

INSPECTION REPORT

LANCASTERIAN SCHOOL

West Didsbury

Manchester

Unique reference number: 105608

Headteacher: Mr Roger Billinge

Reporting inspector: Alan Tattersall
20466

Dates of inspection: 21-24 January 2002

Inspection number: 243758

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2-16 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elizabeth Slinger Road West Didsbury Manchester
Postcode:	MX20 2XA
Telephone number:	0161 445 0123
Fax number:	0161 445 6826
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Riley
Date of previous inspection:	23 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20466	Alan Tattersall	Registered inspector	Physical Education Modern Foreign Language (French) English as an Additional Language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9577	Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14563	Graham Pirt	Team inspector	Music Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Science Art and Design Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology Equal Opportunities The Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
7327	Tony Dunsbee	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious Education Personal, Social and Health Education	

The inspection contractor was:
QICS
"Ibsley"
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lancasterian School is situated in West Didsbury, Manchester. It is a maintained community special school for pupils who have physical disabilities. Many have associated learning needs including communication difficulties. There are 90 boys and girls between the ages of two and sixteen, including six part-time nursery children. The school provides five places in the nursery for children who do not have special educational needs. Children's attainment is low when they enter the nursery and when they enter the school. Ten pupils do not speak English as their first language. Most of these speak Punjabi or Urdu. More than half the pupils receive free school meals, which is high for a school of this type. The school manages the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership, which provides staff and resources to support pupils with physical disabilities in schools throughout the city. Many of these pupils have transferred from Lancasterian School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with a number of excellent features. Leadership is very effective and the curriculum provides pupils with a very wide range of relevant learning experiences. Very high quality teaching ensures that pupils achieve very well. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very high quality teaching enables all pupils to achieve and make very good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and their relationships with other pupils and staff are excellent.
- Very good leadership by the headteacher and senior staff promotes very high standards.
- Teaching and learning in the nursery and the arrangements for children to work alongside those who do not have special educational needs is a strength of the school.
- The excellent provision and the teaching and learning in physical education and sport.
- Local primary and secondary schools receive excellent support from the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership.
- The very good use of communication systems that support or provide pupils with an alternative to verbal communication enables them to make the same progress as others in the school.
- The very strong links with parents, professionals from health and education and the excellent partnership with other schools and people in the community.
- The school makes excellent use of facilities in the community to promote pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- There are no major points for improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since then there has been very good improvement in a number of important areas. The proportion of excellent and very good teaching is much higher and this is consistent throughout the school. Consequently, there has been a similar improvement in the progress that pupils make. Pupils are now gaining accreditation in more subjects by the time they leave school. The school has made very good improvements to its buildings. This ensures that pupils can study all the required subjects such as science, technology and art more fully.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils' achievements are very good. The very high quality of teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for learning, have a very positive influence on the standards that pupils achieve. Pupils make very good progress in subjects and towards achieving the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils make very good progress in English because there is a very suitable emphasis on developing their literacy, speaking and listening and communication skills. They make good progress in reading and writing. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language achieve very well. Those pupils who use communication systems to support or provide an alternative to verbal communication make the same progress as others in the school because the provision is very effective. Achievement and progress is very good in numeracy, personal, social and health education, information and communication technology (computers) and design and technology. Pupils make excellent progress in physical education. They make good progress in science, geography, history, art and design, music, religious education and French. Children under the age of five make consistently very good progress. They take part in activities, which enable them to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and make progress towards the expected standards for their age. They are prepared very well for school when they reach the age of five. By the time they leave school, pupils achieve very well in accreditation in numeracy, literacy and computers. Pupils achieve equally well the school's targets to improve learning in literacy, numeracy and personal development during the year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school. They are enthusiastic and actively participate in all the activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons throughout the school and on educational visits. They behave equally well during activities led by sports trainers and musicians.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show initiative and welcome opportunities to take responsibility. The high quality of relationships between pupils and staff is a strength of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with similar schools. Pupils' arrival at school is delayed occasionally by the late arrival of transport.

Pupils' very good attitudes, excellent behaviour and the excellent relationships between pupils and adults promote a very positive atmosphere for learning in school. Pupils are extremely interested in their work and this enables them to take full advantage of the opportunities they are given.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning is very good overall throughout the school. Teachers understand pupils' special educational needs and have very high expectations for them to achieve. They use assessment very effectively to ensure that tasks are challenging and pupils will build on what they have learnt. Teaching is consistently very good in the nursery and reception where teachers have high expectations for children to achieve and to do as much for themselves as they can. The quality of teaching of English and mathematics is very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and they adapt them very well to promote pupils' learning in these areas. The teaching of personal, social and health education is very good. Very good teaching takes place in information and communication technology and in lessons where pupils use computers to learn and record their work. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is excellent, because the tasks motivate pupils to make excellent progress. Teaching is good in all other subjects. Teachers and support workers provide effective support for pupils whose first language is not English. Throughout the school, teachers and classroom staff provide very effective support for pupils who use communication systems to support or provide an alternative to verbal communication.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is a very good range of subjects, including vocational training. The provision to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is very effective. The curriculum for children under the age of five is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school provides effectively for pupils whose first language is not English. Consequently, they play a full part in lessons and activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school successfully promotes pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are confident to share their beliefs with each other. They are encouraged to become independent. The school promotes pupils' cultural development through art, music and literature, excellent links with artists and musicians and through the study of different world cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There are effective systems for promoting and monitoring pupils' personal development. The partnership between the school and health professionals is very good and ensures that pupils' physical and communication needs are met very well.

The curriculum prepares pupils very well for college and the world of work. The provision for extra-curricular activities at lunchtimes, evenings and weekends is very good. There are excellent arrangements for pupils to take part in sports. There are very good arrangements for pupils to transfer to mainstream primary and secondary schools supported by the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership.

The school has a very strong partnership with parents. Parents hold the school in high esteem and value what the school does for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership. They harness the enthusiasm and staff commitment for high achievement and continued improvement. They manage staff and resources to enable the school to reach increasingly challenging standards. The management of the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership is excellent.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well. Governors provide very effective support, sharing the vision of how the school should improve and the commitment to very high standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good plans to improve the school and systems to ensure that the school knows how well it is performing. The procedures to set and check pupils' targets to improve are effective.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school accounts for its finance very well, making best use of the funds available to provide resources to promote pupils' learning.

The number of teachers and support staff is very good. The provision of training is very good. The Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership provides effective training to other schools and to the Lancasterian support staff who work in them. Accommodation is very good. Resources for learning are very good, including those for pupils who use communication systems to support or provide an alternative to verbal communication. The school has effective systems to ensure that it gets best value for money from its investment in all areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. The school expects children to do their best. Behaviour is good. Children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or two parents of older children would like to know more about daily activities so that they can talk to their children about their experiences when they get home.

Inspectors support parents' positive views. The inspection team finds that the school works very well with parents and that communications are very good. The school should continue to consult parents about what they want to know about daily activities. Parents value extremely highly the support that they receive from the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership for their children to attend their schools successfully.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils throughout the school achieve equally very well to make progress against the targets in their individual education plans. This represents very good progress in subjects since the previous inspection. Pupils at the end of Years 2, 6, 9 and 11 are making very good progress towards the challenging but realistic whole school targets for achievement in numeracy, literacy and personal, social and health education. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is low. The children who do not have special educational needs achieve very well and make very good progress. Their attainment is equal to other children of their age when they leave. Although the other children make very good progress in their time in the nursery, the attainment of the majority of them is below that of children of similar age when they enter school at the age of five. This is because of their special educational needs.
2. Children under the age of five achieve very well. They make very good progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is because teaching is consistently very good and occasionally excellent, with pupils receiving well-planned support from nursery assistants and classroom support staff.
3. The small number of pupils who participate, achieve below the standards expected for their age in National Tests at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9. However, they achieve very well in 'P scale assessments'. Results show that all pupils make consistently very good progress in numeracy, literacy and personal development. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils achieve very well in accreditation. Four received Certificates of Educational Achievement in English and three received certificates in mathematics and art. One pupil gained 'CLAIT' accreditation in using computers. Three pupils achieved ASDAN Bronze Awards and all pupils succeeded very well to gain 'Accreditation for Life and Living Skills.' Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving very well in National Skills Profiles in communication, numeracy and computer skills, personal skills and office practice. The success of these arrangements leads to pupils achieving very well when they leave school, with all securing college placements to continue their study.
4. Pupils make very good progress in lessons through teachers encouraging pupils' excellent behaviour and engaging their enthusiasm for learning. The very good arrangements for assessing pupils' progress ensure that teachers have a clear picture of how well pupils are learning and this enables them to plan effectively for pupils to make more progress. These are significant factors contributing to pupils achieving so well. Pupils who use communication systems to support or provide an alternative to verbal communication make the same progress as others in the school because they receive very effective support.
5. Pupils whose first language is not English achieve as well as other pupils. This is evident in all lessons. Since teachers and support staff anticipate their needs, pupils receive effective support to ensure that they understand what they have to do and to complete their work. They make very good progress in language acquisition and in the subjects they study. Pupils' achievements are evident for instance, when refugee pupils make rapid progress to transfer to other schools, supported by the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership.

6. Pupils of all ages achieve very well and make very good progress in English. There is a suitably strong emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication skills. This leads to pupils making very good progress in speaking and listening and is an important reason why pupils make such good progress in subjects throughout the day. Pupils in Year 1 achieve well, developing reading skills through sharing books such as the 'big book' in the literacy hour or through reading to an adult. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have improved their scores on reading tests very significantly. Since teachers throughout the school plan effectively for pupils to read and write about different topics, this reinforces and extends their learning to achieve well in reading and writing.
7. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy very well and this has led to pupils developing skills in mental arithmetic as well as an understanding of numeracy through written and practical tasks. The school has improved the planning for mathematics since the previous inspection. This enables pupils to gain skills in mental arithmetic, written work and to apply their knowledge to solving problems. Consequently, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in the range of work they complete in mathematics. Pupils make very good progress in numeracy lessons because teachers' effective planning sets challenging but realistic targets for them to achieve. This means for instance, that pupils of all abilities work with gradually larger numbers and learn how to solve problems with them. Pupils of all ages receive plenty of practice in numeracy skills and consolidate their learning in lessons throughout the day. For instance, in using computers to create tables and graphs of surveys of food preferences in food technology.
8. Achievement in using computers is very good. Pupils up to Year 6 make very good progress learning skills in using computers to help them with their work in other lessons. For instance, pupils in Year 1 improve their skills in punctuation and in using computers as they learn how to type the story of their weekend. From Year 7, pupils continue to make very good progress in discrete lessons in the computer room. Pupils use their skills very well for research where in Year 11 they search the Internet for suitable colleges to attend when they leave school. In design and technology, they make very good progress throughout the school where pupils design and make a very wide range of models and products. Pupils' achievement and progress in physical education is outstanding and is due to the excellent quality of teaching and pupils' exemplary behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject.
9. Pupils achieve well in science, history, geography, art and design, music and religious education. Pupils up to the end of Year 10 make good progress in learning a modern foreign language (French). Pupils in Year 11 are disapplied from studying French so that the school can appropriately provide additional time for pupils to learn about the world of work. This makes an important contribution to the very good progress they make in preparation for life beyond the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have maintained the very high standards of attitudes, values, behaviour, personal development and relationships evident at the time of the previous inspection. Their attitudes to learning are very good. They arrive at school happy and cheerful and are delighted when they meet friends and staff. Pupils are keen to learn and involve themselves willingly and enthusiastically in lessons. This is evident in their active participation in drama, where pupils in Year 1 willingly assumed parts and used voices to act out the story of 'The Three Billy Goats'. Year 11 pupils similarly apply themselves very well, completing written and verbal tasks in geography, pleased to share their

knowledge of the Ganges Delta and relate this to the water coming from the Himalayas. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are fascinated to conduct investigative experiments in science. They are energetic in physical education whilst showing that they can be thoughtful, for instance, in devising new gymnastics routines. Pupils enjoy working together and this leads to very good participation for instance in music lessons. Pupils concentrate on their work and are happy to explain what they are doing, whether to their teacher or to visitors. Many are confident enough to contribute to class discussions. They are pleased to show visitors around and are proud of their school.

11. Behaviour at all times is excellent. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting endorsed this view. There have been no exclusions recorded in school records over several years. In the classroom, their exemplary behaviour has a strong effect on promoting learning and progress. Pupils treat school equipment with respect. They move around the building and grounds sensibly and are aware of the need to manoeuvre their wheelchairs with care to avoid others around them. They behave impeccably when out on trips. For example, a group of reception and Year 1 pupils who visited the Manchester Museum was a credit to the school. Pupils play well together at break and lunch times and behave very well. Pupils are courteous and polite. Older pupils respond very well to the trust placed in them to behave during breaks. They sit and chat with each other and staff in a relaxed atmosphere listening to music. There is no evidence of any bullying or oppressive behaviour.
12. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning, They willingly discuss how well they are progressing towards achieving their targets and this helps them to organise their own study better. Pupils relish opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility for instance, by serving on the School Council. Pupils of all ages take their responsibilities seriously. They are clear that they represent the school and their class and must consult each other and give the class a report of their meetings. They are confident to talk about the ideas that they have taken to the School Council, such as improving break times for secondary pupils. Pupils are keen to take opportunities to improve their skills outside of lessons and many pupils attend weekend sports competitions and residential visits. Older pupils take part in work experience, where several show their sense of community by choosing to work in school, for instance by helping the site manager and office staff.
13. A major strength of the school is the excellent relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils are friendly and considerate to each other and those from all backgrounds work together well. They are sensitive to the requirements of others and show understanding of individual needs. A group of boys playing football at break time included those who could walk and run, as well as those in wheelchairs. There are many examples of pupils offering unsolicited help to each other and to staff and visitors in classrooms and around the school. For instance, during discussions with a mixed age group of pupils they ensured that a pupil who used alternative and augmentative communication systems had time to express his views fully.
14. The school has been successful in reducing unauthorised absence through setting good targets for improvement and taking the required action. Several pupils miss school unavoidably because of medical conditions, which means that attendance is satisfactory overall. Parents report that their children always want to come to school and are disappointed when it is holiday time. If their children have a hospital appointment in school time, they ask if they can return to school quickly. Although pupils usually arrive at school punctually, several arrive late because the traffic delays their transport.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The school has been successful in improving the teaching and learning of all pupils since the previous inspection and has eliminated the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching that existed at the time.
16. Teachers plan lessons more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection because they follow much better guidance on what pupils should learn. Their planning ensures that pupils of all special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language are included fully in lessons and achieve equally well. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' skills is very good. Teachers evaluate their lessons or keep anecdotal records of pupils' achievements and responses during individual, small group and whole class activities. This enables teachers and support workers to advise pupils continually how to improve further.
17. The very good training provided by the school for teachers and classroom staff has had a very positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, teachers have responded very well to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They are pleased with the improvements in lessons, and the outcomes of the inspection confirm their view that this had led to an improvement in the standards of pupils' achievements. The monitoring of teaching undertaken by senior staff and increasingly by subject leaders is very good. This and subsequent action has had a positive effect on raising the standard of teaching and learning.
18. Teachers plan with classroom staff to provide very good materials to support pupils in lessons. For instance, in an English lesson for Years 4 to 6, pupils completed different worksheets matched to their attainment when they changed singular words into plural by adding 's' and 'es'. Planning was also effective to enable all pupils to contribute. For instance, the teacher had arranged for two pupils to use computers to write their answers. This lesson also demonstrated that classroom staff are very skilled at asking questions to find out how much pupils understand. Consequently, they discovered that although pupils knew the answers they were not writing them down correctly. They quickly encouraged pupils to complete their work to achieve very well.
19. Teachers use questioning effectively to test pupils' understanding. This was evident in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 4 to 6 where the teacher planned the lesson following the National Numeracy Strategy. The teacher matched the difficulty of questions to pupils well during mental arithmetic to ensure that higher attaining pupils received sufficient challenge and lower attaining pupils participated successfully. For example, higher attaining pupils add three numbers to twenty whilst other pupils do the same to ten. This ensured that pupils made very good progress working towards individual targets in numeracy, with each group supported very well by classroom staff.
20. Teachers have very high expectations for all pupils to learn. For instance, in a science lesson for pupils in Year 11 the teacher ensured that pupils carried out their experiments independently and used the correct terms to describe the outcomes of their work. The emphasis upon pupils using correct language allowed them to make predictions and describe how they would test them, achieving very well. Planning was very good to ensure that pupils who had difficulty with handling apparatus, writing or communication received support to achieve as well as other pupils in the class.

21. Teachers throughout the school have high expectations for pupils to develop skills in using computers. They plan very well for pupils to use computers in most subjects and provide a wide range of different tasks for them. They actively encourage pupils to be independent, using them to support their learning for instance, for research. Teachers have high expectations for pupils to apply their skills in subjects. In design and technology, teachers have a very secure knowledge of how to encourage pupils to improve their designs. They plan very well for pupils to follow a course that gradually allows them to design and make products that are more complex. Teachers encourage pupils to describe their ideas to encourage them to understand that they can influence the design. For instance in a lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher's guidance on choosing parts for a model car provoked pupils to achieve very well when they described what would happen if they chose big wheels.
22. The outstanding skills in the teaching of physical education, together with the pupils' interest, combine to create an exceptionally productive atmosphere for learning in lessons. Pupils follow the teacher's excellent example to maximise their effort and they look for more ways that they can improve. This was evident in a lesson for the oldest pupils who have begun training to be Boccia coaches. (Boccia is a game similar to bowls that everyone can take part in). Pupils followed instructions to referee a match but when a game was tied they discussed how they could resolve it before they asked for help.
23. Teachers set homework particularly well. Tasks are linked to the work in class and provide a very good means for pupils to complete additional work that often provides an opportunity for them to work more independently.
24. The school has maintained the very high quality of teaching of children under five evident at the time of the previous inspection. Staff work very well as a team to promote pupils' learning, including the five children in the nursery who do not have special educational needs. Teachers plan very effectively with classroom staff, preparing activities and resources that match children's needs. They demonstrate a very high level of understanding of pupils' special needs and high expectations for pupils to achieve.

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

25. The school provides pupils with a very wide range of subjects to study. Significant developments in curriculum planning have addressed effectively the criticisms in the previous report. All subjects now have detailed planning which enables teachers to plan work systematically so that pupils make progress. There is now a balanced timetable, which ensures that pupils spend sufficient time on each subject as well as emphasising the important subjects of literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. The school makes very good use of the time available and this gives pupils sufficient time to study each subject. There is a very good range of external accreditation provided for pupils in Year 11.
26. The school makes excellent provision for a significant proportion of pupils to learn alongside other pupils in local schools through the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership. This results in pupils making excellent progress both educationally and in their social skills. Similarly, the school also makes very good provision in ensuring that pupils with communication difficulties have full access both to the curriculum and to the life of the school through the provision of electronic speech devices and other communication equipment.

27. The provision to promote pupils' literacy skills is very good. Teachers have adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet their needs very well. Pupils receive a varied series of lessons from structured reading sessions to carrying out individual research. It ensures that all, including pupils whose first language is not English, make equally very good progress. There is very good planning to ensure that pupils receive a grounding in numeracy during mathematics lessons and in most lessons throughout the week. This has played a significant part in the improvement of pupils' numeracy skills since the previous inspection.
28. The school makes very good provision for pupils' extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of lunchtime clubs covering areas as diverse as computers, art, gardening and wheelchair dancing. The arrangements for pupils to participate in sport are excellent. From cricket to football and from riding to Boccia the school provides a rich variety of sporting activities.
29. Careers education and work experience is very good. Parents value very highly the strong links with the careers service. Similarly, the five day work experience undertaken by Year 11 pupils plays a significant part in their social development. The school values the outcomes of the Education Business Partnership day. Pupils and parents have the opportunity to work with a range of businesses and organisations to undertake activities as diverse as wall papering, laying block pavements and dying fabrics. This preparation leads to all Year 11 pupils going directly to college after leaving school.
30. The school has established excellent links with the community. For example, the Royal Northern College of Music provides excellent support to music lessons. Theatre groups and members of Full Circle Arts (a coalition of disabled artists) enhance pupils' learning for instance, in literacy, drama and personal development. There are very good relationships with Lancashire Cricket Club and with many disabled athletes who give generously of their time to support physical education lessons and a range of extra-curricular activities. There are well-developed links with the police who support personal, health and social education lessons by giving talks on such subjects as stranger danger and drug awareness.
31. The emphasis upon providing pupils with vocational education is an illustration of the excellent way that the school involves the community in promoting pupils' learning. The school has recruited learning mentors successfully from a wide range of backgrounds for instance, members of the local police force and disabled adults. Through the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership, the school has excellent relationships with several of schools to ensure that pupils have full access to the mainstream curriculum. The school makes excellent use of the local area to support pupils' learning, with many visits to places of worship, museums and art galleries, as well as a variety of residential visits.
32. The provision to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. All pupils are valued and respected for their individual contributions to school life and work. There are regular times for reflection in religious education, in lessons and year group assemblies, which regularly highlight pupils' achievements. The school also helps pupils of all ages to consider other people's beliefs. For example, Christian parents join lessons with pupils in the primary department to talk about how their beliefs are an integral part of their family life.

33. The promotion of pupils' personal and social well being is a strong feature of the school. All pupils are encouraged to make choices and be as independent as possible. This includes setting personal targets to achieve each term. Older pupils in Years 7 to 11 benefit from increasing opportunities to develop their social and independence skills through the 'ASDAN Youth Award Scheme'. They follow tasks such as working together to tidy a room and taking part in outdoor games and pursuits. Pupils receive support from the local 'Independence Development Service' to build up their confidence in a variety of settings out of school. They go shopping or take part in sporting and leisure activities. Pupils begin 'work related learning' during their time in the secondary department.
34. The quality of personal relationships in the school is excellent. The mutual respect evident between staff and between staff and pupils fosters pupils' moral development very well. They explore moral issues through discussion and are encouraged to develop a sense of personal responsibility. There is evidence in several classrooms of pupils setting their own targets for personal development, for instance, how they should behave. Pupils learn to consider the needs of others through arrangements for them to participate in annual fundraising activities. Following their suggestions, the school has raised funds to purchase new play equipment for a specialist children's unit at a local hospital. Similarly, Year 9 pupils ran a mini-enterprise for the production of mince pies and scones for sale on behalf of the Salvation Army homeless charity.
35. Art, music and literature provide very good opportunities for pupils to experience other cultures and promote their cultural development very well. In art, for example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 use traditional African fabric designs as the inspiration for their own patterns. Prominent displays around the school show the significance of literature, from the simple stories for younger pupils to older pupils' original writing inspired by Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. The school promotes multicultural awareness very well for example, displays of books of different faiths and pupils' work showing aspects of Sikhism or the way in which different faiths celebrate 'Festivals of Light'. Visits, for instance, observing pupils at another school celebrating St. Patrick's Day by Irish dancing in traditional costume, and to local museums and galleries, raise pupils' cultural awareness very well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Overall, procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' welfare are good. The school is a caring community and teachers and support staff know their pupils very well. They provide very good support for pupils' physical and emotional needs. There are good procedures in place overall to promote health and safety and very good arrangements in place for first aid and for administering medicines. There are very thoughtful and caring routines in place at lunchtime and staff show patience and respect to pupils who require help with feeding. The inspection team informed the school of three minor health and safety points to be attended to.
37. The school works very effectively with other professionals. Pupils' learning and progress benefits from the very good support provided by the health professionals working in the school. The siting of the nurse's room in the centre of the school emphasises the high value the school places on working as a multidisciplinary team. This is a very productive working partnership between health services such as the physiotherapy, speech and language therapy services as well as medical consultants and this ensures that pupils receive appropriate treatment and support. There are also very good arrangements for advisory teachers to provide support to those pupils who have visual and hearing impairments, to ensure that they take a full part in the school.

38. The school is making good efforts to improve attendance and has had satisfactory success in reducing unauthorised absence. The school's arrangements for pupils' arrival and departure are good.
39. The behaviour policy is effective and gives a very clear rationale with guidance to staff on systems for promoting good behaviour by providing rewards. These include a wide range of certificates for primary age pupils and a merit system for older pupils. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans effectively to identify targets to promote suitable behaviour if necessary. There are effective links with clinical and educational psychologists to obtain further advice if required.
40. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are very good. Record keeping is very good and pupils' files contain a comprehensive range of information, which provides a good overall picture of what each pupil knows, understands and can do. Pupils are entered for National Tests at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9 if appropriate. The school uses the information gained very well in measuring individual progress as pupils move through the school. The accredited modules of work provide effective assessment for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' skills in other areas such as sports are recognised through a wide range of certificates. Older pupils' personal development and attitudes are recognised through awards such as the 'Education Business Partnership Award' for work experience, personal challenge and good attendance. The school has assessed all pupils using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's 'P' level assessment materials for English and literacy, mathematics, information and communication technology and personal and social development.
41. The school also uses a wide range of standardised tests each year to measure and monitor pupils' progress in English, literacy and mathematics. The information from these assessments provides a very effective means of measuring pupils' progress over time, helping teachers to set appropriate targets for individual achievement and whole school improvement in subject standards.
42. Annual reviews and transition arrangements are good. The annual reports about pupils' achievement and progress are detailed and annual review meetings are thorough. Many outside agencies and parents are active in giving and sharing valuable information at these meetings. Individual education plans are of good quality and the targets set for pupils to achieve are specific and relevant, clearly identifying what should be learned in order to measure success. These records provide good information in order to plan what pupils will learn next, ensuring that pupils have good opportunities to make progress.
43. The procedures to promote and monitor pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils receive effective support following a very comprehensive personal, social and health education programme. Older pupils receive effective guidance through very good careers education and work experience programmes. Staff take considerable care to provide effective support by including personal targets in pupils' individual education plans. These targets are effective in promoting pupils' independence and their personal and social development. Pupils say that they are comfortable to approach staff with any problems. A very small number of the oldest pupils clearly appreciate the support they receive from mentors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has been very successful in building on the good partnership with parents that was evident at the time of the previous inspection. Parents' views of the school are excellent. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents registered their exceptionally strong support for the school and expressed virtually no concerns. All parents feel that teaching is good and that children are expected to work hard and do their best.
45. The school gives a great deal of thought to the way that it works with parents. Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or with a problem. Teachers hold regular coffee mornings to show parents their children's work, to complement the more formal annual review and end of year parents' day. The school is sensitive to the needs of parents who do not speak English and employs interpreters to attend annual reviews and to help with translations.
46. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Ninety-nine per cent of parents feel well informed about how their child is getting on. Letters and newsletters are written in a very clear and accessible style. This keeps parents up to date with the current curriculum and with school activities. Each term teachers and pupils put together a very good newsletter with photos and articles on the work they have been doing and the successes they have shared. There is an excellent booklet about the nursery, which gives very helpful information about school routines. It introduces ways in which parents can support their children's learning at home. Parents receive a good annual report of their child's progress which teachers discuss with them. The governors' annual report and the prospectus provide clear information about the school and its work.
47. The school encourages parents to become involved in its life and provides a welcoming environment for them. There are many invitations during the school year for parents to come in and talk to staff. Many families live some distance from the school and they find that the telephone provides a good means of communication with the school. Parents sign the home/school partnership agreement and co-operate readily for example, by listening to their children read at home and by reporting absences promptly. Parents demonstrate their interest in the school by attending open evenings and by supporting school activities. Teachers work well to involve parents in the life of the school by encouraging parent participation in fund raising activities, sporting events and all school productions.
48. Parents value extremely highly the support that they receive from the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership for their children to transfer to other schools successfully. They value the continued support that they receive and echo the view of other parents that they feel very confident in approaching the school with questions or concerns.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the school is very good. This supports the view of many parents. The school benefits from the very strong leadership of the headteacher, supported very well by the deputy. Together with the head of the primary school and head of the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership, they manage very effectively a team of teachers, classroom staff, therapists and other staff committed to sharing high standards for themselves, staff and pupils. This results in very good provision to promote pupils' learning and personal development.
50. The school fulfils its aims very well, succeeding to include all pupils in an enjoyable, challenging curriculum and developing their independence and responsibility. Together

with the governors, they have a clear vision of how the school should develop and improve. There has been a good improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection.

51. The governing body provides strong support to the school. Governors are very knowledgeable about the working of the school and aware of the increasing trend for the inclusion of the pupils into mainstream schools and the effect this has on the nature of the pupil population. Since the previous inspection, governors are now more involved in strategic planning and the monitoring of the school improvement plan. They are more aware of the work of the school, reviewing the improvement to policies and planning, often through reports and presentations by subject leaders.
52. The school has very good systems in place to plan for developments. This is evident in the planning to implement the required improvements identified in the previous inspection. There is a close link between each item in the school improvement plan and raising pupils' standards of achievement. For example, by improving the already very good provision of alternative and augmentative communication systems and obtaining additional external funding to fulfil the intention of ensuring excellent provision for pupils. The very good school improvement plan provides targets against which to measure the headteacher's achievement. The school collects a significant amount of assessment information on each pupil such as reading ability, National Curriculum test levels and 'P' scales. This enables it to set challenging but realistic targets for all pupils to achieve more in future years.
53. The success of the training of the school is evident in the effective improvement in subject leadership, which has contributed to the improvement of teaching and learning. Nursery nurses and support workers have equally good access to training. Although staff new to the school receive induction in all the important aspects of the work of the school, the timing of the training is not always appropriate. For instance, there is a need to ensure that all staff are aware of the most important procedures by the time they begin work at the school.
54. Subject leaders have helped to bring about a very good improvement in planning for subjects. They check teachers' planning to verify what pupils are learning and most leaders have the opportunity to visit lessons to observe this. This has a positive effect on most subjects, but particularly English and mathematics where several different teachers take lessons. This means that the subject leaders are aware of how well pupils are learning in other classes, leading to a consistent approach in subjects. The headteacher and senior managers regularly observe teaching. They have ensured that their findings are consistent because they have observed in pairs to compare their perceptions and ensure reliability. The school has introduced performance management successfully. It provides further very good opportunities for the headteacher and senior staff to observe teachers in classrooms and for teachers to discuss improvements that they could make.
55. The school manages finance very well to run efficiently to balance the budget at the end of the year. The management of the finances of the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership is a considerable task but this runs very smoothly. The school accounts for the funds very clearly. The very good working arrangements between the school secretaries, the budget manager and the headteacher supports effective financial management. They manage procedures to purchase and account for expenditure very well. They ensure that the governors have good information to monitor expenditure. For instance, they provide detail for the expenditure of subject leaders. The systems have improved since the previous inspection. Administrative and financial staff make very

good use of computers to manage the finances of the school and maintain pupil records.

56. The governors have a very good knowledge of expenditure and are clearly aware of the need to use finance in the best way to promote pupils' learning. The school takes care with expenditure to obtain the best value and judge the success of the school improvement plan in achieving its targets. The school provides very good value for money and this represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
57. The school has a very good number of qualified and experienced teachers for all subjects. There is a very good level of support in class provided by support workers and nursery nurses. Nursery nurses undertake significant responsibilities in planning and leading parts of lessons. The school has taken effective steps to train a small number of support staff to undertake additional responsibilities. This means that they can work more independently, such as helping with research into the use of augmentative and alternative communication systems.
58. Improvements to accommodation since the previous inspection are very good. There is now very good accommodation for all subjects. The primary building is welcoming and provides very well for pupils' needs. The secondary accommodation provides an effective change for the pupils to match their maturity, providing for greater independence. Displays celebrating pupils' achievements and the very high quality of internal maintenance contribute very well to creating a pleasant working atmosphere.
59. The quality of learning resources is very good. The school has improved resources significantly since the previous inspection. An example of this is the innovative way that resources for literacy have been developed to support lessons, for instance to accompany the reading books. These make a considerable contribution to helping pupils to make such good progress in literacy skills.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. There were no major issues for improvement.

LANCASTERIAN BARRIER FREE PARTNERSHIP

61. The Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership (LBFP) is excellent and fully achieves its aims of including a significant number of pupils who transfer from Lancasterian School into mainstream primary and secondary schools. There has been significant development and improvement since the previous inspection when it was only in its early stages. There are now more than 50 pupils successfully placed in a range of different schools.
62. Pupils make excellent progress in their social development and personal skills. Discussion with the staff of six of the primary schools reveals that teachers and pupils value the arrangements for inclusion very highly. The excellent and committed support that pupils receive enables them to take part in the full range of activities. Pupils participate fully in lessons and academic progress is excellent. In a literacy lesson for example, pupils displayed knowledge of verbs and metaphors; in a history lesson they entered into discussion about Victorian shops, the result of a history trip they had undertaken to a local museum.

63. Schools are very appreciative for the attention to detail, such as the particular efforts made to ensure that pupils can go on school trips. For example, if a specialist bus is required then one is provided. It is typical of the careful and sensitive management that arrangements avoid the pupil travelling alone by sharing the bus with their friends. Attention to every need and the welfare of the pupils are strengths of the provision. The Lancasterian School provides effective guidance to schools, for instance, to understand the pupils' physical conditions or methods to use in teaching physical education.
64. The participating primary schools speak highly of the support they receive from the LBFP staff in both teaching and advisory roles. Similarly, parents have a very high regard for staff. Parents expressed amazement at the progress made by their children. They feel that participation in the arrangements has challenged and stimulated their children. They speak very highly of the way in which any problems are resolved and feel that their opinions are valued by staff. This regard is a consequence of the shared philosophy to value parents as partners, ensuring their children's full access to the curriculum. During the inspection, pupils' participation in lessons and the life of the schools was excellent. This is a tribute to the excellent opportunities provided by, and high importance placed on inclusion by staff and the excellent relationships of pupils in the host schools. Parents rightly praise the excellent provision of support from therapists and the way that LBFP staff follow up the advice they receive.
65. Another significant example of the support pupils receive is the preparation provided for the transition to secondary school. Pupils visit the secondary school accompanied by their support worker and their fellow pupils. Parents also visit the school to confirm the placement. The LBFP staff make great efforts to liaise with the secondary schools to provide support and training for staff. This careful and sensitive management is successful in ensuring the smooth transition of the pupils to the next stage of their education.
66. Since the previous report, the LBFP has been an unqualified success that provides opportunities to pupils that would not otherwise be available. A consequence of this provision is that a large number of pupils have been able to play a full and active part in the life of local schools with the consequent benefits to their self-confidence and personal development. Parents expressed a very strong view that the presence of their children in the schools is beneficial to all and has provided invaluable understanding between children that will be of benefit to them in their lives.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	73

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	33	32	11	0	0	0
Percentage	8	40	39	13	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 one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s].

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No. of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	90
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	48

English as an additional language	No. of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No. of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.87

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.87

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages.

The numbers entered for National Curriculum Assessment Tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 are too small to display or to make comparisons or judgements of progress over time.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	76
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y N – Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	10

Education support staff: YN – Y11

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	785

FTE means full-time equivalent.

The number of teaching and support staff are those who work in Lancasterian School. The expenditure and expenditure per pupil is for the Lancasterian School. The remaining income of £408720 is allocated to operate the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership staffed by 2.2 qualified teaching staff and 24 education support staff working an aggregate 765 hours.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1551877
Total expenditure	1143755
Expenditure per pupil	12708
Balance brought forward from previous year	15812
Balance carried forward to next year	15214

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	86
Number of questionnaires returned	77

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	89	10	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	83	16	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	83	17	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	65	28	2	0	5
The teaching is good.	89	11	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	22	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	98	2	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	17	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	81	18	1	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	87	12	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	83	16	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	83	14	1	1	1

Note: four additional pupils joined the school after this questionnaire was circulated and before the inspection took place.

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

67. At the time of the previous inspection, the school's provision for children under the age of five in the nursery was very good. The provision is now larger: the unit includes the nursery, a class for reception age children and a shared class for reception and year one children. The school has maintained the same high standards in teaching, learning and curriculum provision, and has improved assessment practices and inclusion opportunities. On entry to the unit, children's achievements are low. During their time in the nursery, a small number achieve standards equivalent to those of their peers in mainstream settings. The layout of the nursery ensures that very good use is made of all available space, including arrangements for individual work, group work and a wet play area. Outside, the unit has its own very well designed, colourful, soft surface play area and garden with a climbing frame, sand pits and play shed. The unit provides a safe and supportive environment. Resources throughout the Foundation Stage are very good and include a full range of books, curriculum materials and computers. There is generous staffing, with one teacher, two nursery nurses and three support workers in the nursery and a teacher, nursery nurse and two support workers in each of the other two classes.
68. Children achieve very well and are making very good progress towards the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is because teaching is never less than very good and occasionally excellent and because of the very strong contribution made by nursery nurses and other staff. The school provides a curriculum that is relevant for these children. The main characteristics of the very good and excellent teaching observed include a very high level of understanding of children's special needs and high expectations for pupils to achieve.
69. Assessment procedures are very good. The school uses the 'P Scales' and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy reception age targets to assess, monitor and review children's progress and to set realistic targets for them to learn more. Many children receive assessments that lead to the provision of a statement of special educational needs. The Foundation Stage is a very inclusive setting, with children attending who do not have special needs. Many of the children transfer into mainstream primary schools, supported successfully by the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership. The unit works extremely closely with parents and this enhances learning at home and school.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Children achieve very well and make very good progress in this aspect because teachers plan very well to promote children's personal, social and emotional development. Children enter the school with under-developed personal and social skills and are very dependent on adult support. By the age of five, they have made very good progress in dressing, feeding and toileting. As a result of consistent management and high expectations, children understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Predictable routines, for example at the beginning of the day, help them to feel secure, calm and prepared for their activities. Children can identify a particular partner to work or play with. For example, when working without staff the children often play with or near to others, usually sharing or communicating with them. During one

session, children were encouraged to pretend that they were organising a party. They talked with each other and offered advice about what type of food should be included.

71. At lunchtime, staff work closely with children, helping and encouraging them, for instance to use a knife and fork to eat their meal, or to discuss whether they have sufficient pieces of fruit for the whole group. There is a constant emphasis on communication and relationships. Children are making very good progress because they have very good individual targets to achieve in their care plans and planning is effective for them to achieve them. Relationships between the children and the staff are excellent. The children feel very secure and are becoming keen and confident learners.

Communication, language and literacy

72. Children make very good progress in communication, language and literacy. This is a result of the very good skills, knowledge and understanding of the teachers and other staff. Staff promote children's skills consistently well, in all subjects and at times such as lunch and playtime. Staff read good stories to pupils in an exciting way that holds their attention. Very good props, such as wooden cut out figures, enliven the characters and the plot. A higher attaining child was able to tell the story of 'I went for a walk' with some reference to the text. Children were attentive and co-operative throughout and this contributed to the progress they made. They followed the story with interest and delight, laughing as the page was turned and calling out the name of the animal. Staff used very good questioning to check children's learning and to encourage them to find answers. Children often work towards targets in their individual education plans, demonstrating emergent writing skills and recognition of letter sounds. Children that are more able can read their name and those of some others. Those who use communication aids or alternative forms of communication receive effective support to participate and contribute to lessons. For instance, the teacher uses signs very effectively during changes in activities and this reinforces the purpose of a change such as at snack time.

Mathematical development

73. Children make very good progress working towards the early learning goals in mathematics because of very good teaching. Teachers plan effectively to promote and reinforce children's numeracy skills throughout most lessons and social times. For example, they count the number of children present at registration and identify shapes in houses and buildings when out on a visit. Children increase their awareness of the sequence of numbers through regularly participating in counting songs. In a lesson on consolidating number skills up to five, a birthday cake provided a very good opportunity for children to count the number of candles, repeating it as they 'blow them out'. Thorough preparation and good questioning helps promote good pace throughout the day. Higher attaining children can count beyond five and understand that addition is the joining of two or more sets of objects. Other children match objects and/or pictures and sort them by characteristics such as colour or shape, organising them into sequences. When playing, children handle shapes and fit them together building models, pictures and patterns thus developing their mathematical concepts of position, size and space. Teachers and support staff question children well for instance, to ask if a clay snake is short or long. While playing in the adventure playground or soft play area, children will point out the shapes of apparatus such as circles.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children make very good progress in developing a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding and this helps them make sense of the world. This is because teachers and other staff plan real experiences that encourage exploration and problem solving. Children learn about their classroom and its surroundings. They explore the facilities and resources in the playground, for example, choosing different activities with different levels of difficulty. The use of challenging questions by the nursery nurse helped higher attaining children to identify where people live, asking questions about houses or flats when they visited a sheltered housing project. They learn to use the computer to develop other skills such as language, communication and counting skills. Children use a mouse to operate a painting program independently, making patterns and drawings. They learn to consider families with different religious beliefs and show an understanding of the types of celebrations that take place, such as Eid and Christmas.

Physical development

75. Children make very good progress in developing skills of co-ordination, control, manipulation and movement, because teachers provide them with a large range of activities that offer appropriate physical challenges. The activities include swimming, indoor physical activities, use of the soft play area and riding tricycles. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that all the activities are safe. In the indoor physical activity session, children move freely with pleasure and confidence, encouraged through the use of songs and rhymes. In outdoor activities children learn to take turns and show an awareness of other children's needs. Children who are more able move with speed, agility, balance and co-ordination. They use the climbing frame well, jumping off objects and landing safely. There is appropriate emphasis for children to develop the self-help skills of dressing and undressing. They improve their handling of materials, using scissors to cut along lines, following handwriting patterns and through gluing and sticking activities.

Creative development

76. Pupils make very good progress in working towards the learning goals of creative development. This progress is a result of well-organised activities that allow children time to explore and respond, and use their many senses and talents. In art for example, children explore colour, shape, and form. With support, they produce repeat patterns and collages using different textures such as pasta and leaves. They use simple tools to shape and model clay. In music, they sing songs from memory and recognise how to make sounds by blowing, beating and shaking different instruments. Children indicate whether sounds are long or short as the teacher plays a cymbal. A number of pupils are able to repeat this exercise. The large group-size for music restricts planning for a wider range of work. In free play children assume adult roles in the playhouse and prepare for the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The teachers and other staff extend children's thinking and learning through well timed and considered comments and questions. When necessary they demonstrate skills and techniques to improve children's performance for example, showing them how to handle modelling tools or how to best use a musical instrument.

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' achievement in English is very good. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 achieve similarly high standards in accreditation. The quality of teaching and learning of communication and speaking and listening skills is very good across the school. This is an important aspect of the work of the school and ensures that pupils understand

their tasks. They achieve well in reading and writing. The school has trained staff and responded to implement the National Literacy Strategy and promote high standards in pupils' literacy. Staff have modified the strategy skilfully to be relevant and accessible to pupils to meet their needs effectively.

78. Communication skills are promoted very well in English lessons. There is effective planning to ensure that pupils whose first language is not English can communicate effectively and join in lessons fully. Teachers plan for staff to provide individual support, for instance during reading periods, to check that they understand the vocabulary. Teachers' planning for the start of lessons harnesses the pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 1 listened intently, quickly learning the words and using the 'props' to retell the traditional story of the 'Three Billy Goats'. Pupils in an English lesson for Years 2, 3 and 4 were able to follow verbal instructions on how to make a woolly sheep. The teacher's skilful choice of questions guided pupils to tell staff how they wanted things to be done. During role-play, Year 7 pupils succeeded in describing 'mystery objects,' hidden in a box, to other members of the class. Higher attaining pupils in an English lesson for pupils in Years 10 and 11 talked with confidence in a debate about animal rights issues. The way that the teacher posed questions led to pupils concentrating on the main points and was a significant factor in promoting very good progress in forming a coherent argument.
79. Many pupils receive effective additional support in the development of their communication skills and use of language through working with speech therapists. They provide a mixture of individual programmes on a withdrawal basis and work with larger groups in class. Teachers have very good information on how well pupils are developing skills in literacy and are able to help pupils to improve further when they teach all subjects. They develop very good communication skills during lessons, such as in science. In a lesson for Year 1 pupils, they listened carefully to the teacher and responded with interest and enthusiasm to her challenge to explain how to make a table tennis ball move without touching it, succeeding very well. Careers lessons for secondary aged pupils provide very good opportunities for pupils to improve their communication. For instance, pupils in Year 9 prepare talks about their interests to give to the class as a first step to gaining confidence in interview techniques. This provides additional time for pupils to make progress. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.
80. Pupils enjoy reading and take pleasure in choosing books and listening to stories. The pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress because of very good teaching. The youngest pupils shared reading the big book 'The Jigaree'. They watch intently, anticipating their turn to read the words, following the way that the teacher demonstrated from left to right. As they progress through the school, the pupils read to an adult every day and are encouraged to take their books home every evening to read to a parent. Teachers select interesting books for pupils to read. In Year 8, pupils read the story 'Snow White and the Seven Aliens.' Reading in Years 7 to 11 is supported and developed very well through 'Kick Start' reading activities at the start of each day. Reading tasks match pupils' individual needs, enabling them to make very good progress. For example, a Year 11 pupil for whom English is an additional language, worked with a support worker who asked very astute questions about words, sentences, content and characters. This ensured that the pupil understood the text. Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave school. They have very good age-appropriate texts to read, and discuss for instance, their views of 'Macbeth' and 'Our Day Out' by Willy Russell. Teachers place a very good emphasis upon pupils in Years 10 and 11 using thesauri and dictionaries to find words and this helps them to improve their vocabulary very well during independent work.

81. Pupils make good progress in writing and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is now a good emphasis in encouraging pupils to write independently. Pupils are progressing well towards targets to improve writing skills. Those in Years 1 and 2 order words correctly and show that they have remembered punctuation from previous lessons by adding full stops. Pupils continue to make good progress in writing in English lessons. Teachers have developed good supporting worksheets for instance, to enable pupils to understand how to make nouns plural. There is effective support for pupils who have difficulty writing and they use word processors to complete their assignments. Good planning ensures that the wide range of attainment of pupils in each class is catered for. For example, lower attaining pupils can succeed in their writing tasks where higher attaining pupils are able to complete extra work. This provision of individual tasks is leading to all pupils becoming more independent. Pupils learn skills and apply them in enjoyable and useful ways. They frequently re-write their stories correctly and often use computers. This provides a very good copy to add to the many displays of their work around the school. A Year 7 pupil became engrossed in her work as she used a laptop computer to display her favourite poem, 'What is pink?' by Christina Rossetti. This task provided an excellent opportunity for the pupil to develop more skills in using computers by choosing pictures to add to the text and adding the poem to a book she would use to read to nursery children. The English subject leader is currently developing the use of writing frames to promote extended writing opportunities. Displays on classroom walls and along corridors provide excellent examples of creative writing and promote pupils' pride in their work.
82. The provision made by the school for alternative and augmentative communication users is very good and enables them to participate fully in the learning opportunities offered. The provision is managed very well and clear priorities have been identified which will enable the school to move forward. The use of symbols, signs and communication systems such as single switches and complex communication devices ensures that pupils are actively involved in lessons. Consequently, they are able to make the same progress as other pupils in the school. There is good planning before the lesson for pupils to answer questions, to ensure that they engage well. Pupils use their communicators with confidence and they understand each other's preferred system. For example, a pupil in Year 8 was able to ask an alternative and augmentative communication user to indicate if he needed help, asking him to press the button to say if he was 'OK.' When there is no response, the pupil obtained a positive response asking the other to raise a thumb if he was 'OK'. Staff are very patient and always give alternative and augmentative communication users sufficient time to respond.
83. The English curriculum is planned very well and appropriately includes drama. The subject leader and leader for literacy collaborate very well. They have established a very good range of resources, adapted to meet pupils' needs. Staff have received good training to support and develop reading skills. The procedures to assess and record pupils' achievement are thorough and show clearly the progress that pupils are making.

MATHEMATICS

84. Pupils' achievement and progress in mathematics are very good overall. The school gives a very high priority to promoting progress in mathematics. There is a strong emphasis upon providing individual support and this enables pupils whose first language is not English and those who require support with communication to achieve as well as other pupils in the school. The quality of teaching is very good and

occasionally excellent. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

85. Pupils in Year 1 make very good progress and by Year 2 achievement in mathematics and numeracy are very good. They use numbers confidently and add three numbers together accurately using a number line. Pupils group numbers in tens and units and can count on in twos, fives and tens. They add simple coinage and total the cost of several items. They begin to make and record simple measurements of length and height and represent numbers in other ways by tallying and drawing bar charts.
86. In Years 3 to 6, a strong feature of the very good teaching is the way teachers offer pupils challenges to develop their mathematical skills and ensure variety in learning activities to extend their knowledge and understanding. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress regularly to ensure that all teachers reach consistent judgements about pupils' levels of performance. In an excellent lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher planned effectively to match the tasks to pupils' needs. The first activity engaged all the pupils in calculations based on shopping. They took turns to choose real fruit from a table the teacher had set out as a stall with price tickets and pupils successfully counted the cost of what they would buy. A minority of pupils could calculate the cost mentally. Others worked out the answer from a number line to 20. Pupils demonstrated a very good grasp of numeracy skills when they chose the correct combination of coin cards to represent the money required.
87. Teachers plan lessons effectively. They explain tasks clearly at the beginning of lessons and review what has been learnt at the end. They stress the importance of using correct mathematical terms and this helps pupils extend their learning. Nursery nurses and support workers receive good instructions from teachers to support pupils in individual and small group activities. They contribute very well by helping teachers to assess and record pupils' progress in lessons towards their individual numeracy targets. The teacher planned interesting activities for pupils in Year 4, providing guidance to help the class develop skills of adding three numbers together. Through skilled questioning, pupils achieved very well, predicting the answer. Lower attaining pupils used cubes and number cards with guidance from support workers to calculate sums of three numbers to 10. Higher attaining pupils worked on their own, using number lines to add three numbers to 20. At the end of the lesson, the pupils could reflect on what they had learnt and recognise that when they add the same numbers together in a different order the total will always be the same. By Year 6, lower attaining pupils can find and name simple two-dimensional shapes correctly. They can use a ruler to measure length and can reckon up lower values of coinage. Higher attaining pupils can count up to and back from 100.
88. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils and continually encourage them to rise to challenges as lessons proceed. For example, pupils in Year 7 quickly understood their task to add and subtract sums of money up to the value of £1.00. When errors occurred, the teacher reassured pupils that good learning often comes from making mistakes. One pupil attempted to add up coins, finding it hard at first to distinguish 1p from 2p and to recognise and remember the value of a 20p coin. He persisted with the calculation and eventually confirmed the correct total of 50p.
89. By Year 9, some pupils add numbers to more than 200 and find the difference between numbers over 100. They calculate sums of money by multiplying as well as adding figures. Pupils recognise two-dimensional shapes and identify right angles. They show halves by drawing lines of symmetry and describe times of day in terms of quarters to and past the hour. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are grouped according to their ability. In a

good lesson observed with this age group, the teacher and classroom staff worked very closely with individual lower attaining pupils to solve problems based upon differences in people's ages. Pupils counted by tallying at first but the teacher intervened very well to increase their success by introducing calculators for them to check their answers rapidly. Pupils are motivated to sustain their learning until they leave school by work accredited by a Certificate of Educational Achievement or a grade within the National Skills Profile. A significant number of pupils are successful.

90. The leader for mathematics manages the subject very well and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Arrangements for professional development for staff are very good and currently linked to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has introduced the strategy successfully in the primary department and is extending this well into Years 7 to 9. The leader's specialist expertise and very strong subject leadership enables all teachers to be very well informed and confident in their own lesson planning and teaching. Consequently the three-part lesson structure is firmly established and used to very good effect. Implementing the National Numeracy Strategy consistently and thoroughly results in very positive responses from pupils and makes a major contribution to raising standards of work.
91. The range of resources to support teaching and learning has been improved significantly since the previous inspection and is very good. This includes the use of computers to support individual pupils' learning. Provision in mathematics for pupils who require alternative and augmentative communication is very good overall. Teachers and support workers co-operate very well together to ensure that these pupils have equal access to take part in and benefit from lessons. In a lesson for pupils in Years 10 and 11, a support worker helped a pupil very well to activate a talking device by means of a head switch to correctly order groups of numbers between 20 and 30.

SCIENCE

92. Pupils achieve well. The progress that pupils of all ages make in science is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. By the time they reach the end of Years 2, 6 and 11 pupils' achievements are good in relation to the targets set for them, but below that expected for pupils of similar age.
93. Standards of achievement have improved because teachers use assessment effectively and have a good understanding of what pupils need to learn next. Pupils of all abilities are able to make the same progress because teachers make sure that the tasks and resources match pupils' abilities. There were examples of very good teaching of younger primary age and the oldest secondary age pupils and an example of excellent teaching in Year 1. Pupils in Year 1 concentrated very well in well-planned lessons using interesting resources. The teacher's enthusiasm and use of new technology led to them making excellent progress as they investigated movement and forces. Pupils were fascinated to watch the television screen as the teacher used a digital camera to follow the movements of a ball being blown. This inspired them to explain how the ball moved and then describe how other familiar objects such as toys moved in previous lessons.
94. Teachers plan lessons well to enable pupils to develop scientific understanding and skills across all the areas of work they are required to study. They ensure that pupils whose first language is not English and those who require support with communication

make the same progress as others by planning and providing very effective support. For instance, teachers and support staff check that pupils understand the worksheets for experiments. They ensure that pupils know what they have to do in lessons. The pupils in Year 1 are confident to carry out 'tests' and develop very good investigative skills. They identify the forces needed to move a selection of toys. Pupils take part in an excellent range of interesting and purposeful activities to test forces such as push and pull. The very good use of a digital camera linked to the television helped pupils to understand and identify different forces. Pupils were very interested in the photographs because they were related to their own experiences over the last few weeks when they demonstrated 'push and pull' to move different toys to class members.

95. In Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils were excited when given a very good range of food resources to put together a healthy lunchbox. They made their lunch boxes 'even more healthy' by applying their understanding of food groups to reconsider their first selection. They were very keen to talk about the interesting foods. Classroom support staff contributed well by encouraging pupils to reflect on what they had learned earlier in the lesson and this helped pupils to sort foods into different groups. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the need for a healthy diet and lifestyle. They make very good progress developing language to describe their work. When they talked about the movement of the sun, earth and moon, they described them as 'rotating'.
96. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills during science lessons. For example, pupils in Year 7 sort living things into the different categories of plants, insects, adult and baby animals. Pupils' recorded work shows that they can use computers well to find information and to record their work using text and graphs.
97. As they get older, pupils' skills become more sophisticated and by the time they are in Years 8 and 9 pupils are confident to dismantle a tulip to find the different parts. The oldest pupils demonstrated very good laboratory skills when they tested foods for glucose. They accurately predicted which foods contained it by applying their knowledge of food categories, tested their predictions confidently using skills gained from past investigations to test foods for starch. Older secondary age pupils can describe the life cycle of a plant and they develop their understanding of a healthy lifestyle further when they test for constituents in foods.
98. The pupils concentrate very well when the teacher reminds them what they have learned in previous lessons. Consequently they can recall past experiences and apply their understanding to new activities. In all lessons teachers make sure that pupils who use communication aids or alternative forms of communication have the same opportunities to participate as others. Pupils are given enough time to think about their answers and teachers direct suitable questions at them to make sure that they are able to contribute effectively in discussions. The worksheets produced by teachers to support lessons are of good quality; they are well designed and matched to pupils' abilities providing a good record of what has been taught. Pupils who are unable to write receive effective support from adults who record pupils' answers for them.
99. The subject leader manages well. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities for development that will move the subject forward. The planning for what pupils will learn is good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when the range of work for pupils to do was too narrow. The school has implemented the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's modules of work for science. These have been effectively adapted for the primary department and the

school intends to adapt them so that they reflect the needs of pupils in the secondary department. These materials provide good guidance for teachers in both departments when they plan work. Currently the school does not provide accreditation for pupils' work in Years 10 and 11 but reviews the need for this appropriately.

100. At the time of the last inspection, the school was without a science room and this limited the range of learning opportunities offered to pupils aged 11 to 14. The school now has a designated science room for pupils to undertake experiments. Resources are good; having been developed to support the improved lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they reach Years 2, 6 and 11, pupils' achievements are good in relation to the experiences they have had and the targets set for them, but below that expected for pupils of similar age. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good teaching was seen for pupils in Years 8 and 9 when they used liquid wax and cold water dye to recreate the patterns and shapes they had observed in African art. Teaching and progress have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory.
102. Pupils of all abilities are able to make the same progress because teachers make sure that activities and resources matched their abilities. Those pupils who use communication aids or alternative forms of communication, or need support to handle materials make the same progress as others because they are supported effectively and participate fully in lessons. Teachers plan a good range of activities enabling pupils to develop understanding and skills. Planning is good for pupils to use computers, for instance to manipulate lines and colours to create a printed pattern. Pupils' sketchbooks demonstrate how they have experimented and made good progress in developing techniques and skills using different materials and media. Sketchbooks enable pupils to experiment well.
103. Pupils in Year 6 confidently select different materials to create a collage image. They identify blocks of colour and textures, which can be recreated in a range of materials such as fabric and paper. A good range of materials engages pupils' interest so that they concentrate well. Throughout their time at school pupils have good opportunities to study the work of famous artists. They refer to the work of artists such as Van Gogh, Hockney and Klee.
104. Pupils in Year 7 complete three-dimensional work inspired by Picasso's early sculptures. Pupils with limited movement receive very effective adult support to participate in the activity. By constant discussion about materials and fixings, pupils guide adults to 'make' their sculptures. Pupils are confident to say if adults have misunderstood what they wanted and so they remain in control of the finished piece.
105. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 develop patterns, which reflect the good range of printed and woven African fabrics. They develop their ideas further through discussion about a visit to the fabric gallery at the local museum. The oldest pupils produce a series of positive and negative images based on the work of Matisse. They produce their own stencils and use pastels with confidence. Pupils demonstrate good technical understanding when they ask for colours to be 'fixed' to prevent smudging. Teaching and learning was very effective when the teacher offered sensitive advice and encouragement, enabling pupils to improve their work and leading them to have high levels of confidence and pride in what they are doing. All pupils in Year 11 are making good progress towards accreditation. Higher attaining pupils will take Certificates of Educational Achievement

and lower attaining pupils will have their work accredited through the 'ASDAN Bronze Award' or 'Transition Challenge'.

106. The subject leader manages very well. Detailed plans of what pupils will learn throughout the school provide good guidance for non- specialist teachers when they plan work. Visits to local museums and art galleries enhance pupils' learning. The subject leader manages well. A good development plan identifies appropriate priorities to improve the subject. The art room, provided since the previous inspection, has provided pupils with a wider range of experiences and has helped to raise the status of art within the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Pupils achieve very well. During the inspection teaching was never less than good and a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that very good teaching takes place. This represents very good progress since the previous inspection.
108. Lessons demonstrate pupils' improvements in the use of a range of cutting and fastening skills. In a lesson for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, they designed and made purses. The staff were skilful in planning for pupils to work independently in cutting and measuring. They guided pupils to consider design problems such as where to place the fastener until they found their own solutions. Similarly in another lesson, pupils in Years 8 and 9 built effectively on previous work in both designing and making puppets. The planning to provide interesting tasks is a significant element in promoting high standards. Tasks such as designing and making a model of an adventure playground introduces pupils to the concept of designing and working with wood in a way that is interesting and challenging. They develop skills through tasks such as making moving vehicle models and pop-up books in the primary department before moving onto the more complex skills for secondary pupils involved in making and flying kites.
109. Pupils achieve well in food preparation where they follow interesting tasks. Pupils in Year 2 make sandwiches with enthusiasm and determination and Year 9 pupils make enormous numbers of scones and cakes as part of a mini-enterprise scheme for the Salvation Army charity. Year 11 pupils are prepared for leaving school through lessons which teach them life skills such as ironing, menu preparation and cooking.
110. The subject is characterised by structured lessons that are planned very well, where pupils are interested and engaged. The effective system of assessment clearly identifies pupils' skills and enables the teacher to plan what pupils will learn next.
111. The management of design and technology is very good. Curriculum planning, assessment and resources have been improved since the previous inspection. This means that pupils make very good progress using computers and other advanced equipment such as computerised sewing machines. This enables them to undertake a wide range of more complex tasks. Year 11 pupils gain good accreditation through the 'ASDAN' assessment.

GEOGRAPHY

112. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in geography. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. This represents very good progress since the time of the previous inspection when pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. The subject leader manages well and has contributed effectively to supporting staff and improving

planning for lessons. This represents very good progress since the previous inspection when subject management was weak.

113. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan work effectively to meet individual needs. They use assessment well to build on pupils' knowledge and encourage active participation in lessons. The quality of learning is good because of the structured approach to lessons following a good long-term plan. Pupils understand what they are required to do in lessons, and they receive very good support from teachers and support workers. Teachers relate previous lessons to current lessons to enable pupils to build on their knowledge over time.
114. In Year 1, pupils regularly complete weather charts and those in Years 2 to 4 have studied different aspects of weather relating to the seasons. By Year 2 pupils have gained an understanding of their immediate environment in the classroom and around the school. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils showed understanding of why it is important to have road signs. Pupils required minimal help from support staff to use the computer to retrieve maps of their own streets from the Internet. They linked this to developing their own signs for placing on the playground bike track. Pupils use appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'direction', 'access,' 'warning' and can apply this to labelling signs. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to understand in lessons and they make good use of resources to achieve this. They ensure that pupils who require alternative and augmentative communication systems are able to participate fully.
115. In a Year 7 lesson about how animals and birds live in different layers of the rain forests, pupils used geographical terms such as emergent, canopy and foliage. Using statistical information collected on the school population, pupils in Years 8 and 9 can use computers to display the information in the form of pie charts and graphs. Since the topic builds upon the school's own population, pupils' understanding is firmly based on real examples.
116. Pupils in Year 10 are studying the formation of storms and understand that evaporation is a term to describe water turning to water vapour. Higher attaining pupils are able to discuss wider aspects of geography, for example, the teacher raises pupils' awareness of national and global issues, such as the importance of water by linking the information to pupils' own knowledge or experience. The teacher and support workers encourage pupils to take an interest in the news, such as a recent volcanic eruption in Africa. Lower attaining pupils in Year 11 follow the teacher's illustration well, using the example of how the Ganges flows from the Himalayas into the sea at the Bay of Bengal. Teachers use computers well to promote pupils' learning, planning for them to use the Internet to search for information on the climate in this area.

HISTORY

117. Pupils receive lessons in history and geography in alternate half terms. No lessons in history were available for observation because pupils were studying geography during the week of the inspection. Judgements about the pupils' progress and achievements are based upon discussions with pupils about their work and with teachers. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' records, their completed work, including that displayed around the school and the study of photographic records of visits and activities that have taken place, indicates that pupils achieve well. This confirms that there have been very good improvements since the previous inspection when pupils made unsatisfactory progress.

118. Pupils in Year 1 can recall work they have undertaken in looking at new and old toys. They know the types of toys their parents and grandparents played with as children. Pupils have visited 'The Bear Factory' to see a new teddy bear being made. They achieved well, comparing a new bear to a member of staff's fifty-one year old teddy. Pupils in Years 2 to 4 have undertaken an interesting study of the Ancient Egyptians and produced good examples of written work and a very good wall display about their visit to a museum in Manchester.
119. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have studied the Great Fire of London and the Great Plague. Pupils have produced good records of their work on the period to gain an understanding of the contrast of life in the royal household and in a poor street in London. Teachers have planned well for lessons since walls display a very good range of artefacts such as pomanders and family trees of the royal lineage. Pupils develop a good attitude to using computers and understand that they can search for information, such as the Tudor period using encyclopaedias or the Internet.
120. There is a good plan of work for teachers to follow and this allows pupils to learn history progressively as they move through the school. The oldest pupils study modern social and political history. Pupils in Year 10 have produced good work in their study of the causes of the Russian revolution and life in Russia before and after the revolution. In Year 11 pupils increasingly use correct terminology in their study of the evolution of the modern transport system.
121. The subject leader manages well, successfully reviewing and extending pupils' opportunities for learning since the previous inspection. This has led to good improvements in the subject. There is now comprehensive information to guide teachers in the content and assessment of lessons, with appropriate guidance on how to plan for pupils' differing needs in class. Visits in the community and visitors to the school enhance the quality of the lessons and pupils' learning well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school. This improvement is mainly due to the wider use of computers in most subjects, which enables pupils to practise the skills learnt in ICT lessons. The strengths identified in the previous report, namely curriculum management and teaching, remain. Resources are better since there is new equipment and facilities such as connections to the Internet. This marks good progress since the previous inspection.
123. The quality of teaching is never less than good and an analysis of pupils' work shows it is very good. The emphasis on pupils using computers to display their work means that they develop very good skills at an early age. By Year 2, pupils are using computers confidently to match symbols with words. Higher attaining pupils already demonstrate their understanding by completing tasks such as independently displaying a four-digit number on the computer screen. By Year 6, pupils' achievements continue to be very good. Higher attaining pupils are capable of complex tasks such as matching road signs to their definitions and labelling pictures and words successfully.
124. The very good achievement of pupils who use head switches to undertake word processing tasks such as moving and deleting text is an example of the school's commitment to inclusion. The teaching of a group containing Year 6 pupils was very successful. Careful planning and the subject knowledge of the support worker resulted in higher attaining pupils successfully completing a database. This displayed the range

of colours of cars in the car park, a task that they found interesting and approached with confidence. It is noteworthy that the thought given to ensuring that pupils work at their own level was successful in ensuring that the highest attaining pupil was capable of working independently and producing her own graph of the results.

125. Secondary pupils benefit from specialist teaching and the use of the ICT room. The quality of the teaching and their subsequent attainment was evident in a Year 9 lesson where pupils established a database of personal details. The teacher's effective planning and use of support staff resulted in pupils being able to construct a complex database, where lower attaining pupils achieved very well and others required little support. Teachers consistently plan lessons that challenge pupils to achieve and embrace not only the use of computers but also a wider knowledge of technology. This results in lower attaining pupils recognising and using equipment as diverse as an iron and a fax machine.
126. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils gain very good external qualifications in ICT. Teachers' planning places an appropriate emphasis on providing pupils with opportunities to use computers for individual research and it is the culmination of the skills' teaching from earlier years that makes this possible. The strength of the teaching lies in the promotion of the pupils' confidence where they are willing to work independently. These strengths were apparent in a Year 11 lesson when pupils were undertaking research on the Internet on the subject of cerebral palsy. Pupils undertook a difficult task very sensibly through sensitive support from staff. Higher attaining pupils required very little support.
127. Teachers plan very effectively for ICT to play a leading role in a range of subjects. In English in Year 2, pupils use word processing programmes and match words and pictures. In Year 11, pupils use computers to prepare a letter to accompany a job application. Similar examples are evident in other subjects. In geography lessons for instance, primary aged pupils researched the Ganges delta and a Year 11 pupil used the Internet to research weather patterns and storms.
128. There are two outstanding uses of ICT. Firstly, the Drake Music Project where pupils use a range of electronic instruments to perform music from a wide range of cultures. The other is the use of computers to augment the communication of pupils with communication and speech difficulties. Excellent use is made of these complex communication devices which enable pupils to fully access the curriculum and enter into discussion with teachers for instance about the latest film they have seen or the merits of Manchester United's striker.
129. The subject leader manages the subject very well. There has been substantial investment in equipment to provide one computer for every two pupils and access to the Internet. It is very good that two of the computers in each classroom are linked to the Internet. The appointment of a technician has meant that the subject leader can spend more time promoting pupils' learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

[FRENCH]

130. Pupils in Years 7 to 10 achieve well in learning to communicate in French and to record their work. A significant factor in their good level of progress in lessons is the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their willingness to participate in all activities in class. This ensures that they concentrate hard and remember vocabulary from previous weeks. The quality of teaching varies between satisfactory and very good and

is good overall. The quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make is better than at the time of the previous inspection.

131. Classroom support staff work effectively to support pupils who use augmentative and alternative methods of communication. For instance, they help to provide the means for pupils to answer in French. As lessons proceed, the teacher constantly checks understanding and this ensures that those pupils whose first language is not English make the same progress as the remainder of the class.
132. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress learning how to greet each other, responding appropriately in French to their name being called at registration. When they watched a video about the places of interest in Dijon, pupils were keen to repeat the presenter's questions and answers about where residents lived in the town. This excellent level of involvement enabled them to demonstrate an increasing knowledge of gender and to learn useful phrases, for instance to say where they live in French. Pupils recognise an increasing range of written vocabulary to answer simple questions about where they live.
133. As pupils move through the school, they increase the range of their vocabulary to respond to questions about a wider range of everyday events. In a lesson in Year 9, pupils quickly learned the words in French for food as they asked for tastes of items such as baguettes and croissants. They achieved well by expressing in French if they liked it or not.
134. Pupils in Year 10 continue to add to their basic vocabulary and learn more about French culture. They make good progress overall. However, in one lesson progress was only satisfactory. Although pupils initially found the video presentation of a carnival in Guadeloupe interesting, they could have made better progress. For instance, the task required them to remember too much about what they had seen in the video. This reduced their ability to answer questions about the colours of costumes that dancers were wearing in the carnival. However, since pupils persevere so well, they are making good progress overall in developing an interest in reading and speaking common French words and learning about French culture.
135. Since the subject leader teaches all lessons, there is a better understanding of how pupils are learning throughout the secondary department. Planning is much better than at the time of the previous inspection and there is now a plan of work to enable the teacher to prepare lessons for pupils to learn the language systematically. Resources have improved and enable the teacher to plan to use new technology well. For instance, videos and other aids enliven lessons to satisfy pupils' interest.

MUSIC

136. The pupils in all years achieve well in music. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' progress was only satisfactory.
137. The youngest pupils respond by singing the rhythm of their name when the teacher calls the register. By the age of seven, they use tambourines, cymbals and bells with confidence, responding on time to musical cues and accompanying themselves in singing. Many of the pupils understand the difference between loud and soft, playing their instruments accordingly. Pupils from Year 2 extend their musical knowledge by counting the pulses in tunes.

138. By the time pupils are in Year 6 they make good progress, clapping and playing percussion instruments to rhythms. Many pupils retain tunes and sing spontaneously as they leave the room. Pupils in the next year group are making good progress as they start to understand that a bass riff is a repeated melody. By the time pupils are in Year 11 they are developing good skills in using electronic and computer based instruments such as sound-beams and switches to allow pupils to operate keyboards and synthesisers. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in developing a sense of rhythm and timing.
139. Visiting music specialists support the school on a regular, part-time basis. The quality of teaching is good. Well-prepared and structured lessons motivate pupils to participate in sharing, turn taking and group activities, and the lively pace promotes enthusiastic responses from all pupils. Support workers provide support in all lessons although they are not always informed sufficiently about how they could participate further. Pupils enjoy the lessons and this is evident on their smiling faces. They behave very well in lessons and work hard. Pupils are prompted to develop their skills in appraising music by expressing their opinions, for instance when listening to Mussorgsky's, 'Pictures from an Exhibition.'
140. Music makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy. Pupils are encouraged to develop skills in speaking and listening. There is a good contribution to pupils' personal development through the very good links with the community through the Halle Orchestra and other performances where pupils attend and participate. At the previous inspection, there was no policy for the subject or suitable planning for music. There is now a good policy and the planned content of work is very good, although still being introduced.
141. The subject leader manages very well. The leader has undertaken specialist training and works closely with the music technician from the Drake Music Project, developing pupils' skills in using electronic instruments through switches and mixing and recording equipment. The specialist tutor who leads the steel band enhances the provision in the subject. This is a very successful long-term project. Pupils play with control, understanding the rhythm and pitch, leading to them playing different harmonic parts.
142. The school has a music room of good size, with wall-charts, pictures and resources. The quality of resources was not reported on during the previous inspection. However, there has been a significant investment in the subject, particularly with the recent addition of technology based instruments. There is a very good range of percussion instruments, including the pans for the steel band. There are some opportunities for individuals to learn a specific instrument, for example, through the visiting tutor of the balalaika.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. The provision for physical education is outstanding. The quality of teaching is excellent, where pupils make exceptional progress in lessons. Most pupils reach standards near or the same level of skill as pupils nationally. This represents excellent achievement and is testament to effective teaching and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils made satisfactory or often good progress in lessons.

144. Pupils are extremely keen to come to lessons, concentrate on instructions and try their best to succeed. This means that they can take full advantage of the teacher's expert guidance. The youngest pupils demonstrated this effectively at the start of a lesson when they described what they did the previous week in gymnastics. They had attended so intently that they could describe each other's sequences of moves as each gave a performance. Pupils moved on benches assuming long and round shapes with their bodies. One pupil contemplated how to jump down safely from the apparatus. Through encouragement and guidance from the teacher, he was delighted to achieve this challenging move. In several lessons, the same support staff accompany different classes, gaining skills to take responsibility for small groups. This enables them to guide pupils effectively since they follow the same planning as the teacher.
145. Pupils have regular opportunities to improve their skills in gymnastics dance and games in lessons planned effectively to match their needs. For instance, in the class for pupils up to Year 6 they achieved exceptionally well in designing courses to perform powered wheelchair slaloms. Pupils understand that the main emphasis is upon improving their own performance. This is evident in the way that they cheer each other on and clap enthusiastically when each completes a slalom circuit. Pupils show a keen awareness of how to alter the course to increase the degree of difficulty and plan suitable courses to challenge each other to improve their skills in manoeuvring.
146. Pupils in each year follow a rich range of activities in gymnastics, games and dance. In a lesson for pupils up to Year 9, they showed that they could devise and perform a dance. In this effectively planned session, they remembered all their movements from the previous week to begin to generate new movements or adapt ideas from observing each other. Through the teacher's effective guidance of their performance they improved in skill and confidence whilst enjoying the tasks. A strong feature of the lesson was the way that all pupils participated, for instance, by using communication devices and wheelchairs.
147. Pupils maintain their progress throughout the school so that by the time they leave their achievement is excellent. Their interest in games and sports continues beyond the school through frequent opportunities to take part in local, regional and national competitions. This has led to the oldest pupils requesting training to become accredited Boccia coaches. Their involvement in a lesson was excellent as they followed the teacher's instructions carefully to take turns to referee a game. By the end of the lesson each had participated in a game or acted as referee. Adherence to rules and respect for each other was outstanding as they enjoyed their exciting matches.
148. The subject leader manages the department extremely well, continually breaking new ground to raise pupils' achievement further. For example, planning for the oldest pupils to design games as part of their course to organise the school sports day. This is typical of the school's planning to promote the highest standards of physical and social development. The teacher provides highly valued expert advice and support to raise standards in other schools, including those in the Lancasterian Barrier Free Partnership.
149. Pupils engage in an impressive range of activities throughout the year such as athletics, outdoor adventurous activities, riding, wheelchair dancing and swimming. Those pupils who require hydrotherapy receive effective provision in the pool in school or at a nearby school. Physiotherapists who lead the sessions often provide the opportunity for pupils to work towards early swimming awards matched to their needs.

150. Pupils receive numerous opportunities to participate in games and sports in a wide range of settings in the community. The provision of games and sports at lunchtimes and weekends is outstanding. This makes an excellent contribution to promoting the high degree of interest in sport and games in school. For instance, pupils regularly attend a local high school after school for table tennis coaching as an extra-curricular activity. A disabled table tennis champion also coaches pupils in school at lunchtimes. The school has achieved national recognition for its outstanding provision for physical education through awards such as the 'Active Mark' and 'Sports Mark Gold' awards for the quality of physical education and extra-curricular activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. Pupils' progress and achievements are good overall. This is a consequence of good and occasionally excellent teaching. Teachers utilise the well-structured programme of work developed by the subject leader. Teaching is excellent in Year 1 and good throughout other years. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' progress was unsatisfactory.
152. Where teaching is excellent, pupils learn very effectively because of the teacher's very detailed knowledge of both the subject and pupils' individual needs. The teacher is also very skilled at explaining the importance of religious artefacts. For example, in an excellent lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher significantly enhanced the pupils' existing knowledge and understanding of family life. Allowing pupils to see and handle Islamic religious artefacts enriches their discussion of what has special meaning for families from different cultures. When one pupil from a Muslim family showed the rest of the class how she wore a special scarf for religious reasons, it raised all pupils' spiritual awareness.
153. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher's ability to offer pupils a personal interpretation of a well-known Christian parable resulted in good learning. The teacher read the class the story of the Good Samaritan and carefully selected pictures to illustrate the talk. This presentation was particularly effective in gaining the pupils' close attention. Their understanding of the characters and their feelings showed that pupils had developed correct views about the right and wrong behaviour towards other people. When the teacher then proposed that pupils acted out the story themselves, they demonstrated good thought and concentration in re-enacting their parts. They showed empathy towards the plight of the robbed traveller on the road and understood his need for help.
154. Older pupils study religious education within the accredited 'ASDAN Youth Award Scheme', developing their ability to become more independent learners and to form their own judgements about important issues. For example, in a good lesson seen in Year 11, the pupils themselves had arranged for a nun from a local convent to visit the school and talk about her work of caring for others. Through sensitive support from the teacher and a support worker, the pupils asked their visitor questions they had prepared, about her life and work. They all concentrated well and showed interest in her answers. The teacher then skilfully extended the pupils' learning by asking them to think and talk about ways in which they care for others. They did this confidently and showed their appreciation of each other's contributions. In this way, good teaching helps them to extend their understanding of important moral issues.
155. Provision in religious education for pupils with an additional need for alternative and augmentative communication is very good. Teachers and learning support assistants

work well together to ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities as others to take part in and benefit from lessons. For example, in the excellent lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher ensured that a pupil's communicator had been programmed in advance with suitable words linked to the theme of Muslim family life. In the introduction to the good lesson seen in Year 4, the teacher provided symbol sheets so that pupils could offer their answers to questions about right and wrong behaviour towards other people. In a lesson for pupils in Year 11, two pupils with talkers made their own significant comments on caring for others that introduced important new themes into the class discussion. One spoke of care expressed through close friendship. The other explained his feelings for his father who is unable to be with the rest of the family at present. They touched on emotions that the whole class respected and acknowledged.

156. The subject leader manages the subject very well and has developed a good programme of work for all year groups. Teachers follow the good suggestions for suitable activities arising from the planning. The provision of resources is very good, with a very good collection of artefacts linked to the six major world faiths. Accreditation is good and encourages pupils to study more independently and convey their beliefs and the views of others.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

157. Achievement and progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good overall. The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils' achievements in the subject contribute well to the high standards of behaviour and respect for others that they show in and out of lessons. Pupils observe positive role models in many aspects of school life and receive every opportunity to develop their personal and social skills.
158. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well. The programme of work they follow helps them to understand the importance of rules in and out of school, how to be healthy and safe and to become more self-confident and responsible. A well-structured programme of topics for assemblies regularly provides time for pupils of all ages to share their thoughts with each other on aspects of responsible and caring behaviour. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have as their assembly theme 'Caring people who look after us'.
159. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good. Lessons in each year follow topics from different levels of accredited schemes such as the 'ASDAN Youth Award Scheme' and 'National Skills Profile'. These are very effective in preparing pupils to transfer to the next phase of their education as young adults. Pupils complete several modules of work in the course of a year. In addition, pupils have lessons about sex and drugs education at levels appropriate to their age and needs.
160. In Year 7, pupils achieved very well in planning a talk on the subject 'It is wrong to...'. The teacher planned very well for pupils to build on what they had learnt in previous lessons on the theme of fairness and unfairness. By proposing to cancel lunchtime, the teacher immediately provoked a response and engaged the pupils' attention. Pupils shared their opinion with the teacher. Pupils who required alternative and augmentative communication symbol sheets joined in well to express their thoughts as the discussion proceeded. The teacher was skilled in establishing a positive atmosphere and all the pupils took part enthusiastically.
161. Pupils in Year 10 work through an accredited 'National Skills Profile' module on managing personal relationships to identify special friends and why they are important. The teacher helped pupils to achieve very well by questioning to check on their

progress and providing further explanation when required. Consequently, pupils showed very good concentration and effort. The teacher worked closely and sensitively with a pupil who communicated through a talker. As the pupil named his special friends, the teacher scribed the list for him but ensured that he gave reasons for the choice. Other pupils are very confident to talk about and explain their choices. Their comments are thoughtful and reflect clearly the value they attach to making and keeping good friends.

162. Pupils in Year 11 look in detail at responsible sexual behaviour, including their power to say no and the consequences of possibly becoming parents. The subject leader is skilled in this area of teaching and planned lessons effectively. Support workers are well prepared to provide support to pupils in individual and small group activities in lessons. They contribute very well by helping the teacher to assess and record pupils' progress in lessons towards completing their units of work.
163. The subject leader manages the subject very well. Every pupil has personal and social developmental targets within their individual education plans. Pupils choose their own broader individual targets for themselves, which they discuss and review with their class teacher. These are displayed in their classrooms and pupils take pride in working towards them. The accredited schemes of modules incorporate very good procedures for assessing pupils' progress regularly to ensure consistent judgements about pupils' levels of performance. There is good involvement of the school nurse and police liaison officer for schools, who take part regularly in lessons.