

INSPECTION REPORT

SWISS COTTAGE SCHOOL

Swiss Cottage

LEA area: Camden

Unique reference number: 100096

Headteacher: Ms Kay Bedford

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 2 – 4 December 2002

Inspection number: 249285

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special school for pupils with complex needs, including moderate, physical disabilities, severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, and nursery assessment unit for profound and multiple learning difficulties
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Avenue Road London
Postcode:	NW8 6HX
Telephone number:	0207 681 8080
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Phillippa Gitlin
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Swiss Cottage School is a special school for pupils with complex learning difficulties. The predominant special needs are moderate learning difficulties and additional physical or communication difficulties. A growing number of pupils have severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. There are currently 133 pupils between the ages of two and 16 and all have Statements of Special Educational Need. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below average, by virtue of those special needs. The school is organized into three separate and distinct departments; an assessment nursery for children aged two to five years, many of whom move to more specialist provision, and primary and secondary departments. Approximately one-third of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, and another third either with Black or Asian heritage. There is a small minority from an Irish background. The school has a significant minority of pupils who are refugees from Somalia. A very high proportion of pupils has English as an additional language - more than 50 per cent, and almost half of those pupils are at the earliest stages of learning the English language. The main languages other than English are Bengali, Somali, Arabic and Urdu. Half of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals - a figure that is very high by national comparison. The school has two buildings on the same campus, with secondary pupils accommodated separately.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Swiss Cottage is an extremely successful school, achieving excellence in its work. The headteacher's excellent leadership is visionary, dynamic and inspirational to the pupils, parents and staff alike. Leadership at other levels is also excellent, providing clarity of purpose and direction for continued improvements. Pupils, by the time they leave, are as independent as possible and many gain nationally recognised awards. A high proportion of the teaching is very good and a significant amount is excellent, leading to pupils achieving very well over time. There is an excellent atmosphere for learning, where expectations are high, yet realistic, and the pupils' achievements and effort are paramount. The school provides very good value for money and has the capacity to sustain excellence. The school is justifiably proud of its 'Beacon' status, recently confirmed for another three years, for all areas of its work, and has numerous awards locally and nationally.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's excellent leadership inspires pupils and adults to do their best. The senior leadership, middle managers and subject leaders have strong and complementary skills; monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and the quality of education is improving continuously.
- The very high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching ensures that all pupils achieve high standards for their degree of special educational needs; teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the pupils' learning.
- The outstanding opportunities for continuous professional development, equip staff, enable them to improve their practice, and develop all adults' potential for

the overall benefit of the pupils.

- The pupils' excellent personal development, excellent relationships, and excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means they are keen to learn, eager to achieve their targets and thoroughly well prepared for life when they leave school.
- The strategies for developing the pupils' literacy skills are very effective, ensuring many pupils make rapid gains in their learning and access other subjects more efficiently as a result.
- Team work is very strong; adults cooperate and collaborate exceptionally well and contribute much additional effort to enrich the pupils' education.

What could be improved

- Aspects of the accommodation are unsuitable, as there are more pupils with increasingly complex needs, the buildings have not been adapted adequately to meet those needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection in 1998 and all key issues have been addressed comprehensively. In addition, strengths identified previously have been sustained and, in key areas, developed further. Pupils' achievements are now very good, where previously they were good, and the quality of teaching has an even higher proportion that is very good and excellent compared to the last inspection. More pupils are gaining nationally recognised qualifications, even though the proportion of pupils with complex needs is now greater. Pupils are helped to move on to mainstream schools wherever possible and appropriate for their continuing needs. All pupils move on to college and pursue courses that build on from their school work. Attendance that was previously unsatisfactory is satisfactory, and other aspects such as the atmosphere for learning and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, are now excellent.

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	A	A	Good	B
Writing	A	A	A	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		

Achievement is very good overall. Pupils throughout the school make rapid gains in their literacy skills, due to the very effective literacy strategies that have been

adapted and refined extensively to meet their needs. Pupils make excellent progress in personal development, and gain considerable insight into their personal challenges and how best to overcome and compensate for their special needs in the wider world beyond school. Pupils use their knowledge of mathematics and number with increasing confidence, and by the time they leave, many apply those skills in practice appropriately. Individual education plans have targets for the pupils that are tailored carefully for their needs, and pupils regularly meet those targets. They are realistic and achievable, yet suitably ambitious for the pupils to do their best academically, socially and personally.

Children in the nursery are all undergoing assessment for future placement, and achieve very well for their degree of special needs. Other pupils by reception, Years 2, 6 and 11, achieve very well in relation to their low starting points. Many pupils gain Certificates of Achievement, passing with distinction, and Youth Awards at Bronze level, and a significant minority pass General Certificates in Secondary Education in English and mathematics. Pupils, whatever their particular special educational need, achieve very well. This is because the school ensures their needs are assessed carefully and work is matched closely. Strategies for literacy help all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, because of the considerable emphasis on developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn and improve
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils show self-control and recognize the importance of their own effort as they rise to daily personal challenges
Personal development and relationships	Excellent; pupils grow in maturity and self-confidence and develop extremely positive relationships
Attendance	Satisfactory and improving

Pupils are enthusiastic to succeed and arrive with great anticipation and excitement. They understand how to behave in more formal lessons and social settings such as lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils become more skilled at making choices, expressing themselves and their feelings, and handling social situations in order to prepare fully for adult life. Relationships are based on trust, respect and friendship, with pupils and adults showing a genuine appreciation of one another's company.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching pupils:	of	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11

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

There is a very high proportion of very good and excellent teaching throughout the school. This means that pupils learn very effectively in lessons and achieve very well over time in relation to their degree of special educational need. The very good teaching in English ensures that the pupils make rapid gains in their literacy skills, and develop the ability to express their views and opinions clearly. Teachers are very effective in helping pupils to communicate. This in turn helps them to learn more effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. The very good teaching in mathematics is helping pupils to gain practical skills for life, for example in their understanding of number, money, measurement and time.

Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are very good overall throughout the school and the pupils' skills are developed systematically. Teachers help the pupils to use those skills across many other subjects, thus reinforcing their learning more widely. The very good teaching in science is enabling pupils to investigate, observe accurately and make simple hypothesis and predictions. The excellent teaching in personal, social and health education is resulting in pupils who are confident, able to articulate their ideas and feelings and understand how best to manage themselves in a variety of social situations. Pupils develop a realistic understanding of their personal challenges and how best to overcome them.

The school is very effective in meeting the pupils' wide-ranging needs, and teachers are very skilled in adapting and modifying activities. Many teachers are very experienced in teaching pupils with complex needs and use a variety of well-chosen strategies to ensure pupils learn as effectively as possible.

Strengths in teaching and learning include:

- Very thorough understanding of the pupils' individual needs and excellent relationships between pupils and adults, enable pupils to build on their previous knowledge at an appropriate pace
- Very good knowledge of the subjects and excellent use of resources help the pupils to learn new ideas more effectively and retain information more readily.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very broad, well-balanced and relevant to the pupils; activities outside lessons are of high quality.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good; pupils are very well supported in their work, and the emphasis upon speaking and listening helps them to achieve very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; pupils grow in confidence and maturity, and develop strong principles, skills and insights for life beyond school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well; pupils are cared for very effectively, and their well-being is a high priority for all staff.

The curriculum is very well organised and planned to ensure the pupils' skills and knowledge in different subjects are built on systematically. The curriculum for ICT is excellent, enabling pupils to develop and use their technology skills in many areas. As pupils move through the school, there is a very distinct progression from the primary to secondary departments, and an equally different approach to the curriculum, its content and delivery. This helps the pupils gain a clear sense of moving on, as they realise that more is expected of them. The school has a very strong partnership with parents. The very effective care for pupils ensures they are at ease and able to learn readily.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership; senior managers, subject leaders and heads of department show a clear vision for improving the school; and make an excellent and highly efficient team.
How well the appropriate authority	The governing body is led very ably, and governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise to the school; they have

fulfils its responsibilities	a clear and strategic overview and hold the school rigorously to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent; there are rigorous methods for monitoring, and meticulous strategies for evaluating the impact of its actions; self-evaluation and continuous improvement is at the heart of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent and strategic use of resources, including time, finance and people, to maximise the pupils' learning opportunities. The principles of best value are applied rigorously for recruitment and all other areas of financial management, and funds used prudently.

There is an appropriate number of very well-qualified staff, and resources are good in range and quality to support the pupils' learning. Accommodation has scope for improvement in its design, quality and access for pupils. The school's deficit figures carried forward are due to late receipt of funds; this has now been resolved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • The teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • The school expects their children to work hard and do their best • They are kept well informed and would feel comfortable approaching the school • The school works closely with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more homework for their children

The inspection confirmed all the strengths identified by the parents. Inspectors considered the amount of homework to be appropriate, but there is scope for further clarification for some parents as to what constitutes homework and how best they can support their children further.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The headteacher's excellent leadership is visionary, inspirational and dynamic. The senior leadership, middle managers and subject leaders have strong and complementary skills; monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and the quality of education is improving continuously.

1. The headteacher's excellent leadership inspires adults and pupils to have high aspirations for themselves and encourages them to achieve and surpass their personal best. Everyone is valued for their worth as an individual and helped to realize their potential. There is a sharp focus on pupils' progress and a desire for continuous improvement at the school. There is a strong emphasis on setting high standards and recognizing achievements. This is linked closely to preparing the pupils thoroughly for the challenges of adult life and gaining the necessary skills for successful integration into the community.
2. The senior management team, including the two deputy headteachers, are highly skilled leaders who make a significant and strategic contribution to the school and its direction. They have vast experience in the sphere of special educational needs, and manage their responsibilities most effectively. They enable the headteacher to carry out many of her more public roles, by being so efficient and effective in leading and managing the school. Managers with responsibility for the primary and secondary departments have a clear overview of their separate areas and track the pupils' achievements closely. They liaise regularly, ensuring a systematic flow of information between teachers about the pupils. Teachers with responsibilities for leading subjects are highly efficient, and understand the priorities for bringing about further improvement. Leadership at all levels is of a very high standard, and enables the school's aims, mission and values to be implemented swiftly and consistently throughout the school. There is much emphasis upon including all pupils, regardless of their differences or backgrounds, and every opportunity is taken to ensure they mix as widely as possible.
3. There are meticulous arrangements for monitoring the school's work and evaluating the impact of its actions on standards, teaching and the pupils' achievements. The school has well-embedded strategies and school policies, known as 'key processes', which have been developed and refined over time. They also form part of the school's continued success in gaining the 'Investors In People' award. Teaching is observed regularly, and teachers understand clearly what works well and what areas require further development. This has ensured continued improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. All other aspects of school life are monitored regularly to ensure there is maximum impact on the pupils' progress. All staff are encouraged to be involved in some form of monitoring, and everyone has the opportunity to reflect on what works well and how there could be further improvement. Initiatives are evaluated regularly for their overall impact on the pupils, and the school development plan

is both strategic and comprehensive. There is no complacency in the school, as it strives to achieve and sustain excellence.

The very high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching ensures that all pupils achieve high standards for their degree of special educational needs; teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the pupils' learning.

4. There was a very high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching observed during the inspection. A little over half the teaching was very good, and almost half was judged as either good or excellent. The strong features were seen across all ages and were not exclusive to any one subject.
5. Teachers have high, yet realistic expectations of the pupils academically and socially. They set work that is challenging and closely matched to the pupils' wide-ranging needs. The pupils' targets are precise and measurable and reflected accurately in daily activities, and as a result, they meet their targets regularly and then move on to greater challenges. Targets are reviewed and revised as a matter of course at frequent intervals. Assessment is used rigorously to track the pupils' achievements and to note if there is any variation in their rate of progress at any one time. Teachers take the necessary action in order to ensure all pupils are achieving what is realistic for their special educational needs.
6. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the pupils' learning. They know what is expected of them and have a wealth of understanding about individual pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work as a seamless team, moving between activities and lessons efficiently. Teaching assistants show considerable initiative. In an excellent example in the primary department, as pupils were learning the purpose of ICT and its use, the teaching assistant engaged the pupils most effectively in imaginary play. Pupils used the two-way radio to call for a taxi, using and developing an increasing range of language, whilst another used the cash register and scanner to purchase books from a bookshop. At the same time, potentially disruptive and challenging behaviour was most effectively diverted by drawing the pupil's attention to an appropriate activity. The teaching assistant then moved swiftly to another group and supported pupils in their understanding of a story and its characters, by dressing as grandma in Goldilocks and the three bears. Throughout the lesson, there was a great sense of fun and enjoyment, whilst maintaining a clear focus on the pupils' learning.
7. Teachers have a very thorough knowledge of the pupils' needs, and the excellent relationships between adults and pupils help create a relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere for learning. Teachers are ambitious for the pupils to succeed and surpass their personal best. Many pupils gain nationally recognized awards. By the time they leave school, in the most recent examinations, all those pupils entered for Certificates of Achievement in English, art and design and technology, passed with distinction. In mathematics, most pupils passed with distinction, and others, with merit. In science, two-thirds of the pupils passed with distinction, and one-third with

merit. In ICT a growing number of pupils are gaining distinction, and the majority gained a merit. In addition, a significant minority of pupils passed their GCSEs in English and mathematics with grade D- an impressive outcome in relation to their degree of special educational needs. Just under half the pupils gained a graded assessment profile in English (GAPE), including a module for speaking and listening. These achievements instill a great sense of pride for the pupils and add to their self-esteem. Wherever practical and realistic, teachers and teaching assistants enable the pupils to leave school with as many qualifications as possible. Pupils develop considerable tenacity, perseverance and fortitude as they overcome challenges in their learning.

The outstanding opportunities for continuous professional development, equip staff, enable them to improve their practice, and develop all adults' potential for the overall benefit of the pupils.

8. The school has exemplary strategies for developing the staff's professional skills, and all adults are part of the school's continuous professional development programme. It is a common feature for people to join the school as a volunteer, or assistant, and find themselves being trained further, and sometimes becoming teachers. The school does not have a recruitment problem; this is a remarkable feature in the current climate. This is because it has a strong reputation, including the opportunities it offers staff for career development. The staffing structure has many opportunities for people to take responsibility, and there is excellent support in the process. They often start as assistants to, for example department leaders, and learn new skills, before finally taking full responsibility. This means that within a relatively small special school, staff stay longer as they learn a wide variety of skills at different levels over time. In addition, when the school advertises for new staff, at whatever level, it is usual for there to be an extensive list of applicants of high quality, and a waiting list of others wishing to work for the school should there be a vacancy. This is resulting in a very skilled and strong workforce.
9. All staff are seen as people with potential for further development. Their skills are utilized to the very best effect for the pupils. Teaching assistants with particular strengths are encouraged to contribute those skills. A teaching assistant with expertise in dance leads the entire secondary department, on a weekly basis, in a session for dance and aerobics, providing an excellent role model in the process. Another member of staff, who started life in the school as a teaching assistant, is now training for qualified teacher status, and is used by the local authority to train others in physical education. These are only two of the many rich stories of people's professional journey since starting at the school.
10. There are other excellent instances where the school provides training for staff. Currently, the subject leader for ICT is piloting a training programme designed to be used nationally, to equip teaching assistants further in ICT. The training is exceptionally high quality, accessible and followed by a wide range of adults from Swiss Cottage and other schools locally. The training is very relevant to the pupils' special needs, including assessment strategies, correct seating and positioning, and using ICT for signing and symbols in order to enhance the

pupils' communication opportunities. Pupils are benefiting directly from this initiative as they are supported more efficiently with adults who have growing confidence in their own technology skills.

11. The school has been used as a model of excellence by the Department for Education and Skills in producing a video for national use in continuous professional development. It has attracted special attention, due to the advancements made in recruitment at a time of difficulties nationally in this area.

The pupils' excellent personal development, excellent relationships, and excellent provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means they are keen to learn, eager to achieve their targets and thoroughly well prepared for life when they leave school.

12. The pupils develop a high level of insight into their own personal challenges. The staff enable them to talk about their experiences and feelings, particularly in relation to how others beyond the school behave towards them, concerning issues of disability. This approach helps the pupils to gain understanding and handle otherwise difficult situations more effectively. Pupils, for example attending college, have a range of strategies to cope with other students' responses, and there are regular opportunities when they return to school at the end of the day to reflect on what went well and how they might do things differently next time. This approach does not dwell on their difficulties, but rather enables and equips them with the necessary skills to thrive beyond the security of the school.
13. Pupils recognize the importance of effort and hard work, and many remember their targets clearly. There are regular opportunities where pupils discuss their work. The annual review process, whereby the staff, parents and pupil discuss the year's achievements and set new targets, is just one example of helping the pupils' personal, academic and social development. In an excellent annual review observed during the inspection, the pupil came prepared with carefully selected pieces of work to demonstrate how the targets had been achieved, and discussed with great clarity and awareness what areas there were for further improvement. The pupil expressed thoughts with great frankness about why things had been successful and what struggles continued to be faced. At the end of the meeting, there was a shared commitment, to strive for further goals, alongside much pride for what had already been achieved in a short time.
14. There are excellent relationships between pupils and with adults that are built on respect, consideration and kindness. Pupils develop genuine friendships and offer one another much support and encouragement. Staff and pupils celebrate one another's successes with obvious enjoyment and pride. There are excellent opportunities, for example at the School Council, where pupils discuss and debate ideas for further improving Swiss Cottage School. Their views are taken very seriously by the staff, and there are numerous examples where adults listen carefully to the pupils' views, in order to enable and empower them

further. Pupils as a result have a strong sense of ownership for the school, and take responsibility for what happens in a remarkably mature manner.

15. The school places great emphasis upon developing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The provision is woven into all aspects of school life in a way that is natural, relevant and realistic. Pupils, for example are encouraged to pray for one another and members of the staff, if there are particular areas of concern, such as illness in their families. This is done sensitively but with a real sense of meaning. Pupils realize quickly when they arrive that the school has a strong code morally and socially. There are high expectations set within a clear framework for pupils to understand the consequences of their actions and how they impact on others. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills during the school day, after school at clubs and during residential weeks away from London. Pupils may be seen in a relaxed and social context talking together, playing games, listening to music or chatting with adults at break, lunch and after school. Pupils learn about topical and life issues, and during the inspection, discussed maturely 'World Aids Day' and the impact of the disease. They also recognize the impact of death and its effects on themselves and the school, as occasionally a classmate sadly dies whilst attending the school. The entire school community handles such instances with great dignity, openness and reality, enabling pupils to move forward whilst coping with their own feelings and emotions.
16. Pupils' own cultures are highly respected and there are systematic opportunities to learn about cultures worldwide. In the nursery, for example children with more severe learning difficulties joined in a special session to remind them of Hanukah. Teachers read a story, and used well-chosen artefacts to assist the children in their understanding, including special food, candles and a cap. There was a genuine sense of wonderment as children watched the Menorah candles lit one by one, listened to music and looked in the mirror when the cap was worn by a classmate. The atmosphere of spirituality was tangible as the children were enthralled by the sights and sounds around them. Pupils are thoroughly well prepared for living in a diverse community, and learn from a young age that differences are to be respected and celebrated. These values are assisted further by the school's clear policy and systematic practice in promoting race equality, and the confidence expressed by parents from all communities represented in the school.

The strategies for developing the pupils' literacy skills are very effective, ensuring many pupils make rapid gains in their learning and access other subjects more efficiently as a result.

17. There are very effective strategies for pupils to develop their literacy skills. Pupils make rapid progress in reading, for example, and their results within the space of one year are impressive. The literacy strategy has been carefully adapted and refined to meet the pupils' wide-ranging special educational needs. There is a very strong and precise approach to teaching phonics, and this is providing pupils with specific skills for attempting to read new words and spell them accurately. Pupils have very effective individual support that is focused

accurately to their specific needs and results in them making many gains in their own strategies for reading, spelling and writing.

18. The literacy subject leader is highly knowledgeable and expert in the development of literacy. All staff are trained regularly, and there is a detailed training programme for assessing the pupils' needs. New staff are supported very effectively in order to ensure a consistent approach for the pupils. There is meticulous attention given to ensuring any reading material given to the pupils is at the appropriate level, and all worksheets are analysed carefully to check they are useful, relevant and at the correct reading level for groups and individual pupils. These features enable teaching to be high quality and often include excellent practice. In an example of excellent teaching in a literacy lesson in Years 7-8, activities were carefully matched to the pupils, the text was highly appropriate, and the excellent planning ensured pupils gained many new skills. Pupils listened attentively to a text, imagining the features of a country they were hearing about, and then compared an extract from the text with their own lives. The excellent and rigorous use of questions, coupled with an extremely effective summary at the end of the lesson recapping the key learning points, ensured pupils understood the main purpose of the activity.
19. There is a systematic use of literacy across the curriculum, enabling pupils' literacy skills to be emphasized and practised regularly beyond the literacy lessons. The school has a wealth of very well-organized resources, and there is a separate literacy resource room that is a treasure chest of books, materials and guidance for staff. These are used extensively for the pupils' benefit.

Team work is very strong; adults co-operate and collaborate exceptionally well, and contribute much additional effort to enrich the pupils' education.

20. There is great emphasis upon working together as a team, and the school has clear principles established for building and sustaining strong professional relationships. These include simple and straightforward ways to handle and resolve conflict, work harmoniously and seeking to complement one another's strengths. Such basic guidelines provide a plumb line for professional conduct and behaviour, and mean that everyone's efforts are focused on the pupils' learning. There is a high degree of satisfaction expressed by staff at the school as they feel valued and appreciated for their work. This means they contribute additional effort, work as efficiently as possible and give of their very best. The bursar and administrators understand clearly how their work contributes to the bigger picture of the pupils' achievements. They in turn create a very smooth and highly efficient department to underpin the school's work. Other staff, including the premises officer, take pride and interest in their work, and find ways of contributing their personal skills to the school's life. Staff and pupils alike are enabled, encouraged and empowered to achieve their very best.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Aspects of the accommodation are unsuitable, as there are more pupils with increasingly complex needs, the buildings have not been adapted adequately to meet those needs.

21. The accommodation is made up of two distinct buildings, previously two schools, until amalgamation in 1995. The buildings are separated by a large playground. The school makes best possible use of its space and ensures it is a bright, attractive atmosphere for learning. The buildings have had minimal adaptation, and some alterations, such as modification to the science rooms, are unsuitable for the pupils who are wheelchair users. The furniture in the science room, installed with limited consideration of the school's specific needs, is unsuitable for a significant minority of pupils using wheelchairs as they cannot always move close enough to carry out investigative work or reach the resources without adult assistance. There are parts of the buildings that are increasingly unsuitable for the pupils' complex needs. The school has more pupils who are wheelchair users, and others with frail conditions, and associated physical disabilities. Few of the classrooms can be accessed by pupils independently if they are wheelchair users. This decreases their sense of independence to enter parts of the building.

22. The school buildings have no covered way, and consequently, pupils travel some distance between the accommodation in all weathers without appropriate protection. The fabric and repair of the buildings require considerable investment in places. Floors in some classrooms are pitted and worn, and windows in need of repair. The hard playground areas are worn, cracked and uneven in places. The quality of the fabric, repair, flooring and paintwork has considerable scope for refreshing and refurbishment. Currently, the

accommodation does not do justice to the excellent education provided at Swiss Cottage School.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) *Improve accommodation by:
- ensuring greater independent access for pupils using wheelchairs to all parts of the school
 - improving the quality of the outdoor space
 - providing appropriate covered facilities for pupils when moving between buildings
 - improving the fabric and overall repair of the school buildings and some classrooms.
- * Indicates this issue is already identified as part of the school's improvement plan.

As referred to in paragraphs 21-22

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	15	5	2	0	0	0
Percentage	24	52	17	7	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 three percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	133
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	67

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	69

Pupil mobility in the last school year

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	42	0	0
White – Irish	9	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	23	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	28	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: Nursery– Y 11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Nursery – Y11

Total number of education support staff	30
Total aggregate hours worked per week	978

Financial year	01/02
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	£
Total income	1850728
Total expenditure	1934021
Expenditure per pupil	14221
Balance brought forward from previous year	83704
Balance carried forward to next year	-83293*

* reflects year end position; subsequent receipt of funds relating to individuals of some £110,000 has remedied this apparent deficit.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	133
Number of questionnaires returned	82

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	12	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	68	24	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	27	6	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	34	15	5	3
The teaching is good.	80	19	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	22	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	20	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	16	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	68	30	0	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	78	18	0	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	23	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	32	4	0	5