

INSPECTION REPORT

GREEN PARK SCHOOL

Bilston, West Midlands

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104415

Headteacher: Mr M Partington

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 26th September 2002

Inspection number: 249306

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Green Park Avenue Bilston West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Bond
Date of previous inspection:	9th June 1997

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9619	R Miller	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23412	A Jeffs	Team inspector	English Music	
12112	G Carter	Team inspector	Geography History Modern Foreign Languages English as an additional language	
3055	C Tombs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
18498	D Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	
13101	M Kell	Team inspector	Science Physical education Educational inclusion	
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
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?	9
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS	44

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Green Park School is in an urban setting in Bilston in the West Midlands. There are 96 pupils and students on roll from Year 1 to Year 14. There are 58 boys and 38 girls. All pupils and students have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or are subject to statutory assessment. Pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties. These include severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), challenging behaviour, and sensory impairments. Although 66 pupils are from a white British background the school population as a whole is very mixed. Eighteen pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). There are two children from refugee families. A very high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is well below average. Pupil numbers have increased significantly since the school was last inspected and the proportion of pupils with PMLD has increased greatly in recent years. The local education authority (LEA) is carrying out a review of its funding for pupils with SEN.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school. All pupils make good progress. Leadership and management are good and, consequently, teaching and learning are good. The teamwork, between all school staff and personnel employed by the LEA or other services, is exemplary. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils and students achieve well regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnicity. Progress is consistently good and often very good in communication, reading and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Students achieve good results in accredited courses.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. All staff make a significant contribution to the pupils' progress and use the accommodation and available resources well.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior management team and key staff are good.
- The pupils' medical and personal hygiene needs are met extremely well, whilst causing minimal disruption to their learning. This is a real strength of the school and results from the exemplary teamwork between the classroom staff, other school support staff and health staff.
- The school meets the needs of different groups of pupils equally well including those with SLD, PMLD, ASD, challenging behaviour, and sensory impairments. There are very good arrangements for educational and social inclusion and promoting racial equality.

What could be improved

- The accommodation is inadequate and has a negative impact on the progress of all pupils but particularly those with PMLD.
- Although satisfactory overall, the range and quality of learning resources has a negative impact on pupils' progress in several subjects.

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 was previously inspected in June 1997. Overall improvement has been good. There have been significant improvements in teaching. In 1997, there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching and a large proportion of it is good or very good. The school took appropriate action on all the shortcomings previously identified. The management of change in the school's curriculum, management structures and, most significantly, increased pupil numbers has been good. There is a very strong, shared commitment to continuing improvement among the staff.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	B	B	B	very good A
reading	B	B	B	good B
writing	C	C	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

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

Pupils and students achieve well throughout the school and in most subjects. All pupils make good progress over time regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnicity. Progress is consistently good and often very good in the key skills of communication (speaking, listening, signing and gesture), reading and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Progress is satisfactory in writing and religious education (RE) and varies between satisfactory and good in science. It is good in all other subjects, including mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils and students in Years 10 to 14 achieve well in appropriate, nationally recognised, accredited courses. The school has improved its procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do and it is now possible to set measurable individual and class targets. Such targets are met in most cases and when they are not good analysis is carried out to find out why.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They enjoy school and most of them try very hard. Pupils with different learning difficulties are equally enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Most pupils behave very well and do not imitate their less compliant peers. A small number of pupils present significant challenging behaviours. In most instances, these pupils are managed well and this results in minimal disruption to learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and are the basis for the good atmosphere for learning in the school. Some pupils respond well to opportunities to take on simple responsibilities. However, for many pupils their learning difficulties are so severe that taking responsibility and showing initiative are extremely difficult.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average for a school of this type. Given the medical needs of many of the pupils this is a very positive statement about the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

Nearly a 100 lessons were seen and the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all of them. Teaching was good, very good or excellent in over three-quarters of the lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The most important difference is that, although some satisfactory lessons featured common weaknesses, there is now no unsatisfactory teaching and there was a high proportion in 1997. The school meets the needs of different groups of pupils equally well including those with SLD, PMLD, ASD, challenging behaviour and sensory impairments, such as visual impairment (VI). In particular, staff successfully minimise the effects of the accommodation and promote racial harmony.

The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The key skills of communication and literacy, including speaking, listening, the use of signs and symbols and reading and the key skills of numeracy are taught well. The teaching of science is good overall but is less consistent. Teaching and learning in ICT are good and improving. The teaching in PSHE is very good. This is based on a few lesson observations in PSHE and citizenship and the important contributions made by lessons in all other subjects, lunchtime and personal hygiene programmes, inclusion activities, educational visits and extra-curricular activities.

Because all staff work very well together and teachers' knowledge and planning is predominantly good, pupils are motivated to learn, concentrate well and at times persevere for long periods. Where learning is only satisfactory this is because some staff are not as effective at managing difficult behaviour or because some teachers do not provide enough variety in the long lessons common in the school timetable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and modified to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Statutory requirements are met but in some respects national guidance is followed too rigidly. Very good procedures enable educational and social inclusion. There are good links with mainstream schools and colleges and good developing arrangements for teaching mixed groups in the school itself.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school meets the specific needs of pupils with EAL well. The school promotes racial equality very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. The school is very effective in developing the pupils' knowledge of themselves and others and is successful in promoting awareness of the diversity of the local community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The formal procedures for the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils meet statutory requirements and are good overall. Day-to-care care is very good. The arrangements for academic assessment are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school has clear, laudable aims. It is very successful in meeting them because the headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and the senior management team are rapidly developing effective systems to take account of the views of all staff, governors, parents and, where possible, pupils.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The school benefits from the support of an effective governing body. The governors are highly committed to school improvement. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are extensive and effective procedures for self-evaluation. The school development plan contains appropriate priorities although it is rather unwieldy. There are clear links between the school's targets and its good arrangements for staff development and performance management.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of available finance including specific grants such as Standards Funds and funding for pupils with EAL. Very good use is made of available staffing and the accommodation.

The accommodation is inadequate. Staffing and resources are satisfactory overall. However, the school has a barely adequate number of teachers and the range and quality of learning resources has a negative impact on pupils' progress in several subjects. The school applies the principles of best value very well by, for example, comparing its performance with that of similar schools and seeking the views of parents and staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded 95 per cent or more think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school has high expectations; their children likes school; the staff are approachable; they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on; the teaching is good; their children are making good progress. 	<p>Of those parents who responded 23 per cent think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their children do not get the right amount of homework. <p>A small percentage of parents think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school does not work closely with them.

The vast majority of the parents who responded have very positive views of the school. The inspection team agrees with their positive views and finds that the school is predominantly successful in its working relations with parents. The inspectors share parents' concerns about the arrangements for homework. The school's policy on homework is not clear enough and day-to-day practice is inconsistent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Achievement is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils and students achieve well throughout the school and in most subjects. Pupils and students in Years 10 to 14 achieve well in nationally recognised accredited courses for young people with special educational needs (SEN). All pupils make good progress over time regardless of age, gender, ability or ethnicity. This is because the school meets the needs of different groups of pupils well including those with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), challenging behaviour and sensory impairments. It is to the credit of the staff that they minimise the effect of the shortcomings in the accommodation and learning resources on the pupils' and students' progress. Furthermore, there are very good arrangements for educational and social inclusion, both within the school itself and in mainstream schools and colleges, and the school promotes racial equality very successfully.
2. Progress is consistently good and often very good in the key skills of communication, which for the pupils attending this school include speaking, listening, signing and gesture. This is because the school gives a very high priority to the key skills of communication and very good attention has been given to training staff in Makaton signing. The use of picture cards, symbols and pictorial timetables is consistently good and it is improving with pupils with ASD. This results in pupils having a good understanding of school routines and lesson objectives. The most able students in the post-16 department are confident speakers who contribute to class discussions well and readily engage in sensible conversations with visitors. Progress is also good and often very good in reading. Few pupils develop sufficient skills to read books independently. However, all pupils make good gains in accessing information and deriving pleasure from stories through high quality adult support and the good use of signing and symbols alongside text. Progress is satisfactory in writing and the more able post-16 students acquire the basic skills to write their names and addresses and fill out simple forms with support. Writing is an area which the school is giving a high priority in its current development plan.
3. Progress is good and often very good in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and, particularly in the secondary department, citizenship. This is a key indicator of the effectiveness of a school of this type because pupils' achievements in their personal skills are the bedrock of their success in all other subjects. All pupils make very good progress in personal hygiene and social interaction in accordance with the degree of their physical and learning difficulties. The more able pupils do well when learning about the wider aspects of society such as rights and responsibilities. Pupils with ASD, who have particular difficulties understanding relationships, make good progress because they are sensitively encouraged to consider the needs and feelings of others.
4. Progress varies between satisfactory and good in science and it is satisfactory in religious education. It is good in all other subjects, including mathematics and ICT. The implementation of the national Numeracy Strategy has resulted in more consistent progress in the key skills of number recognition and simple calculation including working with money and time. Pupils make good gains in acquiring scientific knowledge and the more able pupils in the secondary department are beginning to understand the basic principles of scientific experimentation and investigation. In ICT, pupils make good gains

in understanding and using computers and other modern technology devices. For example, the most able pupils use a digital camera and video recorder and pupils with PMLD use a range of special switches to operate devices which produce different lights and sounds effects.

5. This positive picture of pupils' and students' achievements arises from the following aspects of the school's work:
 - good leadership and management by all key staff;
 - good teaching, characterised by very good pupil-adult relationships and exemplary teamwork by all adults in the school;
 - good opportunities for pupils and students in Years 10 to 14 to follow nationally recognised and accredited courses for young people with learning difficulties;
 - improved procedures for assessing what pupils know understand and can do mean it is now possible to set measurable individual, class and whole-school targets. Such targets are met in most cases and when they are not good analysis is carried out to find out why.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and learning, involving themselves fully in all the activities provided. They enjoy coming to school and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They respond positively to their teachers and always try to give of their best. By the time the pupils reach the secondary stage of education, they are capable of communicating their ideas. For example, in an art and design lesson, pupils were able to express moods through colour and texture of paintings. Pupils with SLD integrated successfully and effectively with those with PMLD. The youngest pupils in the school have sound independent learning skills and these are very good by the time they become students, preparing them well for leaving school and adult life. This is achieved in basic, practical ways such as encouraging pupils with ASD to change their shoes and socks before entering and leaving the sensory areas.
7. Behaviour throughout the school is good and there are good management skills employed by most teachers in the classroom. The vast majority of parents agree that behaviour is good and that the school is helping their children become mature. Teachers maintain very good relationships with their pupils and have high expectations of behaviour in class. Pupils are taught right from wrong. There are some pupils, throughout the school, who have specific behavioural difficulties and these individuals are supported consistently well in accordance with their individual behaviour plans (IBPs). Procedures to ensure the orderly movement of pupils around the school and good behaviour in the dining hall are effective. The school has adopted the good practice of organising activities in the playground at lunchtime. This is proving to be very successful in promoting social development and in ensuring that pupils can be fully occupied if they choose to. Although occasional minor disputes break out these are quickly and efficiently dealt with by teachers or lunchtime supervisors. In these ways, the school successfully promotes good racial harmony and bullying and racism are not issues. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year.
8. Pupils' personal development and their relationships with one another are good. Pupils respond warmly to visitors and co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. Both younger and older pupils can be relied upon to sensibly carry out monitor duties in the classroom and around the school such as returning registers to the school office and helping in the dining hall. Some pupils with PMLD are successfully integrated into classes containing pupils with SLD and this enhances their personal development and

achievement. The school has a clear strategy to increase such opportunities. Students are able to attend residential courses and local colleges and there are a number of organised clubs for pupils and students to attend.

9. The school's attendance rate is very good compared to similar schools. It is currently well above the national average and has improved steadily since the last inspection. Considering the high proportion of pupils with medical conditions this is a very positive outcome. Pupils nearly always arrive on time to school and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. Teaching is good overall. This is the case throughout the school with a slightly stronger profile at Key Stage 4. Nearly 100 lessons were seen and the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all of them. Teaching was good, very good or excellent in over three-quarters of the lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The most important difference is that there is now no unsatisfactory teaching and there was a high proportion in 1997. The school meets the needs of different groups of pupils equally well including those with SLD, PMLD, ASD, challenging behaviour and sensory impairments, such as visual impairment (VI).
11. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The key skills of communication and literacy, including speaking, listening, the use of signs and symbols and reading, and the key skills of numeracy are taught well. This is because the school has implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and makes good provision for the pupils' specific communication and learning difficulties. Makaton signing is used well in most classes and in some this is extremely good. It is also used at other times such as assemblies and lunchtime. In addition symbols are used extensively alongside written text in books, teacher presentations and classroom displays. This enables pupils to understand the content of lessons and communicate with adults and their classmates increasingly successfully. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9, who have great difficulty understanding the complexities of written text, quickly understand and use symbols for fast and slow in a scientific investigation of the effects of exercise on the body.
12. The teaching of science is good overall but is less consistent than it is in English and mathematics. Teaching and learning in ICT are good and improving because the school has identified this as an area for improvement and is taking effective action with support from the LEA. The key skills of ICT are now developed well through discreet lessons in the use of computers and the use of other modern technology and devices, particularly with pupils with PMLD. Many examples were seen of ICT being used in other subjects. This is invariably effective in consolidating the pupils' ICT skills and supporting their learning in other subjects, such as mathematics and geography. A particularly good example was seen in a Years 9 to 11 lesson about Mother Theresa, which was timetabled as English but clearly made extremely good links with religious education and ICT.
13. The teaching in PSHE is very good. This is based on a few lesson observations in PSHE and citizenship and the important contributions made by lessons in all other subjects, lunchtime and personal hygiene programmes, inclusion activities, educational visits and extra-curricular activities. PSHE has a very high priority and in broad terms is second only to communication within the curriculum.

14. The most significant strength of the teaching is the exemplary teamwork of all adults who work with pupils. This includes teachers, classroom support staff (both qualified nursery nurses and teaching assistants) and additional personal support assistants and lunchtime staff who help with feeding programmes and personal hygiene. There are many other adults working in the school with pupils. These are variously employed by the school, LEA and health authority and include educational support and advisory staff, physiotherapist and assistants, speech and language therapists and assistants and nurses. All these staff work very well together causing minimal disruption to lessons. All classroom staff know the pupils very well. Teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and lesson planning is predominantly good. Consequently, pupils are motivated to learn, concentrate well and at times persevere for long periods.
15. Some satisfactory lessons, and even some judged to be good overall, featured common weaknesses. For example, some staff, particularly teachers who have previously worked in mainstream schools, are not as effective as others at managing difficult behaviour. This was noted, for example, in a Years 4 and 5 religious education lesson. The school's timetables are structured in such a way that many lessons are very long. In some cases this works well because teachers plan a variety of learning situations and activities and deliver them at a good pace maintaining the pupils' interest and involvement. Good examples of long lessons that featured a wide variety of activities and sustained pace were seen in a Years 8 and 9 science lesson and a Years 7 to 10 history lesson. However, some teachers do not provide enough variety in these long lessons and have over ambitious objectives for particular groups of pupils. This leads to pupils losing interest and the quality of learning is reduced. Examples of long lessons that did not work so well included a Years 6 and 7 mathematics lesson on shapes and Years 1 and 2 science lesson on human senses.
16. Homework, including home-school diaries and therapy programmes is satisfactory. However, its effectiveness in involving parents and extending and consolidating pupils' learning is lessened by some inconsistent use. The school is aware of the problem and is currently reviewing and clarifying its policy and practice.

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

17. The curriculum provision is good. The school provides a broad and balanced range of worthwhile learning opportunities, which meet pupils' and students' diverse intellectual, physical, medical, sensory, therapeutic and personal needs well.
18. It is a good curriculum because it emphasises pupils' personal and social skills, and develops their knowledge, skills and understanding in the important areas of communication, application of number, and more recently, ICT. Later, as pupils move into the post-16 department, the curriculum emphasis changes appropriately to that of independent living skills, the use of the community and self-advocacy. A key strength of the curriculum is that it is socially inclusive in its organisation and relevance. It ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and students, including that of attending different mainstream settings. It is also a good curriculum because pupils and students are offered appropriate opportunities for accreditation through several recognised courses. These are ASDAN Towards Independence, National Skills Profile, Equals 'Moving On' and Accreditation for Life and Living. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements, as all pupils follow the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It is an effective curriculum because, through its work-

related education including careers guidance and college links, it prepares pupils and students successfully for life after school.

19. There have been significant improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection. In particular, there have been improvements in curricular planning and co-ordination, so that for all subjects there are at least satisfactory, and mainly good, policies and schemes of work in place. Teachers now know what to teach and when to teach it. Through training, whole-school literacy and numeracy strategies are more deeply embedded and impact positively on standards. There has been considerable improvement too, in the teaching of ICT as a discrete subject and in its use in support of other subjects. Supporting these developments have been good improvements in assessment procedures and data analysis. Good assessment practices now monitor pupils' progress, inform planning and result in more accurate target setting in the pupils IEPs. In turn, this enables class and whole-school targets to be set and comparisons to be made with the performance of similar schools. In addition, the curriculum is now better resourced, if only to a satisfactory standard in most subjects. It is monitored satisfactorily through teachers' planning, pupils' work and records and through classroom observations.
20. In spite of these improvements and a considerable amount of time and effort spent on curriculum reviews, there are still some areas for development. These are concerned with the length of some lesson times and the wholesale adoption of QCA guidelines in some subjects without sufficient differentiation of the content and pace to match pupils' needs. Examples of less effective differentiation and overlong lessons with too much content having a negative impact on pupils' progress and achievement were found in science and music for example.
21. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good. An annual audit defines the nature of each pupil's special needs and ensures that the curriculum has an appropriate balance. Specific resources, staffing and strategies are put in place to ensure full access and success. Co-ordinators effectively oversee the additional curriculum provision for pupils with ASD, PMLD or sensory impairment. They initiate training, monitor resources, and liaise with a wide range of support staff and services. These include physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, nurses and the LEA services for the hearing and visually impaired. In addition, a range of staff within the school have developed particular expertise through training and visits and this contributes to the overall high quality of provision and care. For example, a Makaton tutor holds regular training sessions to maintain the effective level of signing within the school. All staff have been trained in moving and handling techniques and in behaviour management (SCIP), by the school's own trainers.
22. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. The experiences provided outside the classroom are used well to reinforce and extend the statutory curriculum. During four lunchtimes a week, for example, a wide range of well-planned creative activities and clubs is provided. Registers show that take up is good. These include such activities as wheelchair dancing, swimming, yoga and make-up and personal grooming. In addition, many pupils and students go on residential trips to such places as Blackpool and Euro Disney, evening trips, for example to see the 'Walsall Lights', and a summer drama school. There is a high demand from parents for such trips but the sudden growth in pupil numbers has meant that not all can attend. All these experiences link well with the very good provision for PSHE and provide real opportunities for pupils and students to develop valuable personal and communication skills. Together, they make a good contribution to pupils' physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

23. Provision for PSHE and careers education, including sex education, drug misuse and aspects of citizenship, is very good. It contributes to pupils' positive attitudes and sense of being valued and belonging. There is a comprehensive programme in place. It is taught in discrete lessons and, notably, the planned personal hygiene and feeding programmes. Additionally, informal aspects of PSHE permeate the whole curriculum, through high expectations and very good relationships during lessons, the high quality of care, positioning and handling, and through the constant and positive interactions of staff with pupils and students.
24. Work-related education, including careers and guidance, is good. Pupils and students are prepared well for life after school. There are good links with the specialist Careers Service (Connections). A careers officer attends the 16-plus transitional reviews and provides on-going support from this point onwards. When the time comes for students to leave school, there is careful, joint planning with the student and parents to consider the options of post school provision. For most students, the social services department, health authority and further education services meet post-school needs, and these services are identified within the transition plan. Careers education, through the ASDAN scheme, focuses on developing students' independent skills within the community, mobility and self-advocacy. Students' opportunities to learn about the world of work through actual work experience are limited. However, the most able have a one-week placement, for example, in ASDA and Morrisons supermarkets. There is a small careers library with appropriate guidance and relevant computer software.
25. The school has very good links with the community. Visits to local places of interest, including religious and historical, involvement in local projects and the regular use of community facilities such as shops and the leisure centre, add richness and relevance to the curriculum for all pupils. People in the community visit school and share their interests and skills. The local community supports the school financially and in particular supports the annual prize-giving event. Local businesses provide some work experience placements for students. In turn, the school provides work experience for pupils and students from other schools and colleges. Pupils are encouraged to think of others, and over the years they have raised and donated funds to the MacMillan Trust, Compton Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital. Through use of the Internet, pupils have opportunities to link with other pupils, families and schools in this country and in Europe.
26. Links with local schools and colleges are good overall. The staff take good care when inducting new pupils and families from schools or nurseries all over Wolverhampton. Strong inclusion links have been built up and maintained with the local infant, junior and secondary schools. The school enjoys good relationships with other special schools in the area, including a joint project with one and post-16 links with another.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

27. The school has made a sound and significant start on meeting the needs of pupils with EAL and provision is now good. A member of staff has been appointed to co-ordinate this provision and to provide learning support specifically for Punjabi speakers who comprise the largest group of pupils with EAL within the school. The school has worked hard to obtain additional funding to provide the translation skills necessary to communicate with the parents of refugee children. The LEA's EMAG service helps to assess pupils' level of language need and to offer advice on teaching and resources. Resources for pupils with EAL are good.

28. The Punjabi-speaking support assistants' role in keeping in touch with parents in their own language and ensuring that details about pupils' welfare and progress are thoroughly explained is of great value to the school. In a school where communication is a problem for the majority of pupils anyway, this is a significant and important part of the work. Occasionally, in classroom situations, support assistants speak to pupils in their home language, which helps to clarify learning situations.
29. The school is currently making a big investment in providing training for all staff on the various cultures represented by pupils and students. This initiative is contributing well to the development of the school's inclusion policy as well as to promoting aspects of cultural development, to the benefit of all pupils.

Educational inclusion

30. The school is fully committed to extending pupils' and students' curriculum opportunities and social development through individual inclusion programmes. This provision is extremely good and highly effective because of the way it is managed, organised, put into practice, and evaluated. All pupils are assessed in terms of their personal and social needs, and the overall quality of their responses to other pupils is analysed. As a result, pupils who can benefit from inclusion opportunities are identified and individual programmes are put into place for this targeted group. These programmes may involve only internal arrangements, such as pupils with PMLD being included in lessons alongside pupils with less profound difficulties. However, the school is equally committed to searching out opportunities for externally based inclusion programmes for pupils and students through their attendance at local mainstream schools and colleges. Consequently, one pupil is following a foundation GCSE course in French at a local high school, whilst small groups attend a neighbouring primary school for music, art and design and physical education lessons. A good link has been established with Dudley College where the more able students go for one morning a week and benefit from specialist teaching using additional tools and resources, as well as the social experience of being in a larger environment.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

31. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Spiritual development is good. No whole school assembly was seen during the inspection. There are planned moments every day when pupils pause for reflection and prayer, such as before lunch, and this provides a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on their own values and beliefs. Visits to places of worship, such as the Gurdwara, help pupils to recognise the purpose and value of worship within a community. In lessons, the development of spirituality is not always well promoted. However, a strong aspect of the school's contribution to developing spirituality is its commitment to creating an ethos where pupils can flourish, develop and be respected. All staff demonstrate their concern to accommodate differences and respect individual integrity. Pupils are valued, whatever their difficulties, and teaching styles promote an atmosphere where pupils can make connections between different aspects of their learning and find space to consider their own thoughts and concerns. Parents' views included comments that weekly assemblies are an important celebration of pupils' achievements, both personal and educational, and the annual prize-giving day is a highlight of the school calendar.
32. Provision for moral development is very good. The school provides a clear framework for behaviour, which is promoted consistently in classes and at other times. This helps pupils to learn how to behave appropriately in a range of situations. Staff provide

excellent role models in their relationships with each other and with pupils, and provide pupils with good examples of respect, fairness, honesty, kindness and tolerance. As far as possible, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and decisions, and the making of choices is often a priority target in IEPs. Racial and religious equality are promoted well in day-to-day interactions. However, occasionally opportunities to encourage reflection on the rights and wrongs of particular situations, such as war or persecution, are not fully exploited.

33. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. The senior management team and other staff work hard to foster a sense of community with common, inclusive values. Equal opportunities are promoted well at all times. Inclusion opportunities, in other schools and college, widen pupils' experience of different settings. The many residential visits and trips provided give pupils an opportunity to develop independence and social integration. In classes, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively. Throughout the school, pupils take on responsibilities such as carrying the registers to the office or helping to prepare and tidy rooms for lessons or other activities. These activities help pupils to develop maturity and confidence.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors as well as by activities such as the summer school, which gave pupils the opportunity to explore drama as a vehicle for expression. Visiting artists help pupils experience creativity, such as making an attractive mosaic. The curriculum, particularly in subjects such as English, art and design, history and religious education, helps to widen pupils' experience of their own culture and gain a glimpse into others. The school's strengthening resolve to intensify its multi-cultural provision is helping to prepare pupils for life in the pluralist society in which it is based, to address racism and promote equality. It will be improved by promoting greater awareness of language, artefacts, display, culture and customs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS AND STUDENTS?

35. The pupils' wellbeing, health and safety are very high priorities. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and day-to-day pastoral care is very good. The school's policies and procedures for ensuring and maintaining pupils' and staffs' health and safety are sound. Formal written risk assessments of potential hazards in and around the school are undertaken regularly. A number of aspects regarding the accommodation and resources have been drawn to the attention of the headteacher and governors, to urgently pursue with the LEA.
36. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The staff are fully aware of the procedures to be followed when pupils are ill or have accidents. Satisfactory procedures for child protection are in place and all staff are aware of the routines to be followed if a pupil is believed to be at risk. A senior member of staff has recently been appointed the designated person for child protection and works closely with the nursing staff employed at the school.
37. The school's procedures for promoting good discipline and behaviour are very effective. The school has a clear and consistent approach to managing the behaviour of pupils. This ensures that good behaviour is achieved in class and at lunchtimes and playtimes. All the staff undertake training in behaviour management and behaviour generally is subject to wide consultation with parents particularly when preparing IBPs. Incidents of poor behaviour are recorded and dealt with swiftly and effectively. There is no record of any racial incidents occurring. Teachers make very good use of rewards to celebrate good achievement and behaviour.

38. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Unexplained absences are followed up on a daily basis and there is good liaison between the school and escort staff who accompany the pupils from their homes to school on LEA provided transport. Registers are kept well and meet statutory requirements. Close links are maintained with the educational social worker.
39. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good throughout the school. The staff know the pupils well and any areas for development are identified quickly and addressed by teachers and additional support staff, such as nurses and physiotherapists. When personal targets are set these are shared with the pupils and parents concerned. The school works closely with external special educational support staff and other agencies.
40. Procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can do are good. Teachers know pupils well and show good levels of awareness about their personal and academic achievements. There are effective systems in place to identify how well pupils achieve, particularly in relation to their individual targets in their IEPs. These identify specific, measurable targets in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. Because these targets are well monitored, pupils' progress is clearly measured as they move through the school. New assessment procedures were introduced last year and are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of information that is available. Class profiles have been established so that whole-school targets for improvement can be set. These were mostly achieved last year and where they were not careful analysis was carried out. Assessment procedures are particularly good in mathematics, where an audit of pupils' levels of attainment is helping staff to measure progress accurately from year to year. The moderation of achievement in mathematics across year groups and key stages has ensured that accurate information is carefully collated and linked to improvements in teaching and learning. There are also very good procedures in ICT and art and design. However, the school has not yet achieved consistent high quality practice in all subjects. Accreditation at Key Stage 4 and post-16 is good, with key skills, ASDAN and ALL modules offered as appropriate.
41. The use of assessment information to inform the next stage of teaching and learning is also good. It is best within the IEP structure, where prior assessments are used well to set new targets and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' achievements. The use of assessment in lessons is satisfactory. Teachers evaluate how each lesson went, but do not always make specific comments on individual pupils' progress. This sometimes makes it difficult to pitch the next lesson at an appropriate level. However, teachers subject responses to pupils' individual targets from their education plans, do indicate achievements and progress. These are monitored well and used appropriately as part of the annual report to parents, which provide good, thorough information about progress over the year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The partnership between school and parents is good overall and continues to be strong since the last inspection. There are very high levels of parental satisfaction. The majority are very happy with the quality of education and care the school provides and the pupils' achievements. Parents agree that the staff and headteacher are approachable and accessible. Parents feel that any concerns that they have will be listened to and acted upon. The inspection findings confirm the parents' views that homework is inconsistent across the school.

43. The involvement of parents in school activities is satisfactory. Some parents help on school trips and most attend consultation evenings. There is no parent-teacher association but there is a voluntary committee made up of representatives of local organisations, who raise funds for the school. This enables the school to provide additional resources. Although a small number of parents have helped in school in recent years, at least three of them have now become members of staff. One support assistant, who is a parent, provides good assistance to those families who come from ethnic minority groups and who have EAL. Although most parents and carers give good support to their children at home, not all parents do enough to help their children with homework and liaise with the school.
44. The information the school provides for parents is good. Information includes a class diary for all pupils to enable a dialogue to take place between individual teachers and parents on a weekly basis. The school prospectus and the annual governors' report are informative, comprehensive and meet legal requirements. Pupils' IEPs are reviewed every school term. There are very good opportunities for parents to participate both by making written comments and attending the formal meetings. Annual pupil reports are comprehensive and detailed. However, they do not always provide clear enough information about individual pupil progress in the non-core subjects.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Leadership and management are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. Appropriate action has been taken to address the areas for improvement identified in the previous report and most significantly to eliminate the high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching at that time. The school has clear and laudable aims and these are very successfully met in daily practice. This is because the headteacher provides strong and effective leadership resulting in a clear educational direction to the work of the school. The senior management team, which includes some relatively new staff to the school, are rapidly developing effective systems to evaluate the work of the school and take effective action to improve identified areas of relative weakness. These systems include a clear commitment to take account of the views of all staff, governors, parents and, where possible, pupils. All members of the leadership team have a teaching commitment. Policies are in place for all aspects of the school's work and, with the exception of homework, reflect day-to-day practice well. There are good policies, in particular, for educational and social inclusion and racial equality. In these ways, leadership provides a clear educational direction to the work of school and there is a strong commitment to continuing improvement.
46. The school has experienced some long-term staff absences and redundancies in the past two years. There is no evidence that this has had a direct, negative impact on pupils' progress. However, this situation alongside changes in senior staff has resulted in a reduction in opportunities for subject leaders to observe their colleagues teaching in the past couple of terms. The school is very aware of the value of key staff engaging in this form of subject monitoring and there is clearly a commitment to enabling this practice as often as possible. In other respects, such as the monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, subject leadership is good. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the leadership group is good and the school has benefited from helpful monitoring visits carried out by LEA personnel.
47. The school benefits from the support of an effective governing body. Governors meet frequently both as a full body and in their various committees. They have taken a

balanced approach in their liaison with the LEA. They have consistently and appropriately expressed their concerns about the school's funding and the limits it has placed on their ability to improve staffing, accommodation and learning resources. At the same time, the governors and headteacher are appreciative of the support the LEA has provided in relation to curriculum developments. For example in ICT, monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and supporting pupils with particularly challenging behaviour and learning difficulties. The governors are highly committed to school improvement. Statutory requirements are met.

48. There are extensive and effective procedures for self-evaluation. Careful analysis of pupils' attainment and progress is carried out and targets set for individual pupils, classes and the whole school. The school development plan (SDP) contains appropriate priorities and guides the work of the school, although it is rather unwieldy. There are clear links between the school's targets and its good arrangements for staff development and performance management. This includes training in Makaton signing, moving and handling pupils with physical difficulties as well as developing teachers' subject knowledge and classroom skills. There are very good arrangements for the induction of new staff in the school and for informing staff of current initiatives and changes, particularly at key times such as the start of a new school term. The school is involved in graduate teacher training. This is a very positive aspect of the school's work and is unusual in a special school.
49. The school currently has a licensed deficit budget agreed by the LEA's finance section. National comparative data for special schools indicates that current funding levels are good. However, this is not a straightforward comparison. The LEA has made additional funding available in the last year because it has recognised that the school has a high proportion of pupils with very profound and challenging difficulties and deficiencies in the accommodation and learning resources. The LEA is carrying out a full review of how it funds its special schools. The school's financial planning is good and closely tied to its targets and priorities in the SDP. The senior management team and governors make good use of available finance including specific grants such as Standards Funds and funding for pupils with EAL. Day-to-day administration and financial management are very good and ensure smooth running of the school. Very good use is made of available staffing and the accommodation. Premises staff make an important contribution by maintaining the appearance of the building to a good standard and, for example, carrying out improvements to storage facilities. Difficulties have been experienced with vandalism and appropriate and effective steps have been taken to improve school security. The school applies the principles of best value very well by, for example, comparing its performance with that of similar schools, nationally and locally, and by systematically and regularly seeking the views of parents and staff. All of this suggests that the school has been under-funded historically.
50. The accommodation is inadequate. This is largely because of the age and design of the building. These difficulties have been exacerbated by the increase in pupil numbers generally and of those with PMLD and ASD specifically. In spite of the best efforts of the staff, the accommodation presents significant difficulties of access and space for these pupils. The school has carried out good improvements within the financial constraints and there are some good aspects. For example, the student common room and food technology facilities in the post-16 department, the shower facilities in the secondary department and the provision of a separate sensory room and additional sensory areas in the classes for pupils with PMLD. However, some unsatisfactory aspects of the accommodation clearly have a negative impact on learning. Access to the hydrotherapy pool and multi-sensory room is problematic at all times and it is poor when staff are having to move the older, bigger pupils and students. Also, the lack of specialist rooms

for science, design and technology, art and design and music has a negative impact on learning, particularly for secondary aged pupils. The current ICT suite is not the most effective use of available space and equipment. Facilities outdoors are not good enough for the staff to promote pupils' physical development and environmental studies to best effect. Some classrooms are too small for the current class groupings and the learning difficulties of the pupils in them. With the current school population, the school will find it very difficult to improve this particular issue without significant building work and re-organisation.

51. Staffing is satisfactory overall. Nationally available data suggests that the school has an adequate number of teachers and good number of support staff. However, the school has a high proportion of pupils with PMLD and a very high proportion of pupils with severe medical needs. Therefore, the national data needs to be interpreted with great caution. Consequently, this inspection finds that the school has a barely adequate number of teachers.
52. Resources are satisfactory overall and have improved since the previous inspection. Teachers generally make good use of resources within the school and very good use of facilities within the local community. Displays enhance the learning environment by celebrating pupils' achievements and stimulating their interest in learning. However, resources have a negative impact on pupils' learning in several subjects.
53. Taking into account the pupils' achievements, the effective leadership and management of available finance, and the quality of teaching, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The headteacher and governors should now:

(1) As time and finances permit, and in close consultation with the LEA, improve the accommodation by:

- improving access to the hydrotherapy pool and multi-sensory room;
- improving the provision of facilities outdoors;
- improving the facilities for practical and technical subjects, particularly in the secondary department;
- planning building modifications and re-organising class groupings so that learning is not restricted by the size of classrooms.
(paragraphs 1, 49, 50, 64, 86 and 121)

(2) As time and finances permit, and in close consultation with the LEA, improve learning resources in all subjects, and thereby consolidate pupils' progress, giving priority to:

- more age appropriate reading resources in the secondary and post-16 departments and school library;
- provision of specific materials and devices to maximise the involvement of pupils with PMLD.
(paragraphs 1, 19, 49, 52, 64, 73, 79, 96, 101, 111 and 121)

55. The headteacher and governors should also consider the following minor points:

(1) Improve the arrangements for homework by:

- reviewing the school's policy and practice so that appropriate homework is provided for all pupils and students and parents have a full understanding of what is expected both of their children and themselves;
(paragraphs 16, 42 and 45)

(2) Following the outcomes of the LEA's ongoing review of its funding arrangements for pupils with SEN, review the school's staffing and, if possible, increase the number of teachers or support staff.
(paragraph 51)

(3) Improve learning opportunities and teaching by:

- reviewing the length of lessons and making sure a wide variety of activities is included if the longest sessions are retained on the timetable;
- maximising the matching of tasks to pupils needs, particularly those with PMLD and those with ASD, without compromising their entitlement to the national curriculum;
- providing more opportunities for all subject co-ordinators to observe their colleagues teaching and discuss their findings.
(paragraphs 15, 19, 20, 40, 41, 46, 79, 96, 101, 111 and 128)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	28	39	21	0	0	0
Percentage	6	30	41	22	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	96
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

Please note that, at the time of the inspection, 12 pupils were being 'tube fed' by nursing staff due to medical conditions. This table, therefore, equates to 45.2% of pupils being eligible for free school meals.

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9

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

Achievements of pupils and students

Pupils and students in Years 10 to 14 are entered for various nationally recognised courses. In 2001/02 achievements were:

Number of pupils or students entered	Accreditation	Level	Modules entered	Modules achieved
4	NSP	First	15	15
8	OCR – ALL	First	16	16
13	OCR – ALL	Introductory	86	86
13	ASDAN Towards Independence	Network 'B'	46	46

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	66	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.1
Average class size	7.4

Education support staff: Y1 – Y14

Total number of education support staff	32
Total aggregate hours worked per week	978

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1,266,118
Total expenditure	1,257,067
Expenditure per pupil	13,688
Balance brought forward from previous year	-50,030
Balance carried forward to next year	-40,970

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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 = 64%

Number of questionnaires sent out	96
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	25	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	59	36	0	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	3	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	33	16	7	25
The teaching is good.	67	28	0	2	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	25	3	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	20	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	21	5	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	23	0	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	38	0	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	26	5	0	11

Other issues raised by parents

Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate serious concerns raised by one or two parents about aspects of the care of pupils and communication between home and school. On the contrary, inspectors agree with the majority of parents who have positive views on these matters. Furthermore, the questionnaire return rate of 64 per cent is very high.

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

ENGLISH

56. There has been significant improvement in the provision for English since the previous inspection. Then, progress for all pupils was satisfactory. It is now good overall and often very good. Previously, there were, 'limited opportunities to systematically help pupils practise literacy skills in other subjects'. Now, there is good use of literacy across the whole curriculum. During the current inspection teaching was good overall, often very good and occasionally excellent. This is a very great improvement on the last report, when a quarter of lessons was judged unsatisfactory.
57. All pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Younger pupils, and now those in the early years of secondary education, have benefited from the good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to listen carefully to stories, join in with reading, comment on parts of the text and answer questions. Daily discussion ensures that all pupils take part fully in oral aspects of lessons. Where pupils have complex communication difficulties or a range of very significant learning problems, classroom support staff are used exceptionally well to maximise the communication opportunities through the spoken work, song, sign and symbol. Because teachers use so many channels of communication, all pupils have the opportunity in every lesson to hear stories, take turns in discussions and express ideas and feelings as appropriate. Teachers and classroom support staff work as a very effective team in every class, using humour, challenge and encouragement to draw ideas from the pupils. Adults act as good role models for speaking and listening, reinforcing turn-taking skills by accepting answers when spoken and using sign, gesture, symbol and touch to ensure the clearest possible interaction and understanding. The pace of lessons is usually good and staff ensure that every pupil has a fair share of both adult time and the many and varied experiences that the English curriculum affords.
58. The concentration on communication, speaking and listening provides a good basis for work in the later years. Pupils at secondary level and post-16 students have gained great confidence in speaking to the whole class; they greet visitors maturely and express ideas and views clearly and well. Where communication is very difficult, the close and committed relationship between staff and pupils ensures that the smallest gesture, smile or frown is addressed and respected as that pupil's contribution to the lesson. Staff demonstrate very good skills in this area. Thus, in a literacy lesson for older pupils about Mother Theresa, the teacher built very well on pupils' previous learning. The concept of 'old' was developed well by contrasting video camera images of the pupils with a photo of Mother Theresa herself. The main part of the lesson consisted of some pupils, with Mother Theresa masks, being interviewed by their peers. The questions and responses were recorded, often by the pupils themselves, on Dictaphones and digital cameras. Every pupil participated at an appropriate level. In this way, pupils whose language skills range from 'beginning to communicate intentionally' to 'link up to four key words, signs or symbols' demonstrated mature skills of social communication. They gained effective understanding of a major world figure, and this is very good preparation for participating in the adult world.
59. Progress in reading is good throughout the school. In this context 'reading' often comprises the understanding of how a book works, what a story is and how pictures or symbols link to words. This is the result of some very effective initiatives and the good

emphasis placed on reading throughout most subjects. The development and very good regular use of the Makaton sign system has provided all pupils with access to books at their own level. Many pupils, of all ages, experience close one-to-one storytelling with a classroom support assistant. Others become involved in more complex activities, such as reading the symbols that are used as a 'parallel text' in many of the storybooks. Within the literacy sessions, there is good use of big books and all classes have reading boxes that allow pupils a free choice to handle, investigate, read and listen to stories. Within this school population only a few pupils move on to formal reading without symbol or adult support. Those who do, show an enthusiasm for text and a wish to discuss stories and move from the beginning to the end of a book. They understand the conventions of page order and print direction, that pictures support the text and that individual words have a meaning and sound. Other pupils develop an understanding that print is for both enjoyment and information. They listen and respond to text in pictorial or written form and understand that signs and notices carry important meanings. The very good implementation of the use of symbols in every class and the developing links between signs, symbols and speech have reinforced this enjoyment and the understanding of reading.

60. In the previous report it was noted that pupils did not have enough opportunities to experience reading in a 'a variety of contexts'. There has been good improvement in this area. The inspection team was impressed with the use of sign, symbol and traditional print in all subjects. All ICT lessons seen reinforced basic vocabulary such as names, addresses and a few key words. In an excellent Year 3 food technology lesson the class was read 'The Giant Sandwich' prior to making toast. The vocabulary of 'bread', 'sandwich', 'corned beef' and 'toaster' were all introduced and emphasised in appropriate ways. In a very good Year 10 lesson on recycling, the staff used signs and symbols frequently, including, 'electricity', 'stop', 'look', 'listen', 'glass' and 'plastic'. This cross-curricular use of language skills has ensured that reading key subject vocabularies reinforces the concept that print has meaning and that signs and symbols have important roles in daily life as well as in stories.
61. The quality of literacy teaching of pupils with PMLD is characterised by one excellent lesson seen in the primary department. The lesson related to 'The Owl and the Pussycat'. Each member of staff had a storybook and a bag of objects. They read in unison and introduced each pupil to, for instance, the owl (a fluffy toy), the money (a bag of real coins), and the moon (a lamp that switched on and off by touch). Superb staff teamwork meant that, although pupils were receiving medical and feeding assistance during the lesson, everyone followed through the story and had a rich experience through the full range of senses. Touch (feeling the furry cat), smell and taste (smelling and eating real honey), sight (watching the stars as a torch picked out metallic star shapes in front of them) and sound (strumming guitars) were all employed to maximum effect. To round off the lesson the pupils found themselves under a blue silk ocean when staff sang the owl's song and the pupils threw their own objects into the sea. The lesson had lasted 40 minutes. This small group of pupils with PMLD had benefited from an extremely deep and rich experience of this gem of English literature.
62. Writing is an area that the school continues, rightly, to see as one for development. Pupils' and students' achievements and progress are satisfactory. The work of the post-16 students demonstrates that early skills are built up well, with some students becoming independent at the early stage of formal writing, such as name, address and phone number. Other students show a continuing difficulty in expressing themselves in print. Throughout the school considerable work has been carried out with ICT symbol programmes, with a range of writing and tactile experiences and with regular co-ordination exercises. In a good Year 2 lesson, the class worked together on recognising

and experiencing objects beginning with 'i'. They then moved into small groups where staff worked on activities from formal letter formation to very basic touch and movement. In this way a formal literacy activity was used, appropriately, for the full range of pupils, supporting hand control for some, letter writing for others. The plenary at the end of the lesson saw the teacher using the computer well to recap on the letter sound pictures, which had been converted into a software programme. More work of this sort can still be carried out, especially of a tactile nature, to enhance the skills of the more able pupils.

63. The work of the English and literacy co-ordinator has contributed considerably to the good developments over the past few years. She has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well. Resources have been developed as well as the limited budget has permitted. In addition she has ensured that the initiatives in sign, symbol, objects of reference and ICT have been mobilised to move standards forward in English. There have been very good developments of accredited schemes with post-16 students, where English has been linked well to the world of work. She now has good support from a communication co-ordinator, who has a sound action plan for auditing the use of communication in the school and building on the good work already carried out.
64. Resources are still limited and the budget is not adequate to fulfil the programme for such a wide range of complex needs. The school meets the needs of different groups of pupils and students well, such as those with SLD, ASD and PMLD. However, this is often achieved through the imaginative use of the available books and resources rather than the school having enough to easily make effective provision. This is particularly the case with older pupils, where the more adult requirements demand the purchase of appropriate teenage materials. In addition, the size and configuration of classrooms are not adequate to fully deliver the National Literacy Strategy. Although there has been effective work carried out on the library, by some learning support staff in particular, the facility is still not adequate to support basic book usage and reference skills. The school currently does not have a resource where students can learn how to use a library, browse among books for recreation or have access to spoken or video materials that reinforce work in class.

MATHEMATICS

65. Achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school. The introduction of aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. There has been good improvement in the provision and in achievement since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and their full inclusion in lessons is a real strength.
66. Numeracy skills are developing well and have improved since the previous inspection. This is due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Because of this, daily numeracy time is helping pupils to practise and consolidate basic number skills. Good staff training has ensured that lessons are planned and taught well and that pupils' progress is measured regularly. Many pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in Years 7 to 9, pupils have used a stopwatch to time how long it takes to make a piece of toast. They have then used ICT to present their findings. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 apply their skills well in literacy and ICT. They collected data about holiday transport and presented it as a bar chart on the computer. They have also used their number skills in design and technology to weigh and measure ingredients and resources. They have, for example, shared a pizza by

cutting it into quarters and a few are beginning to tell the time. At post-16, number skills are applied to everyday activities, such as creating shopping lists, estimating costs and recognising coin values.

67. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress and achieve well overall. They develop their number skills as a result of the good quality numeracy lessons. Pupils with PMLD explore a range of tactile objects when learning to interact with toys and find missing ones. They benefit from clear, specific targets and appropriate resources by, for example, interacting and touching objects while adults count them. Pupils with SLD and ASD are beginning to count to three accurately and to recognise some numerals. They enjoy their numeracy activities and show good levels of interest in their work. More able pupils count objects to five and recognise more than two items as a group. Others are beginning to understand the concept of counting and identify objects by pointing or gesturing.
68. In Years 3 to 6, pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Those with PMLD develop their fine motor skills and visual awareness through exploration of multi-sensory resources. Bright, shiny objects catch their attention and help them to focus, follow and reach out to touch. More able pupils with SLD and ASD begin to solve simple problems and make decisions using real money. Many of them recognise a few coins and give a 1p or 2p coin to an adult on request. They show good levels of enthusiasm in their tasks as they work hard to succeed. They benefit from good quality numeracy activities, which are helping them to improve their number skills through consistent, repetitive practise on a daily basis.
69. In Years 7 to 9, the good progress continues and pupils develop their mathematics skills through a wide variety of appropriate activities. Pupils with PMLD benefit from high levels of support as they learn to explore different textures, shapes, sizes and weights. For example, in one lesson they played a game with giant balloons when learning about 'big' objects. They had fun and showed good levels of participation in the game. Pupils with SLD and ASD develop their understanding of shapes through finding, matching and naming three-dimensional shapes. They find different shapes hidden around the room, and identify ones that are 'the same shape'. More able pupils develop good mathematical language as they focus carefully on identifying the number of faces, edges and corners of a cube. They undertake simple problem-solving activities to find out how many faces a cube has. They follow instructions and work together well for long periods of up to 20 minutes. An appropriate range of resources is used well to keep them interested.
70. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well. Those with SLD make good progress. They count to 20 orally, recognise some numbers and know many of the coins to up to £1. The most able pupils recognise numbers to 100 and are beginning to estimate the weight of given items, and make reasonable suggestions when, for example, saying which ones are heavier than others. They take part in these weighing activities sensibly and use their existing skills well to read the scales. However, the lack of a large dial meant that it was very difficult to see the numbers and this reduced their independence in completing the task. Less able pupils work with classroom support assistants practising counting to ten. For example, in one lesson, they were making soup. They counted ten carrots into a bowl, enjoying the practical nature of this task. The pupils with more complex difficulties and with PMLD learn very well in lessons due to the high quality of the teaching. The very good multi-sensory approaches enable them to make simple choices and parachute activities, for example, stimulate them to look up. However, over time, their achievement is only good because their retention of information is limited by their very severe learning difficulties.

71. Post-16 students undertake accredited modules and develop mathematical skills that will help them in everyday life. For example, they learn to recognise, say and order the days of the week, and use this information to discuss the work of the day. They count regularly to ten or 20 as appropriate to determine how many students are in the class today and how many want lunch. They regularly give out books and resources to each other, learning that they must give one piece of equipment to each student. Students are encouraged to use the language of number on a daily basis and staff frequently ask questions such as, 'Who is sitting next to you?' They learn well through a good, practical approach. Pupils with PMLD make good progress in learning to interact with adults and objects. Well-focused activities, high quality teamwork and use of multi-sensory resources enable these pupils to concentrate, look and explore. The use of darkroom activities for students with VI is a strong feature of the teaching, and enables them to interact very well with the environment and increase their understanding of objects. The effective use of good quality switches and devices stimulates and maintains the students' interest and develops their understanding of cause and effect.
72. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good across the school. Some very good teaching was seen in Years 1 to 6 and the post-16 department and there was some excellent teaching in Years 1 to 6. Teachers know pupils well and set very specific numeracy targets in the IEPs. Every mathematics lesson is planned in relation to these targets and this is a real strength of the provision. Very effective teamwork and the high quality of the work of classroom support assistants is a particular strength and every pupil receives the help that they require to learn successfully. Well-focused questions and the effective use of resources also support the good acquisition of skills. Pupils are managed well and benefit from very positive relationships with adults in all areas of the school. Occasionally, the available time is not used to best effect and this is a minor weakness in the teaching. Sometimes pupils are kept sitting for too long with not enough to occupy them. Too much turn taking sometimes reduces the pace of learning and inhibits the amount that each pupil achieves. At these times, the quality of learning is reduced.
73. Leadership is good and has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Particular strengths are in the monitoring of pupils' achievements and in the whole-school approach to improvement. Because of this, good evidence of pupils' progress is regularly collated, analysed and reported on. This is allowing the school to set challenging targets and to show good progress over time. Assessment procedures are very effective and are used well to support learning and gather information about pupils' achievement. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is also a strength. The approaches and teaching styles of the strategy which ensure regular, daily practise in number skills, is having a major impact on pupils' ability to improve. Some good multi-sensory resources are used, particularly for pupils with PMLD, to help them focus and enjoy their activities. However, resources across the school are only satisfactory and, sometimes, the lack of appropriate resources for a task reduces the quality of learning in those lessons. The school has recently improved its resources for shape, space and measures, but there are, for example, too few ICT resources to further support the development of numeracy in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.

SCIENCE

74. Overall, pupils achieve well in science. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching and pupils' progress was limited. Pupils now make good progress in developing their

knowledge of the living and physical worlds and are developing understanding of scientific investigations and the skills required to carry them out.

75. During their time in the primary department, pupils begin to develop a growing understanding of themselves and the world around them. They begin to record what they have seen and done, such as cutting out pictures of plants and animals, sticking them down, and overwriting their names. Such activities help them to appreciate the differences between living and non-living things. They examine physical processes such as light and electricity. By the age of seven, pupils know the simple characteristics of different materials, such as whether they bend or stretch, through exploring play-dough and elastic. They demonstrate understanding of push and pull forces when they operate switches to turn light sources on and off, and experiment with different components to make simple electrical circuits. Eleven-year-olds with SLD and with ASD know about simple life-cycles and understand that some illnesses are caused by microorganisms whilst injuries occur as a result of accidents. The more able pupils respond to instructions, like observing the differences between liquids and solids, and are at the very early stages of making predictions before carrying out investigations. Pupils with PMLD experience the properties of different materials through activities like painting over pictures they have drawn using wax crayons. The tactile and sensory nature of the garden gives them opportunities to experience some of the features of living things.
76. As pupils move through the secondary department, the science curriculum places an appropriately increased emphasis on simple investigative work. The most able pupils know the names of internal organs and systems of the body, like the skeleton and the positions of organs such as the lungs and heart. They consider the functions of organs and bodily processes through experiments that investigate, for example, the effects of exercise on their heartbeat and breathing rate. They understand that there are similarities and differences between living things and they confirm this by collecting and recording data about themselves, such as the size of their hands. Pupils use equipment such as microscopes correctly, and manipulate smaller items like electrical components when making a simple circuit. Pupils with more PMLD are provided with a variety of experiences and simple, specific scientific vocabulary. They respond to these experiences, such as the contrast between hot and cold water and which foods they prefer, by facial expression and eye movement.
77. Post-16 students study science through the 'Equals Moving On' programme, and have additional opportunities to develop scientific understanding through the modules of the ASDAN accredited course that they follow. For example, they learn about the requirements of a growing plant by looking after hyacinth bulbs they have planted.
78. Teaching is good overall across the whole age range and there are no differences in the quality of teaching of pupils with different special needs. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. Lessons are characterised by very good relationships and highly organised planning and preparation. Teachers provide a variety of carefully chosen activities and demonstrate skilful classroom practice that promotes effective learning for all pupils. The teachers' classroom management skills and effective teamwork with classroom support staff allow them to provide learning experiences that build on pupils' existing knowledge by extending and reinforcing ideas. As a result, pupils achieve well and have a good understanding of what they are required to do. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and academic performance and, therefore, pupils are presented with situations that challenge them by extending their scientific understanding and knowledge. For example, these features of high quality teaching enabled a class of mixed-age pupils with ASD to make very good progress in developing their investigative skills when working with circuits. The teacher balanced

direct teaching with carefully targeted, challenging questions such as ‘What’s missing?’ and ‘Why isn’t it working?’ that required pupils to apply their knowledge. In addition to developing pupils’ scientific language, teachers also take opportunities to reinforce and extend pupils’ numeracy and literacy skills. This aspect of teaching was demonstrated well when the teacher of a class of pupils with SLD used prior work on the recording of pupils’ hair colour to develop the idea of how data can be handled and presented in different ways. Similarly, the concepts of same and different were promoted equally well by the teacher and classroom support staff when a class of students experienced a variety of wigs and hair products whilst examining similarities and differences between themselves and others.

79. The management of science is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to special education but has extensive experience of managing the subject in mainstream schools. Learning resources are satisfactory, but improving, following an audit carried out by the subject co-ordinator. However, the structure of the science curriculum and some aspects of whole-school curriculum management have an adverse effect on pupil progress in science. Timetable arrangements mean that some lessons are far too long, particularly for pupils with PMLD, and the content and activities provided by teachers are sometimes over ambitious, lacking in variety and not matches closely enough to the pupil’s needs and abilities. This is because, although the subject curriculum is now broad and balanced, the school’s long-term planning mirrors too closely that recommended for mainstream pupils. In addition, arrangements do not currently permit the subject co-ordinator to monitor the teaching of science across the school as has been the case in the past and is acknowledged by the school as good practice. It is worth repeating that pupils achieve well in spite of these identified shortcomings.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Overall the quality of provision is good, with many very good features. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their skills through an exciting range of activities that extends across the whole curriculum. Evidence from past work shows that these pupils have used paint, texture, clay and card to express their ideas in paintings and collage work. However, due to the high level of adult support and instruction during lessons, it is not possible to make a reliable judgement on the level of pupils’ independent learning from these examples of work. Pupils enjoy showing their drawings to others but have very limited language to express their feelings about their experience.
81. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to make good progress. They show in-depth thought as they make choices, and work very hard. For example, in one lesson four pupils joined a class in a local primary school where they had to draw a hand and examine its various features. These more able pupils showed mature interaction with their mainstream peers when discussing their drawings. They used a magnifying glass and other resources to see the features of their own hand and to make comparisons with others. They worked hard in small groups and were successful, to a limited extent, with the help and guidance of the support assistants. In this respect, art and design plays a significant role in the implementation of the school’s inclusion policy.
82. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve very well, benefiting from the high quality teaching and provision. Lesson observations and scrutiny of past work show that pupils are able to recognise the different dimensions of doors and windows and to use photographs to identify different areas within the school. Pupils draw, cut and paste different materials together and then decorate and paint them. The most able experimented, combined,

selected and manipulated the range of colours they used. Less able pupils benefited from high quality guidance and help.

83. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow an ASDAN course module and by the age of 16 achieve satisfactory standards. The school uses guidance from a variety of sources to make suitable provision for pupils and students with PMLD in Years 10 to 14. A good lesson with post-16 students involved the investigation of themes such as the expression of emotions through colour. Pupils with PMLD were given more practical tasks and used their hands to draw designs. The multi-sensory approach used is very successful in promoting high quality experiences in which these pupils develop their skills well. Pupils with PMLD successfully participated in mixed groups.
84. The quality of teaching is very good. This judgement is based on three lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. Teaching is planned well and pupils' work is regularly assessed and evaluated to show what elements have been covered and what are the major strengths and weaknesses. This information is used well to plan what the pupils will learn next. In every lesson the planning provided challenging work, which met the needs of all the pupils in the class.
85. Art and design techniques are used particularly well to support and illustrate other areas of the curriculum. This was seen in the very good presentation of pupils' work throughout the school, displayed in the entrance hall, corridors and classrooms. These displays relate well to cultural activities, such as the Chinese Moon Festival, and work in history, for example the life and times of Henry VIII. This stimulates pupils' interest as well as creating an attractive and welcoming atmosphere in the school. The school has funded visits by two local artists. A number of pupils participated in the construction of an attractive mosaic of a seafront. Pupils also worked very successfully on digital art using modern technology. Some of the original work from this project was exhibited in the local art gallery. Pupils participated in an art project during the summer school. A colourful display of this work has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. This is another example of the contribution of the subject to the school's inclusion policy.
86. The policy and scheme of work aim to promote the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of all pupils and students. The scheme of work takes account of the difficulties of the increasingly complex and varied need of the pupils that are now admitted to the school. The school supports the co-ordinator in her professional development and values highly her work in the school. She provides support and guidance for other members of the teaching staff and monitors the teaching throughout the school. The co-ordinator also has an overview of the resources available, which are satisfactory. The school has no designated art room and, particularly in the secondary and post-16 departments, this has a negative impact on pupils' achievements in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. Achievement is good overall, with a number of very good and excellent features. Pupils make satisfactory or better progress throughout the school in relation to their prior learning and abilities. Pupils are presented with tasks that progressively help them to build on their skills and improve their control of materials, tools and techniques.
88. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching is related to the class topic and is closely connected with other areas of the curriculum, for example literacy and numeracy. In this way basic language and number skills are reinforced. Pupils' work show that they are able to make simple things with the help of the teacher and the support assistant. These tasks involve cutting, painting and assembling. In Years 3 to 6, one excellent lesson in sandwich making challenged the pupils in a number of ways. The pupils were given a choice of what sandwich to make, had to choose what they needed, and learnt how to make them. The lesson contained elements of literacy and numeracy as well as developing skills in handling knives and other cutlery. In another very good lesson, in a Year 5 class of pupils with PMLD, a sensory approach stimulated the pupils and their interest was sustained during the whole session. They were able to touch and taste various ingredients used to make bread.
89. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 designed their own boxes to hold sweets. More able pupils chose a suitable price for a box of sweets. In another lesson, in a class with a number of pupils with severe behavioural difficulties, chocolate biscuits were made successfully. In both these lessons stress was placed on improving the pupils' communication skills in addition to enhancing their manipulation skills. Emphasis is placed on the importance of hygiene when handling food and also on the importance of preserving food safely. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards accreditation through the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' course, one module of which is 'Food Preparation'. Pupils have to prepare and serve a meal. In the post-16 department students extend this to include the purchasing of the ingredients necessary to make a meal.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall. It varies from satisfactory to excellent. In the excellent and very good lessons pupils developed skills of investigation, questioning the teacher and support assistants regarding different aspects of the task. The more able pupils were challenged to explore materials and to refine their designs. Pupils are eager to learn and attentive. Their behaviour was very good in the majority of lessons. Pupils are given the opportunity to work independently and in the majority of instances are happy to do so. There is a very high level of valuable adult support and interaction but sometimes this reduces pupils' opportunities for independent learning. Lessons are carefully planned with a variety of strategies and approaches, which fully extend the pupils. Teachers regularly assess the pupils' work. As a result, future plans are drawn up to provide continuity in the pupils' learning. Scrutiny of pupil's work shows a steady progress in understanding and development of skills throughout the school.
91. Teachers use design technology well to promote learning and make links with other subjects, particularly speaking and listening, as well as making a contribution to the development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, making and painting a model as part of the Chinese Moon Festival gave the pupils an insight into a different culture. In history, the model of the clothes worn by the wives of Henry VIII developed pupils' insight into changes of life-style over time. Very good use of ICT in a Year 10 class had a significant impact on pupils' learning. The teacher used an overhead projector and pupils used a computer to record prices and a digital camera to record their progress. As a result, the pupils were highly motivated. Pupils were given a high level of individual support with various tasks using the

computer for their designs, selecting materials for their chosen project and choosing colours for their paintings.

92. The co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject for a short period of time and the co-ordination of the subject is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator is, however, well qualified and has appropriate plans for development. The policy and scheme of work have clear aims and objectives and these have a positive impact on pupils' achievements. There is no design technology room and as a result work with resistant materials is carried out in classrooms, although there is no evidence of this having a significantly negative effect on pupils' progress. There is a good area for food studies in the post-16 department and a very small area in the primary department. Resources are satisfactory overall and easily accessible to all the teachers.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

93. The majority of the humanities lessons seen were in history. The school operates a rolling programme of history and geography lessons, and, for the majority of classes, history was the current topic at the time of this inspection. Both subjects share the same co-ordinator and lessons are planned to the same framework, with QCA documentation forming the basis for the subject curriculum.
94. Pupils make good progress in humanities throughout the school and the subjects overall show good improvement since the last inspection. In history, pupils in Years 3 to 6 begin to show that they can sequence the growth and development of a person from birth to adulthood. They recognise how artefacts, such as kitchen equipment, change over time. Other pupils respond well when studying events like the Great Fire of London and some compare modern and Tudor clothing. Older pupils engage positively in re-enacting the Civil War or considering what it was like to be Royal. In the limited amount of geography seen, pupils made good progress in their understanding of what it is like to experience a hot climate.
95. There is some very good teaching in history, especially of pupils with PMLD. Teachers use a wide range of multi-sensory stimuli, as for example, when simulating the Great Fire of London, using a tape to create the appropriate sounds, fibre-optic and torch lights with cellophane to create the brightness of flames, and a fan heater to demonstrate heat. In other lessons, real items, such as old-fashioned kitchen equipment, are used to show how domestic objects have changed over the years and pupils were also given the opportunity to sequence real photographs. In geography, pupils benefit from hearing about a classroom support assistant's trip to Australia and, from her hot-weather clothing, understand what the climate is like. In the best lessons, teachers focus very precisely on what they want to teach, managing successfully to combine the demands of the subject syllabus with individual IEP targets, such as encouraging pupils to indicate choices or eye-point their responses. Classroom support staff make a very positive contribution to lessons, participating actively in drama and role-play and reinforcing the language targets for the session. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond very positively to the work offered.
96. The subjects are effectively co-ordinated and staff are well supported in planning and resourcing their lessons. However, the overall level of resources in the subjects is poor, and there is a lack of artefacts and large photographs which would help to clarify and enrich pupils' understanding. Occasional museum loans make a valuable contribution to lesson presentation, and the curriculum is enriched with visits to relevant places in the local environment and further afield for both history and geography. The co-ordinator

recognises the need to improve resources and sees this as a priority. There is currently no monitoring of teaching, but lesson plans are regularly checked and discussed and the co-ordinator has begun to compile a useful portfolio of annotated work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

97. Provision is good overall. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They always make at least satisfactory, often good and occasionally very good progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding of ICT. This good progress applies equally to all groups of pupils, including those with PMLD, those with ASD and those with EAL. It is as a result of effective teaching characterised by good planning, seamless support and teamwork, appropriate use of resources and the willingness of staff to incorporate ICT into their lessons. This represents a good improvement on the findings of the previous report when teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory and ICT did not feature in support of other subjects. A scrutiny of pupils' and students' work confirms that this good progress is sustained over time. Older pupils and students are accredited in ICT through the ASDAN 'Moving On' course and the National Skills Profile.
98. During Years 1 and 2, pupils with PMLD develop an awareness of how things work and how they can control their environment to produce a desired effect. In the multi-sensory room they learn to make consistent and intentional movements to press, squeeze, push and pull a range of carefully selected switching devices to change the colours of the lights. They respond with sustained pleasure to these cause and effect experiences. They make good progress because the room is carefully prepared beforehand. Timely interventions by the teacher and support staff ensure all pupils are engaged. Challenging questions, for example, 'How can we get these fibre-optics to work?' encourage pupils to explore and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make very good progress in learning to combine text and graphics by adding symbols and text to pictures and photographs. A particularly strong feature of this lesson was the exceptionally good teamwork of teachers and support staff and their shared commitment and high expectations of learning. This ensured that all pupils were fully involved and maintained on task. Good use of questions such as 'Is it the same or different?' made pupils think and observe carefully. Positive interactions throughout, with encouraging comments, like 'Good looking, good listening' contribute to an enjoyable and purposeful ethos. Very good support, such as the teacher working with individual pupils and providing 'hand on hand' prompts, ensures they make good progress in acquiring basic keyboard skills.
99. Pupils in Years 7 to 11, continue to consolidate and extend their understanding as they build on prior learning. Pupils in Year 9 make very good progress in learning how to use a video and microphone to make a film of their classmates. Pupils are highly motivated by the activity, attend carefully and take their responsibilities for filming seriously. The erratic behaviour of two pupils with ASD was managed well so that their learning and the learning of others was not interrupted. A good plenary assessed progress and understanding. The teacher asked pupils, 'How could we improve our filming for next time?' and a support assistant gathered their ideas for use next time. Post-16 students explore information from various sources, showing they know that information exists in different forms, for example, digital cameras, video and floppy disks. They make good progress because the teacher has secure subject knowledge and manages their behaviour with ease and confidence, but in an adult way. Great emphasis is given to students in allowing them choice and in encouraging them to work independently. Students with PMLD visit the multi-sensory room where they follow instructions, for example, 'Turn on the red switch', and develop an understanding of cause and effect.

100. The use of ICT in other subjects is good and demonstrates teachers' growing confidence and competence. Many examples were noted during the inspection. Particularly good use is made of the digital camera to record pupils' progress and achievements across the school. In English, Year 2 pupils used the 'Clicker' programme to put 'i' words in context and to reinforce the sound of the word and, in Year 3, a 'Big Mac' switch was used to record pupils' responses. In Year 9 mathematics, ICT was used to support pupils' understanding of shape. In Year 10 religious education, very good use was made of a video camera and dictaphone to record interviews on a topic on 'Mother Theresa'. In geography and history pupils used an interactive map and the Internet to reinforce their knowledge and understanding. In a post-16 PSHE lesson, good use was made of the inter-active whiteboard to help students identify rules and conventions associated with photographs.
101. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator, who has a clear view about how the subject is to develop. He acknowledges the very good and consistent support the school has received from the LEA. The school has adopted the QCA ICT schemes of work and is currently reviewing its appropriateness in meeting the varied and complex needs of pupils and students. Long-and medium-term planning is good and there is a systematic approach to skills development. ICT is taught in discreet lessons and in support of other curriculum areas. The co-ordinator monitors how well the subject is covered by monitoring teachers' planning, pupils' and students' progress, and by supporting teaching in the classroom. Assessment procedures are much improved and targets for ICT are being included in pupils' and students' IEPs. All but the most recently appointed staff, have received NoF training, which has contributed to the improved teaching. Staff also receive training from the co-ordinator, for example, in how to use the new inter-active whiteboard effectively and in using 'Symbols 2000' for reading and writing. Resourcing for the subject is satisfactory and improving. The accommodation is unsatisfactory in two respects. The ICT suite is not the best use of the restricted space in the school and has largely outdated equipment. Access to the multi-sensory room is problematic and it is not fully equipped to enable all pupils to interact with the various devices in it. Both these matters are appropriately under review. The school's very positive targeting of ICT as a priority in its action plan and the onset of funding to purchase carefully considered equipment is highly appropriate.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

102. Provision for the teaching of modern foreign languages has improved since the last inspection. French is now taught weekly to a group of more able pupils in Years 7 to 9. An enthusiastic Year 10 pupil attends the local secondary school three times a week where he participates in a GCSE class and is expected to pass the examination along with his mainstream peers. Other pupils in Years 10 to 14, have some opportunity to study and experience French or another culture as part of the accredited courses. These latter courses were not observed during the inspection, but photographic and other evidence shows that the experiences are enjoyed and valued by pupils and that they enrich pupils' learning opportunities. The French curriculum within the school is carefully structured and follows the Certificate of Secondary Language Learning Course accredited by the Birmingham Comenius Centre. The course is appropriately designed to meet the needs of Green Park pupils, and offers a useful framework for teaching.

103. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They exchange simple greetings and identify basic foods. They copy write the words of newly learned vocabulary and read them aloud. Pupils are better at recognising and responding to words and phrases than at initiating their own questions and dialogue, but they enjoy their work thoroughly and concentrate well.
104. Although the teacher in charge has limited subject knowledge, she makes very good use of her skills in teaching pupils with learning difficulties. For example, she uses Makaton to support understanding, and devises numerous games and activities to reinforce and consolidate learning, whilst at the same time maintaining pupils' interest and concentration. The course is planned well and enables pupils to build on what they already know within a structured programme. However, insufficient use is made of ICT.
105. There is a lunchtime club attended by pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school organises study and social trips to France and thereby creates opportunities for pupils to experience the French way of life. Resources are adequate and the support of learning assistants helps pupils to master tasks such as copying writing, which might otherwise present difficulties.

MUSIC

106. The last inspection report was critical of the 'restrictive' nature of the curriculum, which prevented pupils making progress. The curriculum has improved significantly since then. It is now rich and staff are beginning to develop it in an independent way to meet the needs of particular pupils. All pupils learn well in lessons and make good progress over time.
107. In the primary classes, teachers use a combination of skills, plan appropriately and are ingenious in their use of restricted resources. Classroom support staff work together well, using good teamwork and often a high level of musical ability, to enrich the lessons and ensure equality of involvement for all pupils. In some cases talented support assistants take the lesson and deliver good and very good teaching. Three lessons are used here to exemplify the good teaching.
108. A good upper primary lesson started with pupils being introduced to the characters involved in 'Peter and the Wolf'. This was done by the use of speech and sign, together with cut-out puppets. The teacher then told the story, with individual pupils using their instruments to demonstrate the character from the story. After a short break, the class listened to the CD and performed with different instruments. The standard of support and modelling was good from both teacher and classroom support staff. There was clear enjoyment from all pupils and one or two, including a recently arrived child with significant reasons for unhappiness, showed a high level of enjoyment and progress. However, the length of the afternoon session was too long and this is a negative aspect of timetabling that reduces the overall enjoyment and learning.
109. In a parallel lesson for pupils with PMLD, the class took part in musical activities sitting in a circle. The lesson was an exemplar of sensory teaching. A wide range of objects was used, including sticky tape, plastic bricks, mirrors and scents to reinforce the words of the songs. The teacher used very good sensory techniques to convey both rhythm and meaning to pupils who had the most complex medical and educational difficulties. During the lesson, one pupil was tube fed. This was carried out with great sensitivity by a member of the additional support staff. Throughout the lesson, time was allowed for pupils to absorb their learning and for staff to monitor independent actions.

The lesson ended with the excellent use of a candle to mark the end of the day. Here as elsewhere in the school, music was used to mark key points in the day and provide another, enjoyable, channel of communication. Currently classes for pupils with PMLD follow the same, weekly curriculum units. This is not appropriate and does not provide adequate time for real learning development to take place.

110. A good secondary music lesson saw pupils being asked to beat rhythms on every surface they could find in the classroom. A discussion followed about 'loud' and 'soft', 'fast' and 'slow' and the mood of different beats. The teacher then linked this work to a previously seen video. The physical experiences that the pupils had had allowed them to respond more effectively to the video as they provided sound effects for a creeping tiger and marching elephants. This lesson summed up much of the music teaching at Green Park. It provided a fun experience, while developing basic musical skills. Teaching was good in its use of language and symbol. The pupils retained a lot of what they had learned and were able to report back on the lesson to visitors over lunch.
111. Although music has developed well, there are some aspects that currently limit further progress. The co-ordinator has managed the subject well, but does not now have enough time to take the subject further. Assessment procedures are not as consistently applied as in other subjects. Resources, very much enhanced since the last inspection, are still not adequate to support this subject, which is a vital channel of communication for pupils. The co-ordinator and staff have discussed the development of topic-based resource boxes to support the curriculum and this has a lot to commend it. Time will be needed if this planning is to further enhance what is already a subject that enriches school and pupil life.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

112. Provision for pupils' and students' personal development is very good and, consequently, they achieve very well. There are discreet lessons in PSHE throughout the school and good regard has been paid to the most recent national guidance and requirements for the teaching of citizenship in the secondary department. The accredited ASDAN and ALL courses, which are central to the learning opportunities offered in the post-16 department, are nationally recognised and include a substantial number of work units and modules related to the skills of daily, adult life.
113. Teaching and learning are very good. This judgement is not simply based on a small number of lesson observations in PSHE and/or citizenship. It is supported by evidence gathered throughout the time that inspectors spent in the school. For example, the very good individualised programmes for feeding and personal hygiene very effectively promote the personal development of pupils of all ages with PMLD. Laminated place mats with these feeding programmes on them are an effective way of reminding staff familiar with the particular pupil or informing those who are new to them. Personal support assistants help pupils with their hygiene needs whilst causing minimal disruption to lessons. This is typical of the exemplary team working among all adults working in the school, which contributes to all pupils PSHE in all lessons and at other times.
114. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were good overall within the range very good to satisfactory. Lessons are planned and prepared well and provide good opportunities to reflect on their personal qualities and the nature of society at large. A very good Years 10 and 11 citizenship lesson was part of a module of work on re-cycling. In the lesson the use of signing was high quality and clearly helped pupils to understand the content

well. The module as a whole was effectively developing pupils' understanding of environmental issues and properties of materials, providing very good links with work in geography and science. In a Years 6 and 7 lesson on rights and responsibilities the communication skills and social development of pupils with ASD was promoted well. All pupils made gains in their understanding of the feelings and needs of others. The more able pupils made some reasonable suggestions when asked to identify things that their classmates need special help with.

115. Two teachers, one of whom is a member of the leadership team, co-ordinate the school's provision for PSHE and citizenship very effectively. There is helpful guidance for teachers in their planning firmly based in national materials. The co-ordinators liaise very effectively with the classroom staff and all the other adults who work with pupils on a regular basis. There are good written and audio-visual resources. However, the school lacks other resources such as specialised dolls and puppets. The accommodation, particularly the student common room, food technology facilities and shower facilities, contributes positively to the personal development of the post-16 students.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and provision is good. Pupils of all ages, including those with PMLD, achieve well and make good progress. Pupils now benefit from a comprehensive, broad and balanced curriculum that is delivered through a variety of activities. The school's physical education programme acknowledges and meets the needs of more able pupils by giving them opportunities to acquire and practise new skills in ball games, swimming and outdoor activities. However, it also recognises the need to develop all pupils' mobility and co-ordination, particularly those with PMLD. Physiotherapy staff make a significant contribution to pupils' physical development in both hydrotherapy sessions and mobility lessons.
117. Primary aged pupils with SLD and ASD travel in different ways like running and jumping. The more skilful ones change speed and direction, such as moving forwards or backwards, and stretch and curl their bodies as they respond to verbal instructions such as stop and start. By the age of eleven, more able pupils climb steps, walk along a bench and crawl through a tunnel. Consequently, some pupils develop an increasing ability to respond to a series of instructions by combining these movements so that they work unaided and follow simple sequences of movements leading to very simple dance routines. Pupils also participate in games activities and, by this age, show improving mobility and confidence with the more able striking a ball with a bat quite well and stopping a ball when fielding. They run independently, perform standing jumps and throw a sponge discus. Pupils with PMLD experience activities that give them the freedom of physical movement without the support of aids such as splints, stands and chairs that they normally use. Therefore, with adult support they stretch up and reach down in response to music. Some pupils initiate movement without this support and roll over on a mat with minimal help.
118. As pupils get older, they extend their independent skills and their ability to work collaboratively with others. They also follow simple rules associated with PE activities. Therefore, by the age of 14, pupils with SLD and ASD show understanding of the terms 'push' and 'pull' as they discover ways of moving themselves around the floor. They work together in pairs rolling a large ball to each other and playing simple tag games, avoiding others as they run around the hall. By the age of 16, pupils are able to combine

many of these skills. They await orders to begin, helping to count down from three to 'go', and follow instructions such as running round a circuit laid out in the hall. Pupils are developing an understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies. They know that physical activities make them breathe quicker and increase their heart rate. In this way, good links are made with work in science.

119. The physiotherapist and physiotherapy assistants make a significant contribution to the physical education programme for pupils and students with PMLD. Hydrotherapy and mobility sessions focus on carefully targeted individual activities and, therefore, pupils are beginning to explore movement, demonstrate increasing awareness of their own bodies, and develop a growing concept of space.
120. Teaching is good overall. It was good or very good in all lessons observed. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils, and classroom support staff make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations and their energetic approach is reflected in their good use of praise and encouragement. Consequently, activities that match pupils' needs are used well to stimulate them and extend their learning, confidence and mobility. Lessons also make a significant contribution to pupils' communication and social skills as well as their acquisition of other basic skills such as numeracy and literacy. For example, the teacher of a class of 15-year-olds encouraged counting skills when pupils used a trundle wheel to measure a circuit. Their understanding of shape was reinforced as the teacher placed a different shaped marker at each corner of the circuit. The positional language of a class of primary aged pupils with ASD was consolidated equally well when the teacher used a Big Book. The pupils' knowledge of terms such as 'over', 'under' and 'through' was reinforced as they followed a simple movement routine.
121. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is newly appointed from a mainstream school and is at the early stages of developing a thorough understanding of working with pupils with SLD and PMLD. However, she is enthusiastic and has a sound foundation from which to move forward as good subject planning and assessment procedures are already in place. The co-ordinator does not currently have the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching, but the school is aware of this and is addressing the issue. The subject makes excellent use of opportunities to extend pupils' experiences through enrichment activities. They use local facilities such as the swimming pool, the indoor rock climbing face at the Molineux Centre and the dry ski slope at the Tamworth Snow Centre. Outdoor adventurous skills are promoted equally well through activities such as orienteering at Sedgeley Park and canoeing at Calf Heath. Relationships with other schools also contribute to developing pupils' social skills, such as team matches against other schools and involvement in bigger events like the Mini Commonwealth Games. In addition, the school provides pupils with the excellent learning opportunities through residential visits. Groups have been to North Wales, where they participated in a variety of outdoor pursuits, and last year a small group of pupils went trekking in Nepal when they also experienced white water rafting. The school's own learning resources are generally satisfactory, but there are deficiencies in the quality and quantity of resources for pupils with PMLD. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory and the hydrotherapy pool provides a valuable additional resource. However, the pool lacks electric hoists and the accommodation is very cramped. Therefore, the lifting and handling of pupils takes place under extremely difficult circumstances and potentially puts the health and safety of staff and pupils at risk.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. Achievement is satisfactory across all areas of the school. Some high quality visits to places of worship play a very important part in fostering pupils' knowledge and understanding. There has been satisfactory progress in the provision since the previous inspection. Pupils of different abilities all make satisfactory progress and benefit from the full inclusive provision.
123. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoy a practical approach to the subject. They study the life of Jesus, and take part in a range of dramatic representations. They learn about the importance of friendships and achieve appropriately as they work and share resources. Evidence from past work shows that progress is satisfactory at this stage.
124. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are beginning to understand the differences between the Christian and Muslim religions. They develop appropriate understanding of the difference between right and wrong, for example through listening to the story of Muhammad and undertaking role-play activities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are aware of the special events, artefacts and stories of Christianity. They were observed creating a class book about their own special journeys, using photographs they had brought from home. They made satisfactory progress in understanding the special journeys made by Jesus, and developed empathy with each other by sharing their pictures.
125. In Years 7 to 9, pupils continue to make appropriate gains in learning, and begin to link moral understanding and the importance of community values with their study of world religions. Through high quality visits to places of worship, they learn about sacred texts and beliefs. For example, during the inspection, they achieved high standards of empathy with the values and beliefs of Sikhism during a visit to a nearby Temple. They discussed, in a mature way, the ways in which beliefs affect people's lives. They benefited from this first-hand experience and the excellent teaching by developing, for example, their respect for individual differences.
126. In Years 10 to 14, pupils and students explore more sophisticated philosophical ideas and belief systems as part of the ASDAN course. They broaden their knowledge and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through participation in a range of experiences and celebrations of festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. Pupils with PMLD in Years 10 and 11 developed awareness of unfamiliar places as part of citizenship lesson. These pupils benefit from opportunities to reflect on their experiences in a quiet, candle-lit room. Pupils continue to learn about different religions and some more able pupils with SLD explain that both Sikhism and Christianity have special books and that a Creation story is common to these two religions. These pupils recognise and name many symbols of the Christian religion. Students in the post-16 department extend their knowledge and understanding by focussing carefully on everyday rules, symbols and signs and places they have been to. They learn to respect other people's privacy and develop their personal, social and moral skills through good role-play activities. By acting out social situations they develop a good understanding of their own place in the world.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is always satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Teachers prepare lessons well and make effective use of resources to keep pupils interested. This helps to motivate pupils and they generally work hard. Good questioning helps to remind them about what they have previously learned, and reinforces their knowledge. For example, in a Years 10 and 11 lesson, the effective questioning was a key feature in pupils' ability to remember the similarities and differences between religions. Teachers' subject knowledge is broadly satisfactory and this is complemented by visits, where expertise from outside the school supports high

quality experiences for pupils. At these times, very good levels of motivation and interest are fostered by the expertise, pertinent questioning and clear instructions. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well in most cases, although there are a few times when the lack of evident behaviour strategies for one or two pupils, affects the learning of others.

128. The co-ordinator is new to the role and leadership is in the early stages of development. Plans are in place to begin monitoring, but this has yet to have any impact on the provision. There is a good curriculum in place. It is linked closely to the locally agreed syllabus and provides good continuity from year to year and equality of opportunity for all pupils. Resources are good and this is a strength of the provision. A good range of artefacts has been centrally collected and catalogued and the good use of them has a positive impact on pupils' interest and willingness to learn. Religious education makes a very significant contribution to the pupils and students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, throughout the school.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASD	Autistic spectrum disorders
ALLA	Nationally recognized accredited programme for students with special educational needs
ASDAN	Professional body, which produces accredited courses for pupils and students with SEN, including the Youth Award Scheme and Towards Independence
EAL	English as and additional language
EMAG	Ethnic minority achievement grant
EQUALS	National guidance to help teachers, of pupils with SEN, with their planning
HI	Hearing impairment
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector(s)
IBP	Individual behaviour plan
ICT	Information and communication technology
IEP	Individual education plan
LEA	Local education authority
NC	National curriculum
NGFL	National grid for learning
NLS	National literacy strategy
NNS	National numeracy strategy
NoF	New opportunities fund – generally refers to teacher training for ICT
'P' scales/levels	Nationally recommended assessment procedures for pupils with SEN
PD	Physical disabilities
PECS	Picture exchange communication system
PMLD	Profound and multiple learning difficulties
PSHE	Personal, social and health education
QCA	Qualifications and curriculum authority (national body)
SDP	School development plan
SEBD	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties
SEN	Special educational needs
SLD	Severe learning difficulties
VI	Visual impairment