

INSPECTION REPORT

PENN HALL SCHOOL

Penn, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104417

Headteacher: Mr A Stoll

Reporting inspector: Mrs R Eaton
15173

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th March 2003

Inspection number: 249307

Short 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:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vicarage Road Penn Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV4 5HP
Telephone number:	01902 558355
Fax number:	01902 558363
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Giles
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
15173	Mrs R Eaton	Registered inspector
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector
14691	Mrs J Hall	Team inspector
19386	Dr T Watts	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	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' and students' 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	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	9
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	14
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	15

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Penn Hall is a school for girls and boys aged three to nineteen with physical disabilities. At present, 83 pupils attend the school, including eight children in the nursery and reception years and 13 post-16 students. Two pupils are also on the roll of mainstream schools, attending these for part of each week. The needs of the nursery- and reception-aged children are currently being assessed but the other pupils each have statements of special educational needs. In addition to physical disabilities, a small number have particular learning difficulties or sensory disabilities. In particular, 16 pupils have visual impairment, four have severe learning difficulties and two have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Nineteen pupils use voice output communication aids. The majority of pupils are wheelchair users. When they enter the school, the attainment of most pupils is well below average. About two-thirds of them live in Wolverhampton. The others are from neighbouring parts of the West Midlands. Pupils have a variety of different ethnic backgrounds, although the majority are white. Twelve are of Asian heritage. Thirteen pupils have English as an additional language, with Panjabi, Urdu, Italian or Chinese spoken by their families. Although it is a day school, Penn Hall has short-stay residential accommodation, able to take up to six pupils at any one time.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Penn Hall is a very good school with a number of excellent features. Pupils and students achieve very well, largely because the quality of teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's excellent leadership ensures that the school is a stimulating place in which pupils are challenged to achieve their potential.
- The physical education and sporting activities offered to all pupils are extraordinary in their range and quality.
- The programme of motor-based learning helps the youngest pupils' education get off to an excellent start.
- The curriculum is exciting, very relevant and well matched to pupils' ages and special educational needs.
- Teachers plan and organise lessons very effectively so all pupils make very good progress.
- The school works very hard and successfully to ensure that pupils are safe and happy.

What could be improved

- The lift used by pupils to reach the first floor of the main school is too small.

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 November 1997 when it was described as a 'very good school with some outstanding features'. Since then, in every aspect of its work, standards have either been improved or, in areas that were very effective, maintained. Previously good, pupils' achievement is now very good. Currently, teaching is very good or excellent in a far greater proportion of lessons. Pupils' attitudes to school remain very good and their behaviour is still excellent. Attendance and personal development have both improved well.

The school tackled systematically the issues arising from the previous report, making good progress in each of these. Other successful developments have included considerably improving the accommodation and providing a much broader range of activities outside lessons. All this good progress represents more improvement than might have been expected from such a very high starting point.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 14	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good A
reading	A	A	A	A	good B
writing	A	A	A	A	satisfactory C
mathematics	A	A	A	A	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

The school set very challenging targets for pupils to achieve in the 2002 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments. Many of these were met. Where they were not, this was frequently because the targets were not precise enough to register pupils' very small steps in learning. A more accurate scale of measurement is now being used. The targets are still demanding, but the progress of the lower attaining pupils is easier to track. Children, pupils and students achieve very well overall. The children in the nursery and reception years achieve very well in language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In Years 1 to 11, achievement is very good in English, mathematics, science, personal, social and health education and physical education. The oldest pupils and the post-16 students gain a variety of certificates and awards, up to GCSE level. Pupils with visual impairment or communication difficulties, the higher and lower attainers, those from ethnic minority groups and with English as an additional language all make progress at equivalent rates, because the school caters so well for their varying needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and taking part in lessons and activities. They try very hard to be independent and they relish the opportunities provided by the residential facility.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils are able to get on with their work and play a full part in leisure activities because others do not cause disruption or distraction.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils develop the skills they need for living and learning. Relationships with adults and other pupils are excellent. Pupils form firm friendships. Post-16 students provide younger pupils with excellent examples and are confident young adults.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the average for similar schools. Absences are invariably because pupils are ill or receiving treatment for medical conditions.

Pupils throughout the school are very sociable and enjoy each other's company. They support each other all the time. Post-16 students are very able to work independently and they make informed choices about their future lives. The majority of older pupils take part regularly in lunchtime and after-school clubs. Many are extremely enthusiastic competitors in games and sporting events, appreciating very well what it means to be a member of a team. Because the lift is so small, secondary-aged pupils are regularly late to lessons when these involve movement between floors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 14
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education are taught very well, as are the skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy. The school meets the needs of all pupils equally well. Work is matched very closely to what pupils need to learn next. Teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Lessons are planned and organised very well, so learning time is not wasted. Support staff make very strong contributions to lessons and pupils' learning. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to use computers in lessons across the curriculum. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Occasionally, homework tasks are too easy when compared to the work pupils do in class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. At each stage in their school life, pupils are provided with a very rich and relevant range of opportunities for learning. They are challenged to aim high and are prepared very well for their lives beyond school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. An enthusiastic teacher provides very effective support. This is enhanced by speech and language therapy and the way in which teachers and other pupils communicate clearly.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. All aspects of pupils' development are catered for very effectively. Opportunities for social development are particularly strong and help to boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school takes very great care to ensure that pupils are safe and secure, so they can take part confidently in all the opportunities it offers.

The motor-based learning programme makes an excellent contribution to the development of the nursery and reception aged children and the pupils in Years 1 and 2.

The physical education curriculum is exceptionally wide-ranging and well organised.

Art and design is very stimulating and supports pupils' cultural development very effectively.

Post-16 students have very good opportunities to make choices within the curriculum – for example, from a broad range of college courses.

Extra-curricular activities are very good. Visits and visitors to school enhance the curriculum very effectively.

The residential element is very well organised and offers pupils very good social experiences. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are very carefully planned. Health professionals such as the nurse and therapists, work closely with education staff and other groups to support pupils' welfare and learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, working closely with the deputy headteacher, provides outstanding leadership. The senior staff fulfil their responsibilities very effectively and are developing into a strong and influential team.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. Governors are energetic and enthusiastic. They provide effective and well-informed support and are actively involved in school life and developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very effective arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and the curriculum. New systems are being introduced in order to make it easier to compare pupils' progress with that of pupils in similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school uses its funds extremely efficiently in order to benefit the pupils. Hard work results in significant additional amounts being raised to support special projects, such as the new sports arena.

The school successfully applies the principles of best value and will be in an even stronger position when able to make more accurate comparisons with other schools.

All staff have a very clear focus on raising achievement. Consistently and successfully, they work towards making sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part and succeed in all aspects of school life.

The inadequate lift means that lessons occasionally start late and pupils spend too long in queues.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good. • There are close links with parents, who feel comfortable approaching the school with questions etc. • The school has high expectations. • The school is well led and managed. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In their responses to the questionnaire, five parents expressed dissatisfaction with the homework provided.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An interesting range of activities is provided outside lessons. | |
|---|--|

The inspectors fully support the parents' very positive views. On occasions, the homework set is too easy. The school is currently reviewing its policy on homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The headteacher's excellent leadership ensures that the school is a stimulating place in which pupils are challenged to achieve their potential.

1. In his introduction to the school's brochure, the headteacher writes that everyone associated with the school is 'committed to the notion of excellence'. In practice, this aspiration is evident when first arriving at the school – it is abundantly clear that here is a professional organisation, determined to provide the best possible quality of education. The source of these high standards is easy to identify, because the headteacher is so evidently an excellent leader, commanding respect from pupils, parents and staff. He provides a very good model for other staff, consistently promoting the school's key mission of 'Access for all'. In order to achieve this, staff are given every encouragement to be innovative in their approaches and the curriculum and are then supported, wherever possible, to enable their ideas to be realised. This support may involve, for example, finance, time, additional training or a listening ear. The outcome of the headteacher's influence and ability to motivate is a school constantly challenging expectations of what can be achieved for, and by, pupils with physical disabilities. The outstanding success of the physical education department provides a superb example of the way in which staff and pupils share the headteacher's ideals and commitment to raising standards.
2. Staff consistently adopt an outward looking attitude – again, following the headteacher's lead. This applies to keeping up to date with local and national developments, seeking funds and support from all suitable organisations and sharing expertise with other schools and the community. For example, with the support of Scope, a school for parents has been established in order to help meet the needs of pre-nursery aged children who have physical disabilities or sensory impairment. The parents of Penn Hall's pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of the way in which the school is led. As one said, 'There is no sense of coasting. The school is dynamic and wants to get the best for the pupils so they can achieve their potential.'

The physical education and sporting activities offered to all pupils are extraordinary in their range and quality.

3. The variety and quality of opportunities for physical development are remarkable and have been recognised nationally through the prestigious Sportsmark Gold award. During lessons, pupils throughout the school and post-16 students experience a very wide range of activities, allowing for success and enjoyment regardless of their abilities. For example, the swimming programme caters both for independent swimmers who use local baths and those with profound disabilities. These less able pupils benefit from sessions in the school's own pool involving, for example, lights, music and aromatic oils to stimulate their senses. However, though excellent, the timetabled lessons are only the tip of the school's sporting iceberg. Clubs are offered every day at lunchtime and after school. The choice is very broad, especially for

pupils over the age of eleven. For instance, on Thursdays, the options include volleyball, boccia, table cricket, athletics and horse riding. Last year, 100 per cent of boys and 77 per cent of girls aged eleven to sixteen attended clubs regularly. The school's reputation is such that it now has an important role in helping other schools provide opportunities for their pupils to realise their potential.

4. Factors such as very good teaching, the extremely wide choice of activities, high expectations and constant encouragement combine to drive pupils' standards ever higher. Pupils compete very regularly with those from other schools, at local, regional, national and international levels. Parents and governors appreciate the staff support that makes this possible. For example, 15 staff recently gave up a Saturday in order to accompany pupils to a regional boccia and wheelchair slalom event. On other occasions, pupils take part in activities alongside others who do not have disabilities. The Kielder Challenge involves four disabled and four able-bodied young people, working together to solve problems in an outdoor setting. In 2002, 71 teams from around the country competed in 19 heats. Penn Hall and its partner school took part in the final in Northumberland and won the trophy for the first time. When describing this marvellous achievement, the subject co-ordinator said, unsurprisingly, that he still goes 'goose-bumpy' when thinking about it.
5. Undoubtedly, the prime reason for the superb physical education programme is the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of the co-ordinator. His leadership and organisational skills galvanise support from within and outside the school. For example, teachers and support staff take part in frequent training events, contributing to the high quality and increasing range of opportunities for pupils. The staff are hugely innovative and ingenious in the way in which equipment and activities are adapted to enable all pupils to be involved in every type of game and sport. This year, for instance, electric wheelchair soccer has been introduced, with tennis soon to follow. This all means more choice for pupils and a greater likelihood that sparks of interest are ignited and latent skills discovered. The school's sporting successes are remarkable because of the number of pupils involved and the variety of events – so much so that it would be easy to underestimate the individual achievements they represent. The degrees of determination and self-discipline displayed by these young people in order to take part in sport – let alone compete and succeed – are amazing. The school also develops in them such personal qualities as the ability to work as part of a team, playing to win but not at the expense of others' safety and self-esteem. This was exemplified during a game of basketball, as one post-16 student, an outstanding athlete, piloted his wheelchair round and between other players with supreme skill and grace.

The programme of motor-based learning helps the youngest pupils' education get off to an excellent start.

6. Motor-based learning was introduced to Penn Hall in 1974 by a physiotherapist who was committed to the principles of conductive education. It is a system for teaching the motor skills needed in order for people to function in daily life – at home, school or work and play. The skills in question require continuous practise and application and, at Penn Hall, children in the nursery and reception years and pupils in Years 1 and 2 take part in programmes each morning from 9.00 am until 10.30 am. This is time used very efficiently indeed. Until September 2002, pupils were taught in class groups. However, each has now been allocated to one of three mixed-age groups made up of pupils with broadly similar physical abilities. This means that the programmes offered can be even more closely matched to the needs of the pupils. For example, those who are most able physically and have less significant learning

difficulties spend one of their sessions working and playing alongside children and pupils at a mainstream nursery or school. The most physically challenged group has sessions dedicated to sitting and standing, working at a plinth and a mat, hydrotherapy and mobility. During each of these, they learn to make the most of their bodies and do as much for themselves as they can.

7. Programmes are taught by a team of support assistants, nursery nurses, physiotherapists and teachers, each taking responsibility for leading particular sessions. The programmes are planned to a very high standard, with specific targets for each pupil to achieve. Staff's detailed knowledge of each individual and their abilities and needs are apparent in their written plans and in the support they provide. They judge accurately how much effort they can require pupils to make and they know what will motivate each one. For example, during a 'sit and stand' session, with a group of pupils who have some behavioural difficulties, slices of banana encouraged all the pupils, but one was especially thrilled to take charge of the purses they had been using.
8. The purses featured in the lesson because a significant feature of the school's approach is the way in which literacy and numeracy are promoted through motor-based learning. Each half term, the class teachers produce an overview of what is to be taught, so the work done links securely with pupils' other literacy and numeracy lessons. During the inspection, pupils in each group carried out activities linked to the story of 'Jim and the Beanstalk', by Raymond Briggs. For example, when literacy was the focus of a plinth programme, the support assistant's reading of the story was interspersed with lots of opportunities for pupils to practise reading and writing – all involving physical activity. Turning round and stretching out in order to write in sand trays or squeezing oranges flowed seamlessly, but ingeniously, from the story – the giant likes juicy boys on toast. Standing and sitting sessions are linked to numeracy, so the higher attaining pupils practised mental mathematics and used real money for counting and addition, at the same time as straightening their back and maintaining a good sitting position. At all times, staff promote pupils' communication skills, encouraging them to watch and listen carefully, follow instructions and contribute – for instance, through speech, signs or gestures. During lessons, the atmosphere is delightful. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and learning is enormous fun, as well as being very hard work.
9. The motor-based learning programmes are reinforced during lessons and activities throughout the day. For example, similar equipment is located in bathrooms, so pupils can practise their skills. Before lunch, they gather round a table whilst staff chant instructions using the same language as in lessons. ('Two hands flat. Left hand stretch to get flannel.') In this way, pupils learn to wash their hands, becoming increasingly independent. The approach to motor-based learning benefits pupils in many ways. Improvements in mobility and physical development undoubtedly occur – a small number of pupils progress from crawling to walking. Staff are fully aware that this is an unrealistic goal for many pupils, but tiny increases in independence are just as significant – for example learning to roll over in bed without assistance or being able to reach and grasp a cup or spoon. Pupils develop the skills they need in order to learn – such as making eye contact, sitting still and listening to instructions. With success and constant rewards and encouragement, their confidence grows. As a result, they are willing to make huge efforts and play a full part in lessons and activities throughout the day. The groundwork done during these intensive sessions makes an excellent start to pupils' education and equips them with skills and attitudes that benefit them enormously in their future lives.

The curriculum is exciting, very relevant and well matched to pupils' ages and special educational needs.

10. The deputy headteacher has oversight of, and responsibility for, the curriculum. He understands and fulfils this role very effectively. Under his leadership, the strengths indicated in the previous inspection report – such as physical education, community links and out-of-hours activities – have been extended even further. For instance, the range of lunchtime and after-school clubs is now broader than ever, with opportunities for pupils to pursue their interest in science, music, dance and theatre etc., in addition to the enormous variety of sporting activities. As one parent said, 'There's always something going on'. This vibrancy is enhanced by the school's excellent links with the local and wider community. For example, through the Black Country Creative Arts Partnership, artists in residence are visiting termly to lead projects that expand pupils' horizons – creating polyphones, working with wrought iron and making wooden sculptures to develop parts of the outdoor environment.
11. The curriculum is very carefully tailored to meet the pupils' wide-ranging needs. For example, 20 per cent of pupils have a visual impairment. A specialist teacher is employed to teach specific skills – such as the use of a reading system similar to Braille – and to work with pupils in other lessons, helping them to take part and make progress at the same rate as others. Higher attaining pupils are catered for very suitably. The range of accredited courses has developed very well since 1997, so that this year, for example, groups of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are working towards GCSE mathematics and science. Specialist teachers with mainstream experience and, in the case of science, a new laboratory and very good resources, are having a very powerful impact on the quality of the curriculum and pupils' achievements.
12. The post-16 curriculum offers a very good example of how the school continues to adapt and improve the opportunities it provides. It builds firmly on the curriculum in the main part of the school but it stands alone and is different. Students each have an individual timetable, carefully constructed to meet their individual needs and aspirations. For instance, most of the courses they follow are accredited by nationally recognised organisations. These include GCSEs, offered through the school and/or college links, a youth award scheme, Duke of Edinburgh Award at Bronze level and Junior Sports Leader Award. Important skills, such as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and subjects like citizenship and religious education are allocated suitable amounts of time and taught in very relevant and practical ways. Students have very good opportunities to make choices. For instance, they may elect to study the theory part of the driving test and they choose from a wide range of courses at two colleges of further education, contributing to their social, academic and vocational development. Because of difficulties experienced in obtaining off-site work-experience placements, the school is creative in providing in-house opportunities. For example, mini-enterprise activities involve students in restoring and selling glassware and jewellery. Although much of the students' time is packed with structured activities, they also have good opportunities to develop independent study skills – for example, daily sessions when they can use the careers library, access the Internet or support each other by reading or turning pages. Students are prepared very well for their lives beyond school. The curriculum provides them with accreditation, a wealth of relevant experiences and, above all, confidence to look around, make informed choices and move on.

Teachers plan and organise lessons very effectively so all pupils make very good progress.

13. The teaching has many significant strengths. For example, teachers are very knowledgeable about their subjects and pupils' special educational needs. They have high expectations for pupils to achieve and they make sure that lessons are suitable for each one, including those with English as an additional language, communication difficulties or visual impairment. Progress in lessons is very good because teachers structure the work very carefully, enabling pupils to build systematically on what they have already learned. Teachers also make very effective use of resources, such as equipment and the accommodation, and they work in close partnership with support staff.
14. For example, a history lesson for a mixed-ability class of pupils in Years 7 to 9 concerned the Black Death and especially events in the Derbyshire village of Eyam. Pupils had previously watched a video and read about the plague and its causes and impact. This lesson required them to think harder about the effect on real people and to look at a situation from opposing viewpoints. The content was challenging, but the methods used by the teacher ensured that all pupils were able to cope with this, provided they worked hard. The two members of the support staff were crucial to the success of the lesson and had been deployed very well, each supporting half the class and freeing the teacher to move round and check pupils' understanding and learning. The task required each pupil to put forward the point of view of a villager, considering whether or not a stranger should be allowed to settle in the village. With written prompts to guide them, pupils put into their own words their particular argument – for example, that this tailor's health certificate could be forged or, alternatively, that he might be a good marriage prospect. The support staff helped them with any reading or writing difficulties. One pupil, for instance, used an electronic aid in order to communicate, hitting a keyboard linked to a voice recording, and the adult then wrote down his ideas. Captivated by the topic, pupils all worked very hard to prepare for the public meeting when the teacher was to decide the fate of the applicant. The open and mutually respectful relationships between pupils and with staff enabled pupils to take part confidently in the discussion, explaining their side of the dispute and listening patiently to each other. Later, the teacher described what had actually happened – the tailor had been allowed in and had brought the plague with him. Pupils paid very close attention and were clearly affected by the terrible death toll. During the lesson, they made very good progress in historical knowledge, skills and understanding, but the activities also contributed to their personal development and communication skills.

The school works very hard and successfully to ensure that pupils are safe and happy.

15. In its brochure, the school sets out its approach to pupils' rights. They will be: valued as an individual; treated with dignity and respect; cared for sensitively and appropriately as a child or young adult; kept safe from abuse. This statement is followed by a comprehensive list of ways in which these rights are to be achieved – for example, by respecting pupils' privacy at all times. In Penn Hall's systems and procedures, curriculum, strategic decision-making and daily life, these fundamental beliefs and principles are clearly evident. As a result, pupils and students have very positive attitudes to school, they are confident to tackle new experiences and have an excellent capacity to forge and maintain friendships.
16. The school's residential facility demonstrates fully its approach to safeguarding pupils' welfare. On the first floor of the original Penn Hall, accommodation is available for six pupils in turn to stay overnight from Monday to Friday, on three or four occasions each, during the year. The take-up rate is in excess of 90 per cent and the residential

element is valued enormously by pupils and their parents. Children in the nursery and reception years often begin by staying for tea, gradually extending their day. During the day, one of the joint heads of care also works in a supporting role with the youngest pupils, so they have already established a relationship with her before they stay after school.

17. There are very well thought out arrangements to care for pupils who stay overnight. For example, the headteacher and deputy headteacher lead weekly meetings with the head of care, occupational therapist and site manager, ensuring that seating and sleeping arrangements are suitable for each pupil's needs. Again, care staff liaise with the nurse, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists over medication and equipment, for instance. Care staff are trained in essential areas such as first aid, child protection, moving and handling, and alternative methods of communication, such as signing.
18. However, alongside these structures runs the clear intention to help to prepare pupils for their future lives, so they are in a position to benefit from residential holidays or further education. Parents consider that their children learn to become more independent and also develop socially – the stays are an important part of their social life. This was very evident when post-16 boys chatted over breakfast. It is difficult to imagine a more natural and pleasant start to a school day. The students enjoy all aspects of residential stays, including the dormitory-style sleeping arrangements – discussions about sport and girls can go on into the night. That evening, the boys had decided to go shopping and relished the freedom afforded by the mall – they can independently go into every shop, using their wheelchairs. The school has secured funds to refurbish the residential bathrooms, which will enable the pupils to be even more independent. The school's responsibility for keeping pupils safe is balanced very carefully with its absolute determination to enable them to get as much as possible from their lives.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The lift used by pupils to reach the first floor of the main school is too small.

19. Pupils' views of the school are very positive. They would most like to have easier access to the first floor of the main school building. At present, pupils have to queue to use a lift that will accommodate only two wheelchairs – provided they are skilfully driven. At lunchtime, this results in a long wait before pupils in Years 7 to 11 can eat or get back upstairs. Additionally, lessons inevitably start late – for example, when pupils are coming down to the ground floor science laboratory. The school does its utmost, by careful timetabling, to alleviate the situation, but it is a constant source of frustration to staff and, especially, pupils. All concerned with the school are aware of the problem, which was referred to in the previous inspection report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) continue to work with the local education authority to improve the arrangements for transporting pupils from one floor to another of the main teaching block.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	14	8	0	0	0	0
Percentage	12	56	32	0	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	93.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	50	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.5
Average class size	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YN – Y14

Total number of education support staff	36
Total aggregate hours worked per week	921

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1,001,186
Total expenditure	975,941
Expenditure per pupil	12,199
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,762
Balance carried forward to next year	101,007

The sum carried forward appears large because funds are recouped from other local education authorities after the end of the financial year. The

actual sum carried forward was closer to £1,400.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	83
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	17	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	28	2	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	22	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	47	8	2	4
The teaching is good.	79	17	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	29	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	3	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	17	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	24	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	95	5	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	18	0	2	0

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

82	14	2	0	2
----	----	---	---	---