

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLSTEAD SCHOOL

Wavertree, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104751

Headteacher: Mrs M Lucas

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Potheary
21765

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 November 2002

Inspection number: 249312

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community special
Age range of pupils: 2 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Old Mill Lane
Wavertree
Liverpool
Postcode: L15 8LW

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P O'Brien

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21765	Mrs P Potheary	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Geography	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	Mr B Miller	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32176	Ms B Harrison	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Religious education	
12261	Ms R Adams	Team inspector	Educational inclusion including race equality Special educational needs English as an additional language English History	
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Millstead is a day community special school for 50 girls and boys aged two to eleven who have severe learning difficulties. There are 49 pupils on roll full time and of these nine are in the nursery; one nursery pupil is part time. There is a very small minority of pupils from ethnic origins other than white British, including three Black African and one Chinese pupil. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language at an early stage of acquisition. There are 26 pupils eligible for free school meals. Fifty per cent of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, five have autism, seven visual impairment and seven challenging behaviours. There are no exclusions. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Award 2002, the DFES School Achievement Award 2002 and the Healthy Schools Award 2001.

The school has been part of the local education authority reorganisation and changed from an all-ages school for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) to a newly refurbished primary SLD school in 1998. It has retained some staff and pupils, but has also gained staff from other SLD schools in the authority. For this reason this inspection is being treated as a first inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Millstead is a good school with several very good features and few significant areas for development. The school is a happy place to be, bright, welcoming and caring. It provides pupils with good quality teaching where they learn effectively and make good progress. Leadership and management are good overall and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good throughout the school leading to good progress in the majority of subjects.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, as well as links with the community and partner institutions, is very good.
- The quality of relationships within the school community is very good.
- Care and attention to pupils' welfare and procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are very good.
- The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction to the work of the school and staff are well placed and committed to continuous development and improvement.

What could be improved

- The consistent use in lessons of clear, precise learning objectives, to meet the educational needs of specific individual pupils. Improved, consistently used assessment systems to support this.
- Curriculum development to provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.
- Provision for some pupils with significant additional needs, through the further development of communication systems and aids.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED

The school has improved significantly during the last four years, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, the provision of a structured curriculum for the whole school, planning procedures and management of overall performance and pupil progress.

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

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

The school's targets in English, mathematics and personal and social development were all met and exceeded for the last school year. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in the majority of other subjects. Pupils' personal and social development is very good. In information and communication technology and physical education, progress in lessons is generally good, but limits to curriculum breadth and in the assessment of skills and knowledge, leads to satisfactory achievement over time in these subjects. Pupils with severe and complex difficulties generally make good progress and the school provides very effectively for this group. However for some older, higher attaining pupils, progress, although good in some areas, is satisfactory overall. This is due to a limited extension of their curriculum and, for a few, a lack of well-implemented communication programmes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils obviously enjoy coming to school and show very good respect for their teachers and enthusiasm for their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good, the majority of lessons are calm and well ordered, and most pupils respond well to instructions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good strides in developing confidence, social skills and relating to others. The warm, caring relationships in the school are a pleasure to watch.
Attendance	Attendance is lower than for other special schools for pupils with severe learning difficulties due to the level of the pupils' medical needs. However there is no unauthorised absence and attendance in lessons is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

Teaching is good overall for pupils of all ages and in the majority of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. In just over a quarter of lessons teaching is very good or excellent. Teaching is satisfactory in just under a quarter of lessons with a tiny minority being unsatisfactory. The good, very good and excellent teaching is characterised by careful planning which takes into account the individual needs of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants clearly know their pupils well and build on their knowledge and understanding systematically. The very high quality of relationships enables pupils to feel valued and confident and encourages them to learn effectively. The few weaknesses in teaching are mainly concerned with a lack of clear, well-targeted objectives for individual pupils so that they do not always achieve at a pace best suited to their needs. This is linked to some assessment which, apart from English, mathematics and personal and social skills, does not record what pupils know, understand and can do, and so does not provide subject based information to build on from one lesson to the next. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, but the teaching of communication skills is limited for a minority of pupils by a lack of consistent and well-implemented programmes. The needs of the majority of pupils, including those with profound and complex needs, are well met, however for those few pupils with severe communication difficulties, autism, and those who are higher achieving, not all lessons meet their needs and they do not always make as much progress as they could do. A key feature of teaching in the school is lively presentation, with interesting and exciting resources in the majority of lessons, which ensures that pupils enjoy their work and gain a wide range of relevant experiences.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good well-implemented scheme, which suits the need of most pupils well. However it does not yet extend sufficiently to allow the few highest attaining pupils to be adequately challenged.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	For the two pupils with English at an early stage of acquisition, the provision is appropriate and they are able to develop communication skills sufficiently well. The lack of consistent signing in the school however slows even better progress for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision to ensure that pupils' personal growth, their appreciation of the wonders around them, their experience of the cultural heritage of themselves and others is very good and linked to every aspect of the school's work. Pupils are helped effectively to develop a sense of right and wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils are very well cared for, kept physically safe and comfortable and receive excellent medical and physiotherapy support. The use of assessment to help teachers plan effectively is satisfactory overall; records are kept and progress in responses tracked well. Staff also know the pupils very well, but many subjects lack a clear identification of skills and knowledge to be developed. The school works well with parents who think highly of all aspects. However, support for parents in helping their

	children at home, although sound, is inconsistent and underdeveloped.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has provided very clear direction to the school's work resulting in substantial improvement and change. Key staff contribute well to the good quality of provision, especially the high quality of pupils' personal development. Senior staff play a limited role in curriculum development and school performance management, but they are now poised to become more involved in this important area of the work.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its duties appropriately. They are largely new as a group and are highly committed to steering the work of the school effectively. They keep well informed and recognise the need for more training to support them in their developing roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established a good overall system for monitoring every aspect of its work and effectiveness. Links with national systems means that recording and analysing pupil performance over time is developing well. Analysis of the performance of different groups of pupils is less well developed, but improving.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well, budgets are clearly linked to plans and grants sought and used effectively to improve provision. Best value and effectiveness are carefully considered when purchasing and the school has improved as a result. The use of technology to ensure smooth running of the school is sound and improving. Staffing and resources are good and accommodation satisfactory.

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 make good progress • Teaching is good • The school is approachable, works closely with parents and provides good information • The school is well led and managed 	<p>This view was held by a quarter of parents who replied to the questionnaire and attended the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that pupils do not get sufficient work to do at home

The inspection team agrees with the views of parents, pupils like school and make good progress, teaching is good and staff work well with parents and are very approachable. The school is also well led and managed. The only significant issue raised by parents concerned homework. The inspection team found that there is no consistent approach to providing parents with information that would help them support their children's learning at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well in the majority of subjects and make good progress over time. The school's own targets are challenging and are based upon the year group targets in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education and these were all exceeded in 2002. In addition all pupils show good development in these subject scores over two years. The school has recently won the Basic Skills Award and the DFES School Achievement Award.
2. All pupils are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum, and Statutory Assessment Tasks or Tests are not appropriate to any of the pupils. The numbers of pupils in each year group is smaller than ten and so results cannot be compared reliably from year to year, or with similar schools nationally. Progress is therefore judged on individual pupils' achievements over time.
3. The majority of pupils with significantly different needs make good progress in the core subjects and in communication and they make very good progress in their social and personal development. However, there is a lack of well-developed and consistently used communication systems and limited individual objectives in certain lessons. This means that not all pupils progress as well as they can in all subjects, particularly the few higher attaining pupils and those with autism. It is for these groups that individual targets and curriculum breadth are not always sufficiently challenging to help them make appropriate progress. They are however appropriate in the core subjects of English and mathematics and in personal and social development. Generally good progress with individual education plan targets is evident, although some of these targets are too broad to show the small steps in progress necessary for some pupils. This is being addressed as the staff work to develop more effective target setting for all pupils.
4. In English pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. In Years 1 and 2 many pupils are at an early stage of communication and 50 per cent have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The lowest attaining pupils begin to recognise their surroundings and the people who work with them. They show involvement in situations through facial expressions of pleasure and reaching out to touch and hold familiar objects and make choices. For those who are beginning to speak or can talk, progress develops well through increasing communication with adults. Work with paper, crayons and paint in the early stages of writing shows continuous improvement. By the end of Year 6 several pupils are able to ask and answer questions, dictate and copy sentences, write and recognise their names and read simple books with confidence.
5. In mathematics pupils make good progress over time. By the end of Year 2 pupils show good progress in their ability to distinguish different shapes and colours and some can easily sort objects into groups. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties gradually learn to choose between two objects and show a preference. The highest attaining pupils show a developing grasp of number, some of them working with numbers up to 20. By the end of Year 6 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show increasing engagement and anticipation of what an object might do and relate well to the variety of experiences offered in mathematics lessons. Those with higher-level skills show a developing sense of symbol recognition and more confidence in working with numbers in a variety of situations.

6. In science pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. They begin to make sense of the world around them in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 through opportunities to see what happens when they push and pull things; they watch materials such as chocolate change with heat and during visits observe changes with the seasons. By the end of Year 6 good progress is seen as pupils confidently observe how things feel different, they can identify different materials and experiment with changing the nature of things through the use of heat and water.
7. Pupils make good progress overall in geography, history, religious education, art, music and design and technology. In information and communication technology and physical education pupils make good progress in lessons. However, due to underdeveloped curriculum opportunities in these two subjects, pupils' progress over time, in a broad range of skills, is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy coming to school and their attitudes, values and personal development are very good. Pupils often show high levels of interest and enjoyment in their work, especially when the teaching is challenging and inspiring. Pupils usually take an active role in lessons and group activities, such as sessions that are accompanied by music. Pupils throughout the school are normally courteous and friendly and many older pupils provide very good role models when acting as class leaders. Pupils show pride in their school and have a very responsible attitude to the building and to their own and others' property. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to boost pupils' self-esteem and the good use of praise and encouragement helps to create a very positive learning environment. Parents are very pleased with the very positive attitudes and values the school promotes.
9. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good in lessons, assemblies and during break times. In classes 2 and 4 the pupils' behaviour is sometimes very good and they respond well to the teachers' high expectations. Those pupils who have identified behavioural problems often work well in class, especially when they are highly motivated by the activities they are given. For example in a class 7 music lesson, all pupils, including those who regularly present challenging behaviour, were thoroughly engrossed in listening to stringed instruments being played and very little inappropriate behaviour was observed. The effective support of teaching assistants often enables potential behaviour problems to be deflected so that the learning of others is not disrupted. No actions against others, such as bullying, were seen during the inspection. Parents agree that bullying is not a problem. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions where the staff engage very well with the pupils. During the excellent lunchtime session the pupils respond well to their individual programmes which are calmly carried out by the whole staff, the atmosphere is well ordered and the pupils obviously enjoy the social element of all being together. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year.
10. Pupils' personal development is very good. They show good respect for others, listening carefully when their friends are showing their work or taking their turn. Teachers take every opportunity to help pupils understand how they make others feel which means that pupils are careful not to hurt or upset other children. Pupils work very well together and often show very good levels of co-operation and collaboration. Relationships amongst pupils are very good and most pupils are considerate and kind. All pupils show great respect for their teachers and support staff.

11. The attendance rate at around 83 per cent is well below that of other similar schools nationally. This is due almost entirely to the higher than usual number of pupils with profound and multiple difficulties requiring long periods of medical treatment. There is no unauthorised absence and punctuality is good, enabling lessons to start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school and there is a high proportion of very good and some excellent teaching. Every teacher teaches well and all subjects are taught well overall. Just over half of all teaching is consistently good, and roughly another quarter is very good or excellent. Just under a quarter of all teaching is satisfactory with less than two per cent of teaching being unsatisfactory. The school is being inspected as a new school; however, a considerable proportion of staff remain from the previous, all-age school and teaching during their last inspection was satisfactory overall with 18 per cent of teaching found to be unsatisfactory. This means that the teaching skills of staff have improved considerably since the new school opened.
13. Teaching is good in English. The literacy strategy is used well to help most pupils of all ages to learn to speak or communicate well and others begin to read and write. In mathematics the numeracy strategy is well taught. Teachers involve pupils well and make good use of resources and songs linked to the pupils' lives to bring the subject alive. The good teaching helps those pupils with profound and multiple difficulties to begin to see the differences between things, make choices and recognise familiar shapes and objects, while those highest attaining pupils are beginning to grasp number. Pupils are also enabled through good teaching to develop personal and social skills very well.
14. The quality of teaching for the majority of different groups in the school is usually good and often very good ensuring a good rate of progress in their understanding and relationship to the world around them. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties teaching is consistently good, as it is for those with severe learning difficulties. However in some lessons expectations are not high enough for the few most able pupils and they do not achieve as much as they could. A lack of consistency in the use of communication systems also means that a few pupils with communication difficulties and autism are not able to learn in all lessons as well as they might.
15. The good teaching in both key stages is characterised by careful lesson planning based upon very good knowledge of the pupils. In these lessons the work is planned to help each pupil individually reach their goals and improve on past performance. This was evident, for example, in numeracy, where pupils were gradually increasing the number of coins they needed to buy goods in their 'shop' when the price went up. Some excellent teaching manages to engage the attention of pupils who find it difficult to settle, through calm, supportive and very strong relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. In these lessons good humour and a sense of excitement are created and the ability to explore freely is encouraged. The work of teaching assistants is well planned in these lessons and they are skilled in helping pupils understand and take part in the tasks. Attention to the physical needs of the pupils is very hard work; many are hyperactive and others quite passive. The teachers and teaching assistants manage extremely well to see to the pupils' needs, including carefully changing their positions without interrupting lessons.

16. The main area for development in teaching is connected with assessment procedures and individual lesson objectives. The lessons which are satisfactory or, rarely, even unsatisfactory have some strengths, but are also characterised by a lack of clear cut objectives as to what individual pupils are expected to learn. In these lessons, pupils are given a variety of experiences but the lack of a focus for individuals means that pupils do not necessarily extend their previous skills or practise new ones. In addition assessment, based upon how pupils respond in some subjects, does not provide sufficient information to help teachers plan to build on developing skills and understanding. In a few lessons turn-taking takes too long leading to restlessness. In others there is a lack of sufficient time to allow pupils to show what they can do leaving them unable to contribute effectively and so learn through practice. These weaknesses are not sufficiently frequent however to prevent the quality of teaching being good overall.

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

17. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school has rapidly established a curriculum appropriate to most of the pupils at Millstead. In the space of three years, a nationally recognised curriculum (EQUALS) has been introduced and implemented well for each subject. This provides a well-organised range of learning experiences, which help pupils to progress. However, the skills and knowledge, which need to be developed in every subject, are not clear. In addition the curriculum is not sufficiently linked to the early stages of the National Curriculum to ensure that pupils begin to develop skills ready to move into the next stage of learning.
18. The curriculum in all subjects is generally appropriate, broad and the full range of experiences are presented to most pupils. However, in several subjects, including English, science, information and communication technology and physical education, some elements are not in place, particularly those to suit the maturing needs of all the groups in the school. The emphasis upon experiences rather than skill development within the current curriculum is very appropriate for most pupils much of the time, but it does mean that there is a lack of rigorous planning to ensure that skills are developed and pupils with higher attainment are challenged. The approaches are very successful for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties but less so for pupils with complex communication difficulties such as autism and for higher achieving pupils who have complex speech and language difficulties. Too frequently these pupils are not able to express their thoughts or wishes and make sound rather than good progress in some subjects. This is largely due to the limited and inconsistent use of communication aids, signing and symbols.
19. The balance of the curriculum, the time allocated and the clarity of teaching and learning objectives, vary between classes. Where it works well, there are clear time allocations for subject skills and experiences. Thus, a very good registration and greeting session was well planned to identify the literacy skills, each pupil marking their own registers, and numeracy skills, money being used for 'purchasing' food and drink at break time. The same sessions in another class were more vague in their intentions, pupils were not challenged adequately and important basic skills not appropriately reinforced. Balance is also affected, for example, after lunch, when teaching assistants have a lunch break. This means that where a class has pupils with significantly challenging behaviour the lesson is difficult to teach and pupils sometimes miss interesting experiences.

20. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented well and this has contributed significantly to the good progress that pupils make in these subjects. The inspection team was particularly impressed with the effective way that the three-part lesson was used and how well both subjects were resourced to provide whole-class, group and individual work that was stimulating and varied. The effective use of the 'plenary' session to go over what has been learned is not always implemented in those lessons where it would be helpful.
21. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. There are currently after-school clubs, such as information and communication technology and physical education. The distance that most pupils have to travel restricts attendance at these and the school is reviewing the use of lunchtimes to include extra activities. Some work has already been carried out to resource activities at breaks and lunchtimes and teaching assistants are very effective in working and playing constructively with pupils at these times. All of these experiences link well with the very good provision for personal, social and health education and provide real opportunities for pupils to develop valuable social and interaction skills. Some children are given books to take home and read or are asked to bring in things for lessons. However, where a child makes a significant step in learning during the day or does something that needs reinforcing, there is no well-implemented system for giving parents information that would enable them to further support their children at home.
22. The overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. There is an appropriately structured curriculum, which is overseen well by a co-ordinator. Although the school does not provide a sex or drugs curriculum, care is taken to ensure that issues relating to sex education, medication and personal health are dealt with at a personal level as and when appropriate and this is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis, for example, in physical education, on developing independence in dressing and a good use of personal meal plans at lunchtime. All classes have personal and social development lessons and these are used well to encourage turn-taking, relating to each other and developing an independent approach to life, work and their role as citizens. In addition pupils are encouraged to take messages, take charge of moving equipment and sometimes help to push each other in the wheelchairs where appropriate. Personal and social skills are also refined through high expectations, very good relationships during lessons, the high quality of care and through the constant and positive relationships between staff and pupils at all times.
23. The school has very good links with the community and these assist in providing a wide range of social opportunities for all pupils. Each class has a regular programme of visits to local places of interest, including religious and historical buildings, involvement in Liverpool-based projects and community amenities such as shops, trains, buses, the fire station and leisure facilities. These all link to the school's planning towards greater inclusion for pupils. The local community supports the school financially and in particular has supported the purchase of one of the school minibuses, which contributes to the wide and effective range of visits.
24. Links with local schools are very good and support inclusive opportunities further. Two pupils attend a local primary school for one afternoon a week where they enjoy joining in the classroom activities and making friends. The teachers work closely together, for example pupils learn the songs and practise activities that they will encounter. The school makes effective use of another school's hydrotherapy pool. In addition, all staff have close working relationships with other special and mainstream schools, ensuring good contact with a range of views and ideas.

25. There are two pupils for whom English is an additional language and a total of seven from ethnic minority backgrounds. Most make good progress. Of the pupils for whom English is an additional language, progress is at least sound but erratic because communication systems are not well implemented by all staff. However, all staff take considerable time to help pupils express their needs and thoughts in various ways which means that they all do make progress.

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

26. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual social and cultural development is very good and the general provision for moral education is good throughout the school. These aspects are strengths of the school and contribute significantly to the happiness, security and respect that all pupils experience within the school. This, in turn, assists in the progress made intellectually and socially.
27. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Whole-school assemblies provide very effective times for pupils to celebrate and share their successes. At the end of every day, there are planned moments when pupils pause for reflection and prayer. These provide a good opportunity for pupils to reflect on their day and a very effective and settled boundary between school-time and going home. School visits to places of worship, such as the cathedral, mosque and synagogue, help pupils to recognise the purpose and value of worship within a community. In lessons, spirituality is promoted well through the respect given to all pupils by adult staff. The strongest aspect of the school's contribution to developing spirituality is its commitment to creating an atmosphere where pupils can flourish, develop and be respected. All staff, through listening, celebrating, caring and sharing, demonstrate their acceptance of each other and of pupils. They value differences, even where such differences manifest themselves in problematic behaviour. Pupils are valued, whatever their difficulties, and teaching styles are flexible enough to ensure that all pupils receive praise and respect. This celebration of the diverse nature of pupils is something that parents value and find supportive.
28. Provision for moral development is good. The school provides clear guidance for behaviour and this is usually promoted well in classes and generally around the school. It helps very much in developing pupil maturity. Staff provide excellent role models in their relationships with each other and with pupils. They 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. Individual education plan targets place an emphasis on the development of moral behaviour and making choices is often a priority. Although this is a strength, there are occasions when the boundaries set for good behaviour in classrooms are not consistently followed through. However, the good practice seen in most classes contributes well to the overall personal development of most pupils.
29. The provision for pupils' social development is very good indeed. All staff work hard to foster a sense of community with common values. The school's mission statement emphasises the wish to live and work as a 'team'. This is carried out in practice and provides a supportive atmosphere within the school, with many opportunities for pupils to act independently and to respect those around them. The many trips and the Year 6 residential visit provide pupils with an opportunity to develop independence and to mix socially. In classes, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively in pairs, groups and as a whole class, for example in singing, music and story lessons. 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 them develop maturity and confidence.

30. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors as well as by activities such as the summer physical education week, which gave pupils the opportunity to participate in a wide range of physical activities. Visiting artists have produced an excellent playground train for the school and many visits take place, which allow pupils to work with, for example, the Liverpool Philharmonic, string quartets and touring opera companies. The curriculum, particularly in subjects such as English, history and religious education, helps to widen pupils' experience of their own culture and gain a glimpse into that of others. Close links with the Chinese community and the close involvement of the Jewish community are two examples of links which provide all pupils with very good preparation for the adult world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The very high level of pastoral care at the school ensures the health, safety and wellbeing of pupils. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school environment is secure. The health and safety co-ordinator conscientiously addresses any safety issues that are raised and brings major issues to the attention of the headteacher and governing body.
32. Good procedures and systems are in place to ensure the protection of all pupils. The designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection has a clear understanding of the role. The school also has a nominated governor who has recent responsibility for issues of child protection but has yet to undergo formal training for the role. Teachers and non-teaching staff understand the agreed systems. The resident nursing and physiotherapy provision is of very high quality. First aid and appropriate treatment is always readily available. Records of any accidents that occur are kept and parents are informed promptly if their child is taken ill in school or has an accident.
33. The school's procedures for monitoring absence and for promoting attendance are good. Links with the education welfare officer are effective and unexplained absences are always followed up promptly.
34. The school has an effective system for helping pupils behave well and be kind to each other, which is very well monitored. The clear behaviour policy is consistently applied by the majority of staff, although limited staffing makes this difficult in the after-lunch sessions. The physical restraint policy is clearly understood by all staff and they have received training in its application when it is considered necessary. The school has sound anti-racist and racial equality procedures and these are reflected in practice. The school is a very racially harmonious community. The incidents of inappropriate behaviour are isolated, involve a small number of pupils and are dealt with effectively.
35. Formal procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. These procedures are enhanced by the teachers' good knowledge of pupils as individuals. Teachers know their pupils very well and report annually to parents how their child is developing personally as well as academically. They record qualities such as persistence, application, co-operation with others, the ability to concentrate, communication and self-confidence.
36. The well-established systems used to assess and record pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. They are used very effectively to identify the small gains pupils

make in communication, number and personal development, to identify the next steps and track progress over time. Attainment against annual targets in these areas is closely monitored throughout the year and most pupils achieve or exceed their targets. In the other subjects pupils' experiences and responses are recorded and this is appropriate for many. However for the highest attaining pupils, and the older pupils with severe learning difficulties or autism, this does not provide information about the skills and knowledge that they have gained in each subject. This in turn means that some lessons do not move individual pupils from one stage to the next as fast as they might. The teachers' and teaching assistants' very good knowledge of pupils means that the majority do make good progress however.

37. The assessment procedures to monitor how well pupils achieve are not yet consistently used and teachers' expectations vary, but this is being improved. The school is at an early stage of judging how well pupils achieve compared to similar pupils in other schools. Progress for pupils with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism is tracked at a whole-school level, but not for those with complex physical, language and learning difficulties. The current system has been very successful in raising standards for pupils with severe learning difficulties and for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, for a small minority with autism, and complex physical, language and learning difficulties, the target-setting process has been less successful in raising their standards of attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents have very positive views of the school. They are pleased with the standard of pupils' behaviour in school. Pupils like coming to school and parents believe that the school expects pupils to work hard and to achieve their best. All parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems they might have. A minority of parents would like more information on ways in which they can support their children's learning at home, perhaps through the home-school link diary.
39. The quality of information to parents is good overall. Newsletters are sent home each term and this complements the very regular contact that takes place both by telephone and the home-school link diary. The school's prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are very good documents, well-presented, easy to read, comprehensive and meet statutory requirements. Where parents have been invited to formal meetings with governors or for curriculum matters the attendance has been poor. The vast majority do, however, attend annual review meetings for their child's individual education plan. Annual reports of pupils' progress are of satisfactory quality but do not provide sufficiently clear detail of the progress pupils are making in all subjects.
40. The impact of parents on the work of the school is satisfactory but despite the school's efforts it has not been as successful as it would like. There is no active parent-school association and parents do not help in school, mainly due to the distances they have to travel. The school has tried to strengthen their work with parents and has sent out a questionnaire to find out parents' views. Where parents are contributing to their children's education at home this is having a positive effect on achievement.
41. The school is working hard to improve its partnership with all parents and recognises that there is still even more to be done to achieve the excellent partnership that most parents, the headteacher, staff and governors would like.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school. Since taking over with an established staff but a changed pupil age group, she has established a clear, consistent curriculum model, clarified the assessment of pupil progress, developed the subject areas and clearly improved the quality of teaching and learning. This has involved some considerable changes in practice and has led to a good quality of education, high staff morale and a culture of continuing development. The pace of these changes have been pitched very well to develop staff skills and understanding, whilst keeping them highly motivated and working effectively as a team to improve even further.
43. The role of other managers is sound and developing. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to observe how well their subject is taught and how well pupils learn and they now monitor the planning and assessment of pupils. This process is good in the key areas of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and personal and social education, but inconsistent in other subjects. The role of senior managers is less well defined. They make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school and ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is of a very high standard, in line with the school's aims. However, their role is not clearly involved in improvements in curriculum, teaching and learning. The school recognises this as an area for development.
44. The school seeks to validate its own monitoring of teaching through the use of outside agencies which is very good practice and has led to significant improvements in teaching over time. Appraisal and performance management are well established and are being used very effectively to drive the process of change. The headteacher is working very effectively with local and national groups to develop assessment in a way which will allow more rigorous analysis of results and give clearer information on the performance of different groups of pupils. This process is at the same stage as similar schools nationally. Data on the overall performance of pupils in English, mathematics and personal and social development is well established, but less so for other subjects.
45. The school is very clear about the priorities for development and there is good evidence of systematic action being taken in all identified areas. For example the work on measuring pupil attainment is carefully planned to develop from year to year as more reliable data begins to build.
46. The governors fulfil their duties appropriately. The governing body has experienced considerable change and upheaval recently and many of the governors are new. They have a good view of the strengths of the school and understand where it needs to develop, through the school development plan. Governors are committed, involved and well informed. There are a suitable number of sub-committees and they are prepared to and do ask challenging questions when appropriate. The governing body has undertaken some training, but new governors are still in the process of learning the full implications of the role. The governors understand well the need to continue developing as a group in helping to steer the work of the school effectively.
47. The financial planning and use of resources are good. The headteacher, governors, a very efficient school administrative assistant and the local education authority monitor and control the school spending effectively. Spending decisions are based upon the school improvement plan and the subject development plans. The school income is greater than other similar schools because of the very high proportion of pupils with

complex medical, physical and learning needs. Very good use is made of specific grants and charitable donations to finance the school and meet the learning and physical needs of individual pupils, for example there has been significant improvement in the level of resources and specialist furniture. The school provides good value for money. The school has a budget under-spend that is appropriately being kept in reserve to build a much needed car park once local building works are complete. The headteacher and governors, supported by the local education authority financial services, and in consultation with parents, are rigorous in ensuring that they seek good value when spending and assess the effectiveness of purchases made.

48. The school's use of new technology to support efficiency is at an early stage of development and is satisfactory. Computer programs are used well in day-to-day administration and for data analysis and there is increasing use of them to plan and display work. The school has very recently been connected to the Internet and joined the National Grid for Learning. The use of information technology to support curriculum delivery is well planned, there is some very good work with switch technology and subject-based programs, but there is insufficient breadth for supporting pupils' learning effectively in all subjects.
49. Staffing levels are good and there is a comprehensive programme of staff development for teachers and teaching assistants. During the last four years, there has been considerable change. This, staff have welcomed and a very positive approach to continued training ensures that staff experience and qualifications are broadly suited to the needs of the pupils. There is, however, a more limited implementation of some initiatives, such as information and communication technology systems. This is because the pace of change has been fast and teachers have been supported in their own way of working. This works well for most subjects, but is having a particularly adverse effect where whole-school approaches are needed to contribute to pupils' progress, for example with signing, or the communication systems for pupils with autism. The staff work very well together as a team, and all members of the school, including the administrative assistant, kitchen staff, the cleaners and caretaker, pull together for the good of the pupils. The attached specialist nursing and physiotherapy staff and transport escorts also work very well with the school, contributing to the overall good quality of education provided and making Millstead a happy place to be.
50. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and sufficient for the teaching of the curriculum. There has been recent and considerable refurbishment, it is clean and well maintained and wall displays are very good, which makes the whole school look attractive and welcoming. However there is no hydrotherapy pool which means that the 50 per cent of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties receive less hydrotherapy than pupils in similar schools and have to travel some distance losing time in school. Although not a requirement, there are no specialist spaces for any subjects such as information and communication technology or food technology. In addition some of the classrooms are small, walls are thin and noise is frequently a distraction to pupils. The outside play area for the pupils of nursery age is good, with sensory plantings and soft surfacing, however space for older pupils is barely adequate for the activities that take place there. The medical facilities are good.
51. The quality of learning resources is good throughout the school. This represents a significant growth over four years. The main subjects of English and mathematics are well resourced but several subjects require further development of their information and communication resources. The quality and newness of much of the school's equipment contributes significantly to the good standards and pleasant atmosphere of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of pupils' learning further, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Ensure that the educational needs of specific individual pupils are met through the:
 - consistent use of clear, precise learning objectives in lessons;
 - improved and consistent use of assessment systems.*Paragraphs: 3, 16, 36, 37*
- (2) Develop the curriculum further to increase expectations and provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils in all year groups.
Paragraphs: 14, 18, 19
- (3) Improve the development and consistent use of communication systems and aids to support learning for some pupils with significant additional needs.
Paragraphs: 3, 14, 25

In addition the headteacher and governors should consider:

- Improving the system to inform parents in supporting their children's learning at home. *Paragraphs: 21, 38*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	33	13	1	0	0
Percentage	5	18	54	21	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	50
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

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	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	17	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

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
43	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
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: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	7

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	499

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	646,259
Total expenditure	655,344
Expenditure per pupil	12,603
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 9,805
Balance carried forward to next year	58,636

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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	49
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	15	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	23	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	31	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	8	19	0	35
The teaching is good.	77	15	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	92	4	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	23	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	77	19	0	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	88	12	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	27	0	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	19	4	0	15

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents feel that their children like school; they feel that teaching is good and that children make good progress. Parents feel particularly positive about the approachability of the school and that they are kept well informed. In the meeting, they expressed strongly how quickly any small problems are dealt with. Leadership and management are considered a strength. Many parents testify to the very good personal and social progress made by pupils. The major area for concern was homework. In this school it means different things to different parents and this may have skewed the results. However a minority of parents are clear that they would like to have more information to help them support their children's work and progress at home.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Provision for children under five is good. The quality of teaching is good and children learn well. The majority of children who are under five are placed in one class where most have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Two of the older and more able children are placed in another class where the children are all mobile. The curriculum is the same as the curriculum for the rest of the school and is well adapted to suit the very special educational and medical needs of the youngest children in the school. For example, although there are set times for different subjects, lessons often cover more than one area of learning. Staff work well with other professionals such as physiotherapists to meet the varied needs of the children. There are very good relationships between children and adults and children show good attitudes and responses to learning.
53. Children all have individual education plans, which are well written with clearly focused targets for communication, literacy and language, personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. These are regularly reviewed and review comments give evidence of the good progress made by children. Children who have specific physical difficulties also have detailed plans for physiotherapy, which is provided very regularly and is of a high quality.
54. All of the staff working with children under five know the children very well and show a very high degree of care.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Teachers are good at providing opportunities to develop early communication skills well. For example, children are helped to look at an object, experience and show pleasure when something is familiar or exciting or reach out to a chosen drink or toy. The staff work well together and use consistent ways of communicating to children through the use of real objects, signs and easily understood routines. This really helps children to begin to make sense of the world around them and enables them to follow instructions and show how well they have understood.
56. More able children are able to sit and listen to familiar stories where the teacher uses colourful objects from the story such as animals and fruit to maintain the children's interest. Good lesson planning ensures that the needs of each individual child are considered and so they are helped to make better than expected progress. For example, in one lesson a child turned towards the sound of a musical toy. Children are also beginning to paint and work with crayons, which is preparing them for later writing skills. There is some use of 'Makaton' signing, but this is not consistent enough to be of greater benefit to all the children.

Mathematical development

57. Children make good progress through the early stages of mathematical understanding. More able children are able to begin to follow basic instructions, focusing and using

appropriate communication and are introduced to the concepts of 'big' and 'small' with familiar toys and through familiar stories. The teacher uses clear language and signing to describe the objects as the children handle them; this leads to the children making the links between the object and its size. During a number session the teacher makes good use of castanets when counting to three with the children, this is very effective and the children all respond with the most able child counting with the teacher. Good use is made of number rhymes and songs in many different activities and the children respond well to the familiar rhymes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Children make good progress in learning about the world around them. They are helped well to meet different people, visit local places of interest and relate what they learn to themselves and their own lives. For example, work with toys is linked to labelling the parts of their own bodies and several children show good progress by touching their own eyes or hands when asked. Throughout the day children are given clear information when it is time to change activities, for example 'I'm going to put you into your chair for dinner now'. Real objects such as spoons for lunch and bags for home time help the children very well to know what will happen next. Children are helped very well to make things happen by pressing a switch. In one lesson excellent progress was seen as a pupil learned how to make a toy bird dance and sing for the first time.

Physical development

59. The youngest children in the school have easy access to an outdoor play area, this includes a sensory garden so that children can smell the plants and touch different textures which helps them to enjoy exploring things outside and encourages them to want to move around. The good use of a sheltered area means they can be outside and experience different types of weather. Parachute and wheelchair activities as well as a soft playroom contribute substantially to the good range of physical experiences for this group of children. Through these activities the children experience directional movement and show a high level of enjoyment. There are very good relationships with the physiotherapy staff and children's physical needs are often met very well within the classroom as physiotherapy routines are carefully woven into class activities. Children have access to individualised high quality specialist sitting, standing and lying equipment which is used effectively and unobtrusively to ensure that the children are in a good position for learning. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties show very good progress when they enjoy a wheelchair dancing activity, many demonstrate engagement through smiling, eye contact, movement and facial expression.

Creative development

60. The children respond well to music activities. Music is used well to support learning in all areas of learning. Within a large group activity using a parachute, children show distinct signs of recognition and enjoyment of music activities. More able children are able to join in songs with actions, gestures or sounds. High quality teaching during art activities enables children to make good progress by using paint, working with paper to make collages, choosing different coloured paint and putting it onto paper using different types of brushes. Some excellent teaching enables children to develop their understanding of paint and texture in a safe and highly creative atmosphere.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is good leading to good overall achievement and progress. Both classes that have children under five are warm caring environments that provide a great deal of fun. Teachers have high expectations because they know their children very well and understand what they should be aiming to teach next. One child has learned to choose which drink she wants for her break by pointing her eyes in that direction, another loved washing her hands and watching the bubbles appear. Clear targets for supporting children in becoming more independent, relating to others and taking responsibility ensure that children grow and develop well during their time in the youngest classes.

ENGLISH

62. The majority of pupils in all age groups achieve well and make good progress in English. However, for pupils who would benefit from supported communication, progress is erratic because the systems are not consistently implemented.
63. Good progress with reading is evident as most pupils show a real interest and pleasure in looking at books and listening to stories. A few pupils remember traditional stories such as 'The Three Bears' and can guess what might happen next. Some pupils remember that Goldilocks has yellow hair and the baby bear's chair was broken. By the age of seven most of the pupils can communicate simple wishes and give answers to questions about what they have just done. A few pupils can read words and phrases with the aid of pictures and symbols. Some aged six and seven tell the staff 'juice please', or 'biscuit please' at break time, others give the teacher a picture of the drink or snack of their choice. Some ask for what they want and count out their pennies to pay for it. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show good progress when they choose which drink to have by pressing a switch to activate a recorded message.
64. By age eleven the more able pupils show good progress by reading familiar words and phrases using symbols and words. A small number have started to read the early reading books from the Oxford Reading Tree. They are learning initial letter sounds and a few pupils can identify objects beginning with a specific letter sound such as 'f' for feather and 'm' for mop. They are able to match words and symbols with pictures and objects and draw pictures to illustrate aspects of a story or to communicate an idea such as their favourite meal. Several pupils can read their name by the time they are eleven. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show good progress as they enjoy listening to stories, and respond to the sounds, pictures and objects during the lesson with increasing recognition and engagement. Some pupils are able to greet the class in the morning or decide which drink to have during break by using a 'Big Mac' communication aid.
65. Several pupils who find it difficult to communicate gradually learn to tell people what they want by using symbols while others will point and use gesture. Many of the teachers have attended courses such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and 'Makaton' signing, to help pupils have more control in asking for what they want and for sharing their thoughts and feelings. However, these are not sufficiently well implemented to fully support the development of communication skills for pupils with autism and other communication difficulties. This has therefore limited the progress of these pupils in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Where staff use a recognised signing system, pupils' understanding is greatly aided and they make good progress, but not all staff sign. This has been clearly identified by the co-ordinator as an area for development.

66. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in other lessons. Pupils read information and instructions in history lessons when they find out about Christmas pudding recipes for 'Stir up Sunday'. They record simple information by arranging symbols and pictures to record a sequence of events. Younger pupils are helped to place pictures of themselves in order to show a simple history of their lives from babies to childhood. They respond to pictures and sensory stimulation by looking and head turning when listening to stories in other subjects such as history and religious education.
67. The quality of teaching in English is good overall throughout the school for most pupils and has improved considerably since the school re-opened. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' early literacy skills. The best lessons are carefully planned, lively and use a range of activities and resources to maintain concentration. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons happen when teachers are not clear about what pupils should learn or do not match the activities well to their individual needs. This results either in work not being challenging enough for some pupils, or being too difficult for others without considerable adult help. For pupils with the most complex difficulties, the imaginative use of sounds, smells and real objects enables them to understand the stories more easily. Pupils have good opportunities to experience and become familiar with a range of stories and poems. However, without a high level of signing and other systems to help them communicate in all classes, a few pupils cannot make such good progress.
68. The introduction of the literacy hour has made a significant contribution to the good progress pupils make in reading, writing, speaking and listening and the rate of progress increases as pupils move through the school. The structure of the literacy hour has enabled pupils to become familiar with the format of the lesson. They now can anticipate what comes next and the independent learning skills of the higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved. Very good use is made of times such as the beginning of the day, where pupils recall what they are going to do during the day and practise and apply their reading, speaking and listening skills.
69. The new English co-ordinator provides good, effective leadership and has rapidly improved the subject. She works well with the speech and language therapist to develop and implement successful language and communication programmes for specific pupils. The scheme of work is used effectively to plan lessons and ensures that pupils are introduced to a wide range of learning experiences, although it does not yet offer sufficient challenge for some more able pupils. In addition insufficient information is provided for teachers about the different approaches to teaching reading and writing, or how communication systems and information and communication technology can be incorporated into English activities. This has resulted in opportunities being missed for pupils to use picture exchange or symbols to create simple sentences or for them to produce sufficiently challenging written work on the computer.
70. Assessment in English is effective overall. It provides a clear description of the progress pupils make and helps to identify pupils' individual targets for literacy. However, teachers do not yet have clear expectations of what each group of pupils can be expected to achieve and some do not do as well as they might. This is particularly significant for pupils with autism and for more able pupils who have language and learning difficulties, where expectations are too limited.

MATHEMATICS

71. Achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school. This is recognised and appreciated by parents. There has been good improvement in teaching, provision of resources and the progress of pupils over the past three years as the result of good leadership in the subject. This has been recognised by OFSTED and video materials for the National Numeracy Strategy, based upon work at Millstead, have recently been developed.
72. Numeracy skills are developing well and have improved significantly due to the good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy at both key stages. As a result, daily numeracy time is helping pupils to practise and consolidate basic number skills. Good staff training has ensured that lessons are normally planned and taught well, with pace and a good matching of group work tasks to individual abilities. Pupil progress is measured regularly and the overall assessment procedures are very good. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects. In physical education and music lessons, for example, teachers regularly reinforce mathematical concepts such as 'bigger' and 'smaller', emphasise sequence and make frequent use of numbering. Where this happens, teachers draw attention to the connection and this provides reinforcement for pupils who need considerable repetition before basic concepts are established.
73. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils make good progress. They develop their number skills as a result of the good quality numeracy lessons. They benefit from clear targets within their individual education plans and a good range of resources. By the age of seven many pupils recognise two-dimensional shapes, sort objects well by one and two criteria and count with ease up to ten and often twenty. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties develop their understanding by picking up and putting down objects consistently. They begin to recognise early number symbols and take part in number rhymes such as 'Three Little Speckled Frogs' and 'Ten Green Bottles'. All pupils become gradually more involved in the order of the days and week.
74. By Years 6, pupils of all abilities have made good progress and achieved well. Those with complex difficulties have developed their fine motor skills and visual awareness through exploration of a range of resources, such as toys, boxes and 'feely bags'. They begin to anticipate which object will appear from a cardboard tube and, thus, develop their matching skills. In many classes registration and drinks times are used well to reinforce early counting skills. Higher attaining pupils have good symbol recognition skills, being able to identify '2', '5' and '6' with a similar number of objects. They write these symbols with growing confidence and match numbers to spots on a dice. The recognition and drawing of two- and three-dimensional objects has developed well and all pupils use their number skills in subjects such as food technology.
75. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall. Sometimes it is very good and occasionally excellent. Very good teaching is characterised by the pace, humour and rigour of lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well to provide a range of opportunities for pupils to use mental mathematics, to work intensively within groups and to discuss what they have found out in plenary sessions. Teachers know their pupils well and set very specific numeracy targets in the IEPs. Most mathematics lessons are planned in relation to these targets and this is a strength. Very effective teamwork and the good work of teaching assistants is a particular strength and most pupils receive the help that they require to learn successfully. Well-focused questions and the effective use of resources also support the good acquisition of skills. For example, an excellent Year 2 lesson with pupils who have complex difficulties focused on counting from one to three. Every pupil was involved in activities such as choosing a

frog from a box. Time was allowed for all pupils to understand what was happening and to respond. The teacher and assistant missed no opportunities for pupil involvement by touching and talking to pupils and providing stimuli. Throughout the lesson, the two adults exchanged important observations concerning pupil progress such as 'That's...s best hand,' 'Repeat that with ... , she loves counting' and '...can do that himself'. This was an essential element of a lesson that could not be bettered. It ensured that each pupil was challenged and stimulated at every point of the lesson.

76. There are a few occasions when teaching is not so effective and the progress of pupils declines as a result. For example after lunch, teachers have fewer teaching assistants, which makes it more difficult for them to respond to the complexity of needs they have to meet. At these times some good teaching is less effective because more attention needs to be given to the pupils whose behaviour is difficult. A number of lessons failed to fully challenge the small minority of pupils whose attainment was high for the class. In these lessons classroom management and lack of precise targets mean that for higher attaining pupils not enough time is allowed for the full exploration of a mathematics topic and not enough use is made of challenging questions by teacher or assistant. The quality and use of the plenary session in mathematics lessons varies from class to class and the need to review this is recognised by the co-ordinator.
77. Leadership is very good in mathematics. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Particular strengths are in the monitoring of pupils' achievements and in the whole-school approach to improvement. There has been very good staff training and the resources developed contribute significantly to the variety and enjoyment to be seen in mathematics lessons. Good evidence of pupils' progress is regularly collated; although not enough work is currently carried out on comparing and levelling pupils work in all years. Assessment procedures are very effective and are used well to support learning and gather information about pupils' achievement. There are too few information and communication technology resources to further support the development of numeracy, particularly in using, recording and displaying information.

SCIENCE

78. Provision in science is good and the subject is well managed. Pupils' achievement in the subject in both key stages is good overall and they generally progress well. Some opportunities for a few of the highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging however, which slows progress for this group.
79. Pupils show interest in science and have a positive attitude towards it. By the age of seven, pupils are making good progress. For example they work on forces and motions and begin to understand 'pull and push', and enjoy experimenting by pushing and pulling each other in buggies and in blankets.
80. By the age of eleven, pupils have taken part in simple scientific investigations. They make good progress as they grow seeds and learn that they need watering. Pupils also take part in work on changing materials and investigate the making of bread. Pupils also achieve well and make good progress because the good learning opportunities are delivered with enthusiasm.
81. The teaching of science is good overall, and some very good teaching was observed in a class using food to demonstrate how ingredients change. Very good questioning skills from the class teacher helped the pupils to show they knew that 'you have to melt it in the oven'. Good questioning was evident in other classes; when pupils were asked, 'What will happen when it (chocolate) goes in your mouth' an eleven-year-old replied, 'It

will go soft'. The class teacher then extended learning by allowing the pupils to watch chocolate in varying stages of melting, so reinforcing effectively their understanding of how materials can change. The teacher's use of music worked well to reinforce the target of the lesson and resulted in a successful ending which the pupils enjoyed and were involved in. For pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties good use is made of the high number of adults to assess how they respond as they touch materials. Staff work hard to make sure these pupils have good opportunities to experience the world around them. The staff use their voices well to engage the pupils and reflect their responses back to them. Pupils are encouraged to feel with feet and hands, which leads to an awareness of different textures. This varied, interesting range of activities means that pupils of all ages have good attitudes to learning, join in enthusiastically, maintain interest and, for the majority, remain on task.

82. Teachers usually enable pupils to maintain concentration and interest because the presentation is lively and the resources interesting. Sometimes, however, the length of time that pupils wait for their turn is too long, and they become restless and lose concentration. The clear and high expectations of behaviour within lessons usually lead to pupils settling quickly and becoming involved in activities. Assessment opportunities in science are presently underdeveloped and responses rather than learning are recorded. This results in a lack of clearly focused learning targets for the more able pupils and so slows their progress. The planned use of the nationally recognised 'P' levels in science will help to improve assessment and should lead to better target setting for individual pupils. However, very good use is made of photographs to provide evidence of pupils' progress and achievement.
83. In some lessons there are good links to literacy, particularly through the use of big books and small books which pupils recognise and respond to positively. This contributes well to developing overall literacy skills. Teachers also take every opportunity to reinforce pupils developing understanding of number and shape.
84. Science is well managed, there is a good scheme of work and the co-ordinator monitors the quality of planning and learning effectively. There has been good improvement since the new school was established. The time allocated to science is quite limited, which is acceptable for the youngest pupils and for those who are working at the earliest levels. However it does not allow enough time to cover the full breadth of study, which would provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. Occasionally science lessons occur when classes do not have their highest levels of staffing which slows the learning opportunities for the whole group as teachers seek to address the needs of too many pupils. Science resources are good and these have started to be catalogued to ensure that all staff are fully aware of what is available.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Art is well taught and the majority of pupils of all ages learn well and make good progress.
86. The youngest pupils begin to make good progress by exploring the different properties of paint, how thick and thin paint works, how adding glue or glitter affects the texture on the page, creating many appealing effects. They then explore and develop a keen sense of colour through using the one colour in different ways or by mixing different colours together. By the time they reach the age of eleven pupils have also developed a good understanding of many different ways of applying paint, using brushes, sponges, hands, paper or 'squeezezy' bottles for example. A good range of different techniques gradually develops as pupils move through the school, and pupils produce lovely

collages which they add to class friezes. The school is attractively decorated with high quality mobiles, stained-glass effect pictures, papier-mache balloons and paintings in the style of Van Gogh or Monet.

87. Teachers show a good level of knowledge in helping pupils experience a wide range of art activities. This means that gradually, over time, pupils are able to develop increasing skills in using paint, paper and other materials to create some high quality work. In one lesson for the younger pupils, they pressed sponges into paint and gradually built up layers of colours and textures with the different thicknesses of paint. In one excellent lesson the pupils were totally involved with the lively, very high quality teaching, close safe relationships with all staff, exciting resources and excellent care and attention to the pupils as they communicated their feelings and ideas. The quality of the feedback at the end showed very well how pupils appreciated their own work and enjoyed what others had done.
88. In some lessons, the lack of clear objectives for different pupils means that a few, more able pupils cannot extend their ideas and develop skills and techniques at a faster rate.
89. The subject is well managed; every class has a well-organised progressive scheme of work tailored to that group's levels of ability. Each pupil has an art record where responses, but not developing skills, are recorded, which tends to limit even faster progress for the highest attaining pupils. The subject is very well linked to the rest of the curriculum. Divas were made for the festival of Diwali, contributing to religious education as well as pupils' spiritual and multicultural understanding. Communication and numeracy are fully encouraged and artwork is produced to support many other subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Pupils of all ages are achieving well and making good progress in design and technology. Pupils' achievements are good, particularly when they are working with food.
91. Children under five make good progress as they are introduced to familiar everyday objects using all of their senses. They are helped to cut, stick and glue different materials. Pupils by the age of seven are able to explore and experience a range of materials and tools, they enjoy cutting and sticking and using instruments such as scissors and cooking utensils; some of the pupils can use these independently. By the age of eleven pupils are able to make basic models, make choices and try out ideas of putting things together.
92. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of food technology and are confident in teaching this to pupils. Lessons are planned so that they are stimulating and challenging and help pupils to understand how different materials can be used. This means that pupils quickly grasp the connection between what they eat and how it is processed.
93. Pupils are developing a good range of making skills. They become able to make choices in materials they will use to make Christmas cards, for example. During the inspection a lesson in mathematics was linked to design and technology as pupils watched a television programme about fruit and then cut up fruit themselves. Most were able to use knives independently and with confidence; some pupils needed adult support. The teacher explained the activity well so pupils knew what they were doing and why they were doing it. Good links are made to other subjects such as science.

Pupils aged five to seven made biscuits to explore the change in materials. All staff had high expectations and encouraged them to do as much as possible for themselves and pupils were praised for their work. Pupils' understanding of the need for safe and hygienic working habits were well reinforced by staff throughout the lesson.

94. Management of design and technology is satisfactory. There is a clear policy and subject guidelines, which support the good progress seen. However, the breadth of the curriculum is limiting for those few pupils ready to move into the next stage of learning. Monitoring has just started and is planned to monitor the teaching of design and technology annually in each class. Assessment does not clearly indicate what individual pupils need to achieve next which also limits faster progress for some, but not all, pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

95. No geography was taught during the inspection period as it is alternated with history each term. However, the quality of the curriculum and the photographic evidence of pupils' work showed that the subject is well taught and helps pupils develop a good range of skills and understanding. These include developing an understanding of transport within the locality, through the use of a bear that travels, for the youngest pupils and work on the natural environment as well as trips to show positions of places in the local area for the older pupils.
96. Good planning and teaching helps pupils to learn through several senses as well as providing concrete experiences as they travel around to places of local interest. Geography lessons are well organised and lead pupils to develop a keen sense of belonging in the school and the community. Lessons do not have clear objectives for individual pupils however, which limits possible extension of skills and knowledge particularly for the few most able pupils. However, the teachers' and teaching assistants' very good knowledge of pupils means that they generally do make good progress in lessons. The experiential approach is well suited to the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those who are very young. It is cross-linked well to other subjects, such as science and religious education through visits to churches and wildlife habitats. In addition the good resources such as the 'Barnaby Bear' special programme, books and photographs help to bring the subjects alive and hold pupils' interest.
97. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator, who is new, monitors planning and is ready to begin to monitor the quality of teaching in geography. Teachers are clear about what they are to do and resources are good. There is a well-organised scheme, which is progressive from year to year. The range of learning experiences is good for the majority of pupils but lacks extended experiences such as comparisons with other cultures, or work on the Internet. This limits the developing understanding for the few most able pupils. In addition assessment is not linked to subject specific targets and this also limits progress for some pupils.

HISTORY

98. Progress and teaching are good in history at both key stages. Lessons are imaginative, practical and provide a good variety of first-hand objects and experiences that help pupils to understand life from the past.
99. By the age of seven many pupils can say which toys are new and which are very old. One pupil said that the teddy bear looked very old because it had lost an ear and its fur was going thin. Through the effective use of questions, one pupil was able to say that she knew the musical box was old because it had to be wound up and did not use batteries. Others could point to toys they liked and enjoyed exploring how to make the old toys work. Some pupils show good progress by recognising pictures of themselves as babies. With help they placed current and past pictures of themselves in chronological order and could tell the difference between baby sounds and those of their own class.
100. Older pupils are beginning to understand the traditions, events and patterns of life in Victorian and Elizabethan times through handling real objects from the past, dressing up and role-play. Pupils can name what could be found in a Victorian kitchen and how to make a Victorian Christmas pudding. In one class pupils described an Elizabethan banquet, naming some of the popular foods and what would happen. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties showed great pleasure and good recognition of the music they had heard at a party and knew when it was their turn to pass the parcel.
101. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. Well-planned practical activities gradually build and extend pupils' skills and knowledge. Excellent use is made of cross-curricular links to support pupils understanding. For example, one class compared a Victorian and modern cookery book in English, made a list in mathematics and then went shopping for the ingredients of a Victorian Christmas pudding which they were going to make in food technology. They were able to use what they had learnt in science to understand how the ingredients are transformed into a pudding. Key words are taught and good questions used to help pupils really understand what history is. Lessons are fun and lively, interesting resources bring the subject to life.
102. Leadership of history is good. The new co-ordinator has clear documentation and details of past lesson observations. She has completed an audit of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear view of areas for future development. The need to extend the current scheme has been identified to meet the needs of those pupils who are working at the highest levels. Assessment does not identify clear subject targets and this is also identified for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology in lessons and satisfactory progress over time. Elements of the curriculum are very good but, due to a limited range of activities, it is satisfactory overall. Teaching is of a good quality and because it is managed well the subject is developing rapidly.
104. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress in their lessons. In one class with the very youngest pupils, some exciting progress was made as one pupil suddenly grasped the fact that she could press a switch to make a toy sing and dance. She was also able to show a preference by not switching on a different toy that she didn't like so much. An older group of pupils quickly learned how to press switches to turn on the

whisks and mixers that they were using to make a chocolate drink. In the computer club pupils also used the mouse with skill to move the cursor on the screen and so choose colours for a picture. Some pupils also make good progress using the touch screen, rollerballs for tracking and painting and pulling down menu bars. Many pupils benefit well from activating recorded greetings and messages. There are, however, no other aids used to help pupils who might benefit, to communicate.

105. The good teaching is based upon very good quality relationships, where teachers and assistants help pupils to relax and really engage with the activities such as singing and counting while they switch the toys on. Staff have a very good knowledge of each pupil's capabilities and work very effectively with them to help them respond and join in. Lessons are very well organised with a bright and engaging range of toys and events to hold interest and keep pupils working hard. Every opportunity is taken to develop understanding of how things work, including the use of vibration, sound, and taste of a finished product. Sometimes there are too many objects presented to pupils with the greatest difficulties and they are taken away before pupils can practise what they have just learned.
106. The new co-ordinator has improved the subject very well, through a systematic scheme of work, developing resources and with an impressive array of switch technology. She oversees teachers' planning and teaching to ensure that subject quality continues to develop strongly. There has been a continuous development of staff skills and this is ongoing, but staff confidence in using the interactive whiteboard and other common resources is still too limited. Computers are used to help pupils improve their literacy and numeracy through 'Talking Stories', word recognition, symbol writing and programs to help them match, sort and handle data. However, there are still too few opportunities provided for more advanced work in a breadth of subjects. For example, there are no programs used to help pupils control direction, limited use of computers to present pupils work and little use to support pupils in composing and writing their thoughts or ideas. The fact that pupil responses and not their skills are assessed, is a key factor in this lack of expectation for extending skills further. The school has very recently linked to the Internet and this will support improved use of computers to search for and download pictures and information in a range of subjects or communicate with pupils in other schools.

MUSIC

107. The provision for music is good at both key stages and the commitment of staff, together with the good use of song throughout the school, contributes well to good pupil progress.
108. Teachers use a combination of skills, appropriate planning and are ingenious in their use of resources. Classroom support staff work together well, using good teamwork to enrich the lessons and ensure equality of involvement for all pupils. There is good use of music and song in assemblies and across the curriculum. This creates a musical environment, which adds to the joy and involvement of adults and pupils within the school. Three lessons are used here to exemplify the good teaching of music at Millstead.
109. In a very good lesson with pupils who have complex difficulties in Year 2 the theme is vibration and developing a 'soundscape'. One pupil acted as the 'sound man' and operated the CD player, providing sea sounds and music. Each pupil had sand poured over their feet to simulate the beach, while very good use was made of undersea projections. Rain sticks and tambourines provided musical sounds to evoke different

parts of the theme. The lesson took place in near darkness with very effective use being made of bubble tubes, distorted microphones and rotating projector slides. This was a very good example of the use of multi-sensory experiences, including music to assist pupils with complex learning difficulties.

110. In a very good Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils joined in familiar songs, as the pitch varied from high to low. The teacher's and teaching assistant's good knowledge of the subject and the pupils, together with very good teamwork, ensured that every pupil was involved and really enjoyed himself or herself. By making good use of a variety of musical instruments, the teacher ensured that pupils who were beginning to develop attention and response skills were engaged to the full. The richness of the musical experiences, together with the very good relationships in the lesson, encouraged pupils to reinforce musical and social skills to the full. One weakness in some music lessons is the occasional lack of opportunities or time for pupils to show what they can do or explore independently.
111. During the inspection a visiting music therapist worked with three Year 2 pupils experiencing very complex difficulties. The thirty-minute session was a model of its kind in using music to develop pupil involvement and independence. It was clear from the outset that music was to be the language of the session as the pupils were greeted imaginatively through song. Time was given for each pupil to respond fully before choosing and playing different instruments. Pupils' initiated action and their wishes were respected throughout. The pupils were clearly being themselves and were producing responses that were not always possible in a busy classroom. The skills displayed by this visiting professional were of the highest quality. Not enough use is made of this service at present to train staff and develop the skills seen in this lesson.
112. There has been good leadership in music and pupils benefit from teachers' imaginative use of resources and the inclusion of music in many lessons, such as mathematics, physical education, religious education and collective worship. The contribution that music makes to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils is high.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. There is good leadership in physical education and this is moving the subject on well. Teaching and the progress made by pupils are good in lessons but progress is satisfactory overall. There are strong indications that this will improve with further staff training and the introduction of more rigorous assessment procedures.
114. By the age of seven, some pupils show good use of arms and hands in action songs, they work together well in pairs and, where visits are possible, show confidence in the pool. Pupils who experience physical difficulties work well in the soft playroom to develop reaction and dance skills through moving, rolling and turning. By age eleven, many pupils bounce large balls with control and direction. They make good use of space, move freely and show good control in turning, stopping and catching. In addition, they show a developing understanding of how exercise affects our bodies and the need for routines in warming up and cooling down. They are also developing effective dressing skills and show greater independence in this area. Other pupils make good use of the soft play facilities and show considerable development in their gripping and reaching skills.
115. In a good lesson with younger pupils at a local hydrotherapy pool, five pupils worked well and with enthusiasm, although it was only their second visit. At the start of the lesson, they all took part in undressing themselves; dressing targets had been clearly

identified for each pupil and this programme is a strength of the physical education curriculum. In the pool, skilled adult support ensured that pupils felt secure, but were also independent. Pupils were clearly beginning to move away from adult support, make choices with regard to their favourite equipment and show positive attitudes to water. The progress of all five pupils was at least good and this underlines the negative influence on progress arising from the lack of a hydrotherapy pool at Millstead School itself.

116. A very good Year 5 lesson saw the physical education co-ordinator working with five pupils. The lesson started with a very good warming-up session that emphasised the close connection between exercise and heart beat. A pupil with a heart condition was included well in the lesson, being seated at appropriate times and having the assistance of an education support assistant to develop throwing and catching skills. Throughout the lesson, the teacher made good links with literacy, emphasising subject words such as 'stop', 'bounce' and 'throw'. There was also a good link with mathematics, comparing 'heavy' and 'light', 'big' and 'small' equipment. Pairs of pupils bounced large balls to each other, showing good progress in bodily adjustment and co-ordinated actions. After the final cooling-down period pupils helped to clear away the equipment. Three less mobile pupils, who were not at school, had a parallel lesson planned for the soft play area. This was appropriate, but there is as yet no provision for pupils in wheelchairs to be included in the full class lessons at some time during each week.
117. The physical education co-ordinator has shown good leadership. There is now an appropriate curriculum, with good opportunities for older pupils to experience adventurous activities during residential weeks. Plans are in place to introduce assessment and this will assist in the better monitoring of lessons. The school has no hydrotherapy pool. The school recognises the need to improve access to a pool and maximising opportunities for pupils with the most complex difficulties to be involved in whole-class physical education lessons. The links between physical education and physiotherapy are good and the balance between in-class and withdrawal work is appropriate.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. Achievement and progress in religious education is good. Pupils have suitable and good opportunities to make progress and examples of their work indicate that their achievements are good over time. The contribution of religious education to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.
119. A well-structured annual cycle of activities for each class is carefully threaded through with a well-balanced range of religious festivals from the major faiths. All pupils experience an understanding of other religions through visits to or from other faiths. The school has developed very good links with other faiths in the community.
120. Pupils make good progress in religious education. The youngest children are encouraged at the end of the day to prepare for going home; they have a special light and listen to special music, which leads to a quiet and a very peaceful time. Pupils aged eleven are able to make good links about Jesus being special to their own personal achievements. Pupils take pride in sharing their achievements with other pupils and are able to show an understanding of the how well others have done. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to experience peace and reflection within the day and they make good progress over time.

121. Teaching and learning in religious education are good. Teachers use a range of activities to capture pupils' interest. They show interest in looking at photographs of themselves as babies, the teacher effectively leads this interest to preparing for the birth of Jesus. Pupils are able to follow a short video on the birth of Jesus with interest and display good listening skills. As pupils move through the school they begin to increase their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices through celebrating festivals, using costumes and visiting places of worship. However, in some lessons the teachers do not give pupils enough time to respond to complex questions and they cannot easily show what they have understood. Good use is made of real objects to enable pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to join in all activities, which is a key feature of the good teaching with these groups.
122. The management and leadership of religious education are very good. The co-ordinator has ensured a high profile for religious education in collective worship and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The curriculum is good and well balanced but is not always used to extend the knowledge and understanding of the most able pupils. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning supports continued good quality in the subject. Good use is made of links with other special and mainstream colleagues to develop practice. Resources are also good with religious artefacts available for pupils to see, smell and handle.