

INSPECTION REPORT

ARBOUR VALE SCHOOL

Slough

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 110185

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Beane

Reporting inspector: Mr Roger Baker
19946

Dates of inspection: 18th – 20th November 2002

Inspection number: 249340

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stoke Road Slough
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Amanda Gee
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Arbour Vale School is a special school for pupils aged 2 to 16 and for Post-16 students. Since the last inspection, in association with the Wexham Secondary School, the school has been awarded Sport College status and has obtained the 'Sportsmark Gold (Distinction) Award' and the 'Activemark Gold Award'. It also is involved in the National Creative Partnership initiative. Slough is an Educational Action Zone. The current headteacher has been in post for just over a year and during this time developed a new management structure and has undertaken a full review of all policies and practices throughout the school, introducing considerable positive changes. The school provides for the full range of pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and those with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). It has a specialist provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum. Many have some additional needs including emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and specific learning difficulties. Pupils are drawn mainly from the Slough area but there are 27 pupils from neighbouring boroughs. Many come to the school at 11 years of age having previously been integrated at the primary phase but fail to adequately make the transition to the secondary phase. There are 240 pupils on roll, 156 boys (65 per cent) and 84 girls (35 per cent). There are 110 pupils (43 per cent) from ethnic backgrounds, of which 81 are of Pakistani background; the remainder come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is organised into three phases and there are 82 pupils in the primary phase, 122 of pupils in the secondary phase and 37 Post-16 students. The attainment on entry is well below national averages. The school is situated on a large site near the centre of Slough in an area of social deprivation. The school has successfully recruited sufficient staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Arbour Vale is a good school with some very good and excellent features. It effectively meets the diverse range of special educational needs of the pupils. The school governors and senior staff are committed to making the best possible provision and there is strong teamwork throughout the school. The recently appointed headteacher has successfully made significant improvements to teaching and learning and the curriculum provision and assessment procedures. All pupils make very good progress and achieve good standards in relation to their age and degree of learning difficulty. The school now has a very good capacity for improvement and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The provision for pupils' personal development, for spiritual moral, social and cultural development and the way the excellent relationships throughout the school support pupils' progress in these areas.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities and the provision for sports.
- The provision for careers education.
- The way the leadership of the school has instituted change.
- The use made of the links with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The recording of the efforts of pupils to achieve the targets set in their individual educational plans.
- The improvement of provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements overall since the last inspection in 1998 and the key issues identified have been successfully acted upon. During the last year the rate of improvement has increased dramatically and there is now a consistent approach to all procedures throughout the school and high quality teamwork has been established. The newly constituted leadership team excellently monitors and evaluates teaching and learning and this has led to improvements in quality. There have been good developments in extending the roles of subject co-ordinators and assessment procedures are now very good; good use is made of this information in planning lessons. Early Years provision is now very good

and the outdoor play facilities are excellent. The provisions for pupils with SLD and PMLD have improved.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards are well below average for most pupils, apart from a few more able pupils in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16. Pupils make good progress in Early Years and very good progress in the primary years, between ages 11 and 16 and at Post-16.

Pupils with **PMLD** make increasing progress as they mature and their learning skills improve. They increasingly interact positively with staff and their surroundings and gain in practical and learning skills. They use switches to control equipment and electronic talkers but this skill is insufficiently developed throughout the school. They become less reliant on the co-active help of adults and make positive and appropriate choices as they draw, paint, measure and mix ingredients or use equipment. Their social skills develop well. Towards leaving school they become increasingly aware and interested in activities within the community such as shopping where they develop basic skills in the use of money.

Pupils with **SLD or MLD** or having difficulties within the **autistic** spectrum make steady progress across the range of curriculum as they work towards targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs). By the time they leave school most have a very good understanding of books. More able pupils become competent readers and some are able to write independently. They can use a computer to word-process their work and print it out independently. Numeracy skills, including the use of money, develop well. They achieve very good levels of competence in personal and social development, demonstrate confidence and self-esteem and become more independent in school, in college, in the community and in their work related activities and/or work experience. Most students gain external accreditation.

Pupils with **MLD** often make very good progress emotionally, in their self-control and in their educational development. They become confident speakers with some ability to use French. Their reading and writing skills improve considerably but few pupils read for pleasure. By age 16, for example many can record their experiments in science logically in their own words using neat cursive handwriting. They make very good progress in mathematics and have a good understanding of mathematical language but few are secure in their mental arithmetic. They have a good understanding of how a computer works and develop good skills in use of desk-top publishing through the production of posters and downloading from the internet. Through the very good programme of personal and social education, they achieve a good understanding of healthy living and develop positive attitudes to the world of work as they follow a programme culminating in visits to places of work, work experience and link courses at colleges of further education. They respond well to their opportunities to be involved in sports and competitive

games, drama and arts. By the time they leave school most show very positive attitudes, are confident in their interactions with their peers and with adults in the community and in their work experience placements. All pupils gain basic accreditations in a range of subjects, including literacy, numeracy, science, physical education, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT).

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are always positive and pupils work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils demonstrate their sense of community by supporting each other. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities to behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Staff know pupils very well and provide excellent role models. Relationships are excellent and create a climate of personal value and achievement.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance figures are adversely affected by the ill health of a minority of pupils and when pupils go on extended visits to families abroad.

Despite a significant number of pupils having emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, the positive ethos of the school and the consistent approaches to individual needs result in pupils' attitudes being very good. They are keen to participate in lessons and in the wide range of educational and leisure opportunities provided by the school. Relations are excellent throughout the school and as a result pupils and students are friendly and respectful to adults and to each other. They try hard to abide by the school's code of conduct.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall. Teaching is excellent in 4 per cent, very good in 47 per cent, good in 40 per cent and always satisfactory. Pupils learn effectively. Teaching becomes less effective but still satisfactory when teachers' classroom control ineffectively maintains pupils' interest. Overall, teaching meets the needs of all pupils whatever their gender, ethnic background or special educational needs. Teaching in the basic skills of speaking, listening, and numeracy is very good at all stages. In the early and primary years, the teaching is very good. In Years 7-11, where subjects are taught increasingly by 'specialist teaching', it is also often very good. Teaching in the Post 16 provision is very good overall.

Teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn and achieve are usually high. Whenever possible they ask skilful questions that challenge pupils to think logically before answering. Consequently, this enhances the quality of learning, helping pupils to concentrate, work hard and effectively develop a sense of achievement. Most lessons are well planned to extend pupils' learning and resources are well organised. Teachers and assistants work together effectively as a team to ensure that pupils' learning is supported. There were very good examples of teachers providing individual work for all the pupils in the class. In this way pupils are helped to achieve the specific targets set within their IEPs. Pupils often thoroughly enjoy activities and respond positively to the very good behaviour management strategies used by all staff. Teachers are skilled in undertaking assessments of pupils' achievements during sessions and make very good use of this information to plan the next lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Curriculum provision is successful in meeting the wide range of pupils' needs. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is enriched through excellent careers education, a wide range of extra curricular activities and the provision for sports. The provision for outreach is excellent.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported in all classes. The very strong links established with their parents supports pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Across the diverse range of special needs, the school is successful in enabling pupils to make very good progress in their personal development. There is excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very effective. Policies and procedures for child protection, health and safety and the monitoring of pupils' progress in all areas of the curriculum are effectively implemented.

The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the diverse learning needs all of the pupils. There are very good learning opportunities outside the classroom, including clubs, visitors and the very good residential experiences. The very good relationships within the school and the significant attention paid to developing pupils' self-awareness and to treating all pupils with respect and courtesy ensures pupils' excellent spiritual and moral development. The wide range of sporting activities and opportunities for integration promote their social and cultural development. The provision for post-16 students and for pupils on the autistic spectrum is very good. There is a strong ethos for inclusion within the school and all pupils have equality of opportunities. Particular efforts are made for pupils to return to mainstream schools whenever possible and to provide opportunities for inclusion of pupils within the community and mainstream schools and the school is evolving towards being an area resource centre. Excellent partnerships with parents are effective in supporting pupils' personal and educational development. Pupils who need support in managing their personal needs are treated with high levels of respect and dignity, although for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties provision for alternative, augmented, communication systems, manual handling and mobility are underdeveloped.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The excellent way significant positive changes have been achieved in a short time and the very good leadership and management overall, have enabled the school to be effective in meeting the increasingly wide range of pupil needs.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very effectively involved in school management and use their collective expertise very well in strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good procedures are established and target setting has been introduced. However, insufficient attention is paid to the diverse efforts pupils need to make to achieve the steps on their IEPs to measure how effectively the school improves progress and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school makes excellent use of resources, especially grants for sports and continues to actively seek additional support through local and national initiatives. Staffing is very well deployed.

The headteacher, governors and senior staff work very well together as team. Full use is made of the principles of best value through very good planning and financial management.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The progress their children make and the opportunities for accreditation.• The improved approachability of the school and the support provided.• The quality of teaching and learning opportunities provided.• Equality of opportunities within the excellent extra curricular activities.• The way the school understands pupils' emotional needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A more consistent use of homework.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of parents and that the school has improved parents' involvement in the school, making it easier for parents to express their views. The provision for homework is adequate. There was insufficient evidence gained during the inspection to make a judgement on the availability of respite care.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The way the leadership of the school has instituted change.

1. In the short time the headteacher has been in post she has shown excellent leadership. She has analysed carefully the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has acted upon these findings. She has developed a new management structure which has brought the school together as a whole and achieved very good communications between all the departments within the school. Staff morale is now very good and all staff are very well informed.
2. All policies and practices have been reviewed and the school's strengths, for example its links with the community, have been built upon. Shortcomings have been effectively addressed. A good example of these processes is the way improvements have been made in attendance through proactive parental contacts and ensuring that all parents feel welcome and supported. Again, through a review of the curriculum and assessment procedures for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties the quality of assessment throughout the school has improved significantly. The roles and responsibilities of all staff have been made explicit and the leadership team have supported staff well, even though they have themselves been growing into their own roles. Where there have been weaknesses in staff knowledge the governors, with the guidance of the headteacher, have recruited suitable staff. One example of the effectiveness of this recruitment policy in practice is the way the provision for the pupils on the autistic spectrum disorder has been developed in a short time.
3. A very good range of procedures has been introduced to monitor and evaluate the performance of all staff. Much attention has been given to the improvement of teachers' planning and to how pupils learn best. This work has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching which is now mainly good or better. Disappointingly, there is too little excellent teaching but many teachers are capable of consistently achieving these standards. To provide the very best environment for learning, significant improvements have been made to the buildings by creating additional teaching spaces, providing suitable offices for staff and improving the decoration in parts of the school. Thus staff and pupils are seen to be valued in a concrete manner.
4. The school is now in a very good position to make further improvements and many additional improvements are planned, for example improvements to the West Wing, the senior's playground and the redecoration of one of the main corridors.

The use made of the links with parents and the community.

5. Arbour Vale has very good links with parents and the wider community. The school is justifiably recognised as a very valuable part of the Slough community and is a very knowledgeable contributor to special needs education nationally. Community and parent partnerships are used extremely well to promote the personal development of all the pupils.
6. The school has worked very effectively, to increase levels of communication with parents. Since the last inspection, when links with parents were judged to be good and particularly in the last 12 months, the school has involved parents more and more in school events and in their children's learning. The web site is innovative and informative and complements the very good range of newsletters, invitations and telephone links. The school is keen to see parents thoroughly involved in understanding their children's needs, so has arranged a good variety of training aimed at parents, including Makaton, ICT and autism. The school keeps parents well informed of how their children are progressing via the home-school books and regular parents' meetings. Annual reviews are properly undertaken and, in addition, parents receive an annual progress report. This is a new system introduced in September 2002. However, targets for improvement tend to be couched in vague terms, such as "to increase his familiarity and fluency with a wider range of words", which prevents parents from working precisely with the school to help their children progress.

7. Special attention has been paid to the parents who speak English as an additional language. The teacher with responsibility for parent partnership ensures that there is very close and regular liaison with these families. She has become a friend and valuable support to many. Consequently parents who previously were reluctant to be seen at the school, now gladly attend meetings and find out more about their children's learning. Very good numbers of parents attend celebration events, special assemblies and open evenings. Nearly all parents turn up for their child's annual review.
8. The school has exemplary links with the local community and with partner institutions to promote its work and to benefit pupils' progress. All available opportunities are taken to extend and enliven the curriculum appropriately with participation in such projects as Organ Works at Eton College, The Creative Partnerships Project and the very important Sports College status. The school makes a positive point of celebrating the success of pupils in public events and is very proud of its enthusiastic involvement in the Queen's Jubilee celebrations at Bisham Abbey.
9. Staff work very well with mainstream schools and national organisations to share expertise and provide training on special needs education. The school is adept in finding placements for pupils who would benefit from gradual transfer to mainstream education and in return offers sessions to other pupils who need some expert attention or a particular boost in self-esteem. Overall the personal and social development of the pupils is excellent because they have a rich and wide-ranging experience of life and activities beyond lessons.
10. Senior teachers from the school provide a worthwhile 'outreach' service to mainstream schools which has a positive impact on pupils maintaining mainstream placements. The collective expertise of the teachers provides much-valued training, guidance and advice in meeting pupil's special needs within mainstream nursery, primary and secondary schools and support for meeting the needs of children of pre-school age.
11. At the pre-school age level, an outreach teacher provides excellent support where a concern has been raised. For example, for a child with communication and language difficulties at a nursery school, the outreach teacher helped with assessment and support in developing a suitable individual educational programme. She liaised with the parents, staff, LEA and the teacher in charge of English as a second language (EAL) to ensure that the child's needs were met, including having additional specialist support from a speech and language therapist and the services of an educational psychologist. In this way effective home, school and specialist services are working effectively in partnership.
12. The 'Early Bird Programme' provides excellent support for pre-school children with difficulties within the Autistic Spectrum. Specialist teachers from the school are involved in providing parents with training sessions at the school and visits to their homes which aim to help them to understand the difficulties, develop communication and manage behaviour.
13. Staff in mainstream schools appreciate the expertise of the outreach teachers who provide them with training and advice on a one to one basis, through taster courses or through in-service courses on specific issues, such as Autism. Advice is provided on curriculum differentiation, teaching and learning strategies, classroom management and the use of suitable resources. The school has been very effective in providing mentoring for, and delivery of, the very successful SENCOs Accreditation Course and Teaching Assistant Accredited training.
14. The school aims to further develop 'outreach' provision to include a range of training with placements within the school or through 'video conferencing', increase provision for training for professionals and parents and provide a two-way approach to meeting pupils' needs through integrated placements.

The provision for pupils' personal development, for spiritual moral, social and cultural development and the way the excellent relationships throughout the school support pupils' progress in these areas.

15. The school places a very strong emphasis on the promotion of pupils' self awareness and provides an excellent range of opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality. Despite the potential problems of having such a wide range of ages and capabilities amongst the pupils assemblies are very carefully planned to engage pupils' interest and to develop their awareness both of themselves and of other people. For example, in a school assembly, staff and pupils came together to consider what they liked about their school. The sensitive way in which this was handled combined with opportunities for prayer and reflection made this a very spiritual occasion. In a range of lessons there are very effective opportunities to further develop self-awareness further. An example was a religious education lesson for autistic pupils on Diwali where they practised skills of respect for others through the exchange of presents.
16. In art lessons, where pupils gain an awareness of colour and shape and in religious education, where pupils gain an understanding of a range of religions, excellent opportunities are provided for spiritual growth. Music and drama also play a role where pupils are given excellent opportunities to understand human emotions. Videos of pupils' participation in plays show them to be excited and able to empathise with the characters.
17. Particularly noteworthy is the time provided for pupils to express their ideas and to make considered responses. For example, in a French lesson pupils were encouraged to recall vocabulary and given time to do so and, because of this, recall was very good and praised by the teacher. In many lessons open questioning encourages pupils to explain their thought and feelings rather than simply being allowed to answer 'yes' and 'no'. The school places great value on the development of each individual pupil and does so through a caring and supportive environment in which all pupils feel valued by staff.
18. A significant consequence of the staff's emphasis on treating all pupils with respect and courtesy is that moral values are promoted very well. The high regard in which the staff hold the pupils combined with a clear sense of what is acceptable behaviour, are important features in enabling pupils to arrive at a clear sense of right and wrong. The strong moral framework is reflected in the consideration shown to pupils with mobility problems as they move around the school. The school promotes all forms of equality and provides considerable opportunities for pupils to explore and develop moral issues, for example in a geography lesson, where pupils commented upon the destructive force of a volcano and its effect on the lives of some people. In another class, pupils apologised to a teacher because their behaviour had not been up to the standards expected by the school and they understood that they had failed in their responsibility to behave in all circumstances. Pupils are made very aware of the needs of others and through excellent monitoring of behaviour and attitudes and excellent staff role models, pupils work and play together in harmony. Moral behaviour is rewarded and excellent use is made of the Good Things Book to record Outstanding Service Awards.
19. The school makes excellent provision for the development of pupils' social awareness. The provision of a new playground for the younger pupils has had a significant impact on their opportunities for constructive play. The system of prefects is also an excellent opportunity for older pupils to develop skills of responsibility and leadership. This also provides links with the 'World of Work' as prefects have to apply for their posts and undergo a selection process. All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to play an active part in the life of the school. This may take the form of simple tasks such as the return of registers or giving a display of their work before the whole school in assembly. An example of the latter, in which primary aged pupils gave a demonstration of their work on reading before a school assembly, exemplified the high standards of staff and the confidence of the pupils. The use of video conferencing for older pupils to communicate with their peers in other schools is an imaginative and stimulating way of developing pupils' awareness of the wider world. The opportunities afforded to all pupils because of the school's specialist sports college are considerable and provide many situations which develop social awareness. These include table tennis games, camping and other outdoor pursuits as well as competitive games and the special opportunities provided by the excellent facilities in the dance studio. Additionally, Post-16 students regularly attend a local college and formally invite staff to a lunch they prepare. Pupils and students move freely around the school and socialise,

contacts which are encouraged and fostered by the staff. The staff give freely of their time and energies to ensure that all social events are successful and open to all pupils and students.

20. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' cultural awareness. Excellent use is made of the wide range of cultures from which pupils are drawn to make them aware of others' beliefs and traditions. Festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Diwali are actively promoted through music, drama and excellent displays around the school. As well as making pupils aware of cultural activities such as music and drama through concerts and plays, the school also draws upon popular culture to help prepare older pupils for life after school. This is reflected in a very good lesson in which Year 11 pupils analysed the content of teenage magazines to discover the target audience for their advertising. The English co-ordinator has been very successful in raising the profile of books around the school and ensuring that pupils access literature through a wide range of opportunities.
21. The staff work hard on a daily basis to create a community based on mutual respect and tolerance. The school has an atmosphere of friendship and good humour which is a very important element in their successful achievement in creating mature and responsible young adults.

The provision for careers education.

22. Arrangements for work experience and careers development are outstanding. The school has excellent links with a wide variety of appropriate work placements through active membership of the Education Business Partnership and successfully combines these links with exciting and stimulating teaching ensuring that pupils of all levels of ability are actively involved. The Arbour Vale Honours board proudly displays the photos of the details of work experiences of past students and how this has helped their career progression since leaving school. Pupils' involvement in externally provided courses such as "Dress for Success" and "Telephone Techniques" make significant contributions to their self confidence and maturity.
23. Each year the school holds a very useful careers conference that covers subjects such as "ICT in the Work Place" and "Customer Service". Very close links with a range of commercial organisations and the careers' advice organisation ensure that not only is advice offered but pupils and parents experience workshops on themes such as "computers in the workplace" and "customer service." Careers evenings are extremely valuable occasions when parents and students can visit informative stalls set up by Post-16 colleges, agricultural colleges and other training providers. In Years 10 and beyond, the excellent provision for careers education within personal and social education ensures that by the time students leave school, they have had very valuable tasters of the world of work and are extremely well prepared for moving on. As a consequence of this almost all pupils who leave the school go on to further education or to some form of employment or training. Pupils have a very positive attitude to work and look forward to leaving school with a degree of confidence not often see in similar schools. In the Post-16 unit most pupils have extensive opportunities to attend taster courses in college and the course work in school is now linked into pupils' future work in college and so progression is maintained.

The wide range of extra-curricular activities and the provision for sports.

24. Extra-curricular activities are excellent. There are a wide range of lunchtime activities, for example table tennis, dance, football and the opportunity to use the school computers. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' social development. The school's role as a Sports College ensures that the opportunities for extra-curricular sporting activities play a significant part in the life of the pupils; participation in team games and dance are exciting and stimulating for the pupils.
25. The school has completed the first year of its provision as a Sports College and has successfully reached almost all of its targets to raise standards. As a result of the improved facilities and staffing, an excellent, broad and balanced programme of physical education is provided for pupils of all ages and capabilities. These include swimming, table tennis, football, netball, dance, cricket, athletics, hockey, rugby, basketball, riding, softball, Sherborne movement, wheelchair dancing and

soft-play and hydrotherapy. Pupils make very good progress in their development of physical skills and many become competent in a wide range of sports activities, and benefit from participation in sporting fixtures. Excellent opportunities are provided for extra-curricular sporting activities that have had a very positive effect on the inclusion and involvement of girls and pupils from ethnic groups. Pupils benefit from inclusive, out-of-hours activities at the school as members of the wide range of community groups use its facilities and expertise, for example, the after-school Dance Club.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The recording of the efforts of pupils to achieve the targets set in their individual educational plans.

26. The school's procedures for assessment have been improved. The school has successfully introduced the QCA National Curriculum targets for pupils whose skills knowledge and understanding does not reach that required for Level 1 and so are 'working towards' this level. These are known as the P-Scales. Each pupil has a range of targets build around these scales or, if they have already achieved National Curriculum Targets, suitable targets are taken from the level descriptors. In this way all pupils have individual educational plans which contain achievable targets. From this data pupils' progress can be measured and reported to parents. These procedures are now very good.
27. Teachers make good use of the information they collect to plan for future activities and to ensure that pupils make progress. The data collected to formulate whole school targets is less meaningful as it provides no measures of pupil's efforts to achieve their IEP targets. However, there are some good procedures in place. For example, the school has identified a similar all age special school to make some comparisons and takes into account the targets set for schools by the local authority. Additionally the school compares the external examination results of pupils in Years 10 and 11 year on year. From this information targets are set for each key stage and for each department within a key stage. These targets are based on the percentage of pupils who reach the targets set within their individual educational plans, for example, in English, at Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, the first two whole school targets set are for 85 per cent of pupils to increase their reading age by five months and 75 per cent of pupils to increase their spelling age by 5 months. However, at the time of the inspection, there were no measures of the individual effort required by pupils to achieve the targets on their individual educational plans or measures of the difficulty of progressing from one step to another. Thus, current target setting arrangements, while making a good start towards the difficult process of setting whole school targets for the school, require considerable improvements if they are to be meaningful. They do not measure the improvements pupils make, taking into account their level of learning difficulty and the effort they may have to put into achieving a very small step on their individual educational plan. The school has no real measures of how well they are doing in terms of 'adding value' to pupils skills, knowledge and understanding over and above those which may be expected through getting older. The school is beginning to collect suitable data for such an exercise and staff are excited about the prospect of designing systems to address these challenges.

The provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

28. For pupils with physical difficulties, visiting physiotherapists and an occupational therapist liaise well with staff to ensure that suitable movement and exercise programmes are effectively implemented according to the specialist assessment of individual needs. In this way staff enable these pupils to maintain or improve their movement skills, posture and muscle tone. Good advice and guidance is provided so that staff may use hoists or effective lifting techniques when moving non-ambulant pupils during their daily activities. However, in the specialist room for pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and in other excellent specialist facilities, including the new soft-play room, the dark and light sensory rooms and the dance studio, no provision is made for the easy movement of pupils through mechanical means. This restricts access to some activities and facilities for some pupils.

29. A significant minority of pupils are non-ambulant and use wheelchairs. There is suitable wheelchair access to all parts of the school although some specialist rooms such as for science and food technology on the upper floor are a long way from the lift. Some pupils are effectively developing good upper body strength and co-ordination and learning to become skilful in moving themselves around the school independently in their wheelchairs. Others, who lack the physical control skills to do this, do not have opportunities to learn to control motorised mobility through the use of suitable switches. This is unsatisfactory.
30. The school effectively implements very good individual programmes to enable pupils with severe communication difficulties to communicate their wants and needs. Very good use is made of facial expression, gesture, objects of reference, signing, pictures, symbols and labels to support the development of pupils' receptive and expressive communication. Staff have developed good skills in using a multi-sensory approach to the development of pupils' early learning and concepts so that most pupils achieve effective communications with familiar adults. Some use is made of simple electronic 'touch talkers' so that pupils can 'say' a number of key statements, such as greetings or routine requests, but this alternative means of communication is significantly underdeveloped. The school, along with the LEA, is proposing to develop this provision through involvement in the Communication Aids Project initiative and this needs to be pursued with some urgency so that pupils needs are more effectively met.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To develop the provision within the school further and make it a centre of excellence the governors and the school should:

- (1) Recording of the efforts of pupils to achieve the targets set in their individual educational plans.
- (paragraph 26 and 27)*
- (2) Improve provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties by:
- Improving the curricular provision for alternative augmented communication systems for pupils with profound speech and communication difficulties;
 - the implementation of mobility training for those who require it; and
 - improving the provision of suitable hoists for lifting.

(paragraph 28, 29 and 30)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
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	2	21	18	4	0	0	0
Percentage	4	47	40	9	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	241
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	103

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.23

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.30

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	3	11

All pupils working towards Level 1

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	22	4	26

No pupils achieved National Curriculum Level 4

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	17	6	23

No pupils achieved National Curriculum Level 5.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	19	11	30

Year 11 Accredited Examinations Year 2000 to 2002: (CoE and AEB etc)

Examination	2000	2001	2002
Number of students	22	31	28
AEB Literacy			
Level 1	1	6	0
Level 2	16	11	20
Level 3	0	3	0
AEB Numeracy			
Level 1	4	5	9
Level 2	10	10	3
Level 3	6	1	18
Level 4	0	2	0
AQA-SEG Science			
Pass (Level 1)	4	2	3
Merit (Level 2)	9	5	7
Distinction (Level 3)	2	3	2
AQA-SEC PE			
Pass (Level 1)	4	11	0
Merit (Level 2)	15	5	11
Distinction (Level 3)	4	5	3
AQA-SEC ICT			
Level 1	Not taken	0	0
Level 2	Not taken	1	8
Level 3	Not taken	3	6
Edexcel Mathematics			
Bronze	Not taken	8	3
Silver	Not taken	2	4
Gold	Not taken	2	4
Edexcel Foundation English			
Entry Level 2	Not taken	Not taken	6
Entry Level 3	Not taken	Not taken	8
Edexcel Literacy			
Level 2	Not taken	Not taken	5
Level 3	Not taken	Not taken	8
Edexcel D and T			
Pass	Not taken	Not taken	3
Merit	Not taken	Not taken	3

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2002	9	7	16

Twenty-six ASDAN, OCR or ESB certificates were awarded to Post –16 students.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	113	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	18	2	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	81	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	37
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y13

Total number of education support staff	54
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1680.25

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	2,587,603
Total expenditure	2,689,703
Expenditure per pupil	11,161
Balance brought forward from previous year	170,165
Balance carried forward to next year	68,065

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	245
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	24	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	36	6	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	50	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	36	18	4	6
The teaching is good.	60	36	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	34	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	44	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	38	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	48	36	6	0	2