

INSPECTION REPORT

HINDERTON SCHOOL

Ellesmere Port

LEA area:Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111510

Headteacher: Liam McCallion

Reporting inspector: Judith Charlesworth
21501

Dates of inspection:7th- 8th October 2002

Inspection number:249348

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Capenhurst Lane
Whitby
Ellesmere Port
Cheshire

Postcode: L65 7AQ

Telephone number: 0151 355 2177

Fax number: 0151 356 8765

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Julie Dear

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21501	Judith Charlesworth	Registered inspector
9981	Saleem Hussain	Lay inspector
13101	Mike Kell	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International

Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
BN21 3YB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	[]
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	[]
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	[]
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	[]
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	[]

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hinderton School provides for 21 pupils aged three to seven years with autism and severe communication difficulties. There are currently seven pupils of reception age and no nursery-age pupils. It is around average in size for the age range. The school is situated in a residential area of Ellesmere Port, within walking distance of a mainstream infant school with which it has very close links. The number of girls is increasing, and they now form one quarter of the school population. Pupils are assessed as having well-below average attainment on entry overall, although some attain at or near expected levels for their age in certain areas, such as physical development. All pupils have statements of their special educational needs. There is a wide socio-economic mix, in keeping with the school's intake from the whole of Cheshire, but there are considerably lower numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals than average for this type of school. All but one pupil is white English and none have English as an additional language. Pupils are taught in classes of seven, one for nursery/reception age and two mixed-age classes for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective. Although the cost of educating a pupil in this school is high in comparison to other similar schools, the school provides good value for money because: the leadership and management are very good; teaching is very good; and pupils achieve very well in relation to the targets set on their individual education plans and in the important areas of English, mathematics and personal development.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are excellent, and leadership and management are very good overall.
- Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, personal and social education, and the corresponding areas of the curriculum for nursery/reception pupils, and against the personal targets set in their individual education plans.
- The provision for promoting positive attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development is very good and threaded throughout the work of the school.
- The opportunities provided for shared learning with mainstream pupils are excellent.
- Parents hold the school in very high regard and they support the school very well.

What could be improved

- Curriculum planning.
- Assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and personal and social education - and their corresponding areas of learning in the curriculum for nursery/reception pupils.

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

School improvement since the last inspection in 1998 has been very good. All the previous key issues have been successfully addressed. Considerable money and time has been spent on improving the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and as a result pupils' skills are much improved. Religious education (RE) now reflects the locally agreed syllabus and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The basis for the purchase of resources has changed and is now subject-led; consequently, resources are improved for all subjects, and in particular for RE, history, geography and ICT as indicated in the last report. Information for parents regarding homework has improved,

although a few parents are still unsure of what to expect. The prospectus now includes all the required information, and the governing body properly considers the cost-effectiveness of expenditure. In addition to these identified points, a number of further developments and improvements have also been put into place. For example, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching have improved, and constructive feedback has contributed to an improvement in teaching which was already judged to be good. There has been a significant increase in the provision of shared learning opportunities with mainstream pupils, and extra support staff have been appointed to support pupils' independence and inclusive learning.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 2	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
Reading	A	A	good	B
Writing	A	A	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

Pupils of all levels of attainment, and both boys and girls, achieve very well in these priority areas. In the 2002 national tests in English, mathematics and science, teacher assessment showed that three higher attaining pupils reached levels expected for their age. The remainder of the year group made very good progress as measured by the new national *P Levels*.^{*} These results indicate very good achievement. Pupils' achievement in the other subjects is good. Last year, the school set measurable targets for pupils' progress in English and mathematics, measured with the *P Levels*. These targets were appropriate, and were met. They have been extended to include science for this year. Taking their difficulties into consideration, pupils are particularly good at listening and responding. Their personal development is very good, and almost all are sociable and self-controlled.

^{*}*P Levels* give performance indicators for pupils with special educational needs. There are eight levels leading into the National Curriculum Level 1 descriptor of all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school. They show a real interest in their work and play, and clearly enjoy themselves.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils usually listen carefully and respond appropriately, for example giving an answer or calming down. The atmosphere is generally very quiet and happy. With very effective support from staff, pupils learn to manage their own behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are mostly kind towards one another and have excellent relationships with staff. They are sociable and many are able to work and play independently, with minimal support.
Attendance	Very good. It is well above average for this type of school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching is very good for all age groups, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Throughout the school, teaching is equally good for boys and girls, and pupils of all abilities. The teaching of reception-age pupils is very effective and gives them a very positive start in school. They learn and achieve very well, and this is continued when they move into their next class. Teaching in communication, literacy and numeracy throughout the school is never less than good, which is reflected in pupils' high achievement in these areas. Consideration for pupils' personal development is given a very high priority, and is threaded through the everyday work of the school. As a result pupils make very good progress. Particular strengths in teaching include: the very skilled management of pupils which helps keep the atmosphere calm and purposeful and supports the pupils in the management of their own behaviour; the effective use of support staff to help pupils learn, which leads to the development of their interest, concentration and independence; the unobtrusive team work between all adults in the classroom; the staff's in-depth knowledge about the needs of pupils with autism, and how best to support their learning; the way in which individual pupils are challenged at their own particular level, so they are continually being helped to make the effort and learn more; the quality of day-to-day assessment which informs all teaching and planning in the core areas; and the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. In a very small number of lessons in non-core subjects such as history, the learning objectives of the lesson were unclear. As a result, the teacher did not focus so well on supporting pupils' progress. Teaching and learning in these lessons was satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is very good in practice, although it is not always clear in curriculum documentation what exactly teachers want the pupils to learn, and how this relates to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum or the curriculum for nursery and reception pupils. Nevertheless, all subjects are appropriately taught through topics which meet the needs and interests of these young pupils very well. The opportunities provided for pupils to learn and play alongside mainstream pupils are excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' personal development is part and parcel of the everyday work of the school, and is evident in pupils' very good behaviour, the sensitive support given, and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils. In addition, the school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and provision for social and cultural development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good overall. The school's procedures and efforts to promote good attendance and behaviour are excellent. Day to day assessment in the school's core subjects is excellent and used very well to inform teaching and planning for pupils' progress. Assessment in the other subjects of the curriculum, however, is less formalised and a systematic approach has not yet been developed.
Partnership with parents	Parents' views of the school, their involvement in its work and contribution to their children's learning are all very good. The school gives very high priority to establishing good relationships and effective links with parents, and is extremely successful in this.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. All staff are key in this small school. The headteacher is a careful, sensitive and highly effective leader whose work is focused on continually improving the quality of education provided. The deputy headteacher provides very good support and is a model of very good teaching practice. The other teachers, classroom assistants and speech and language therapists also work extremely hard during and out of school time to provide high quality education. They promote pupils' high achievement very successfully.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	This is good. Governors are prepared to ask searching questions about the school's work and management, and so are appropriately involved in shaping its direction. As individuals with different degrees of experience in governance, they are becoming increasingly effective as a united body as the newer members learn "the job."
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good. The managers take self-evaluation seriously and set appropriate targets for improvement. All managers and staff share a commitment to meet these, and succeed. Despite its small size, the headteacher has introduced effective systems for checking how staff and pupils are doing overall, and for setting about making improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are used wisely and carefully to best provide for all pupils, for example: to develop the provision for ICT, to provide extra support for pupils to learn along-side their mainstream peers, and through longer-term saving, to improve the building. Governors consult and take on the views of parents; they seek the best value in purchases, and are

	starting to check how pupils' achievement compares with other similar pupils.'
--	--

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 • They feel comfortable approaching the school about anything • Teaching is good • Children's behaviour is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several parents expressed concern about the lack of similar provision for pupils to move on to when they leave Hinderton • A small number of parents are still unclear about what to expect by way of homework

The inspection team fully supports the parents positive comments, and appreciates their concerns about their children's transfer to their next school. The school has certainly addressed the issue of homework appropriately, but is now aware that some parents may still not be clear about it and will act accordingly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are excellent, and leadership and management is very good overall.

1. The successful leadership and management are based on the shared commitment of all to the continued development and improvement of the school, the quality of education provided, and the achievement of the pupils.

2. The school manages to combine all the best elements of being a small school with high quality education and effective monitoring systems to ensure pupils are learning well. Central to its effectiveness is the strong commitment of all adults involved to the achievement and well-being of the pupils. This includes the members of the governing body who, overall, have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school, and are well-involved in monitoring and evaluating its work and performance. They are kept very well informed by the headteacher, and are involved in in-depth discussions about aspects of the school. Most governors are regular visitors or helpers in the school, and gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of its work and their own responsibilities. This helps them ask searching questions and be properly involved in discussion and decisions about its development.

3. Although already judged to be a very good school when he took up his post two years ago, the headteacher was keen that the school should not be complacent, and that it should continue to develop and improve. The small size of the school means that staff know all pupils very well, and share in the successes and challenges of each one. This creates a warm, secure and friendly atmosphere in which staff are motivated to work effectively, and pupils motivated to learn. The relationships and team-work between class staff are excellent, as are the relationships between staff and pupils. Parents have commented that the staff look on the pupils as people first and foremost, and that the happiness and success of the pupils, and the staff's dedicated approach, have a very positive knock-on effect on the parents themselves.

4. At the time of the last inspection, the staff were already very committed to the work of the school and the progress of the pupils, and were judged to be a "hardworking, knowledgeable and very effective team." They have taken on innovations and developments wholeheartedly – even when this has meant considerable extra work because there are so few of them to carry it out. For example, the role of subject leaders has been developed; schemes of work have been revised, and responsibility for subject-based resources has passed to the subject leaders. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully introduced the national literacy and numeracy strategies and new government guidance for the curriculum for Foundation Stage pupils. This has brought about good improvement in pupils' achievement. The last inspection recommended significant developments in the school's provision for RE and ICT. These have been introduced successfully and systematically into Hinderton, and as a result, pupils' achievements have improved.

5. The national initiative of performance management for teachers has replaced the old appraisal system. The head teacher has implemented this very well, and provides constructive feedback to teachers which has resulted in improvement in the quality of teaching. Besides this formalised monitoring of teaching, the headteacher also teaches regularly in every class, following the teachers' planning. In this way, he can check on the effectiveness of the planning and whether pupils are being sufficiently challenged. The appointment of a deputy head teacher who is a model of very good teaching practice has also helped to raise the overall standards of teaching and learning in the school. At the time

of the last inspection, just over 33 per cent of lessons were judged to be very good, whereas 60 per cent were judged to be very good on this occasion. This improvement has been coupled with the introduction, nationally, of benchmarking by which the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs can be determined (*P Levels*). This has sparked much discussion at Hinderton. Staff have looked carefully at the analysis of pupils' levels of attainment to see how their teaching can be focused to improve pupils' learning in specific areas. They are now working towards setting precise targets for achievement for individual pupils.

6. The school manages to "get it right" on all counts. It provides a safe and secure family environment in which pupils thrive and overcome the challenges of their autism, whilst also providing a high quality of education through focused monitoring, evaluation and development planning. These are set in the context of initiatives which enrich the pupils' lives and opportunities for learning, such as increasing the provision of learning opportunities shared with mainstream pupils, and helping them appreciate the benefits of the cultural diversity of society.

Teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, personal and social education, and the corresponding areas of the curriculum for nursery/reception pupils, and against the personal targets set in their individual education plans.

7. Teaching is very good. Nearly two thirds of the lessons observed were very good, and most of the remainder were good. Teaching for both the reception-age pupils and the Year 1 and 2 pupils was very good. The teaching observed was particularly good in English/communication, language and literacy; mathematics; and personal and social education. This ties in with careful, precise planning in literacy and numeracy, using the guidance from the national strategies for teaching and learning in these subjects; with the staff's skills in promoting pupils' personal development throughout all their work; with their knowledge and understanding of how best to help pupils with autism learn; and with very careful, detailed assessments and records of pupils' skills and achievements in these subjects which informs both subsequent lesson planning and planning for the individuals' progress. As a result of these factors, pupils learn very well.

8. Whilst teaching in physical education is also very good, and pupils' skills very well developed, two lessons observed in science and history were judged to be satisfactory rather than good or very good. This was because the learning objectives for the lessons were unclear. This is due, in part, to the lack of clear learning objectives written in the schemes of work and topic plans, from which lesson objectives are taken. They give detail on the activities to be provided but lack a precise focus on the main point of learning in the lesson. In addition, assessment is under-developed in the non-core subjects which means there is no detailed picture of pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding to help plan more effectively for their progress in these subjects. So saying, the inspectors' judgement was that overall, pupils achieve well in the non-core subjects of the curriculum. This is due to the staff's in-depth knowledge of the pupils, although it is not systematically documented, and their skill in using this to support each pupil's learning at their own particular level and speed.

9. Pupils have detailed individual education plans with a range of learning targets for the term specified. These are very well addressed. A few of these are given overall priority, and separately recorded on a *priority target sheet*. These are the most important next steps for the pupil to achieve, which, in turn, will support learning in all subjects. They may include, for example, targets for communication and behaviour. Staff have these in mind at all times, and all work is successfully directed at developing both pupils' subject skills, knowledge and understanding, and also their personal priority needs.

10. Several factors contribute to the most effective teaching and learning. All staff, including support staff, are very skilled in managing pupils' behaviour to help them stay calm and concentrate on what they are doing. Staff are clear in their directions and questioning, and pupils know what is expected of them and what to do. Staff remain very calm and positive at all times. Their relationships with the pupils are excellent, and pupils feel valued and secure. This approach works to defuse situations, rather than escalate them by giving unnecessary pressure. This passes on to the pupils who are, generally, remarkably calm and interested in their work. If necessary, staff use specially produced pictures to ensure pupils understand what is being said. Pupils learn to use these pictures themselves to initiate conversation, which gives them a good degree of independence and reduces frustrations in communication.

11. Teachers are highly skilled at supporting each individual pupil to make the effort and do "just that little bit more." In the most effective lessons, each pupil is always balanced on what s/he already knows or can do, and is reaching up to grasp new learning. The very timely support given ensures that s/he succeeds. This relates to pupils of all levels of attainment, and the skill of the teacher is in knowing just where to pitch her questions and demands of the pupils to help them "climb the ladder of learning."

12. The team work in the classes is excellent. Each adult, including volunteers, has a specific role to play, and all are well-briefed before the lesson commences. For example, after whole-class group work, the teacher may take two or three pupils in one direction to carry out a given task; the remainder of the class will be directed to choose from a range of activities which have already been prepared and enticingly set out; and the support assistant will see pupils individually to focus on a particular bit of skill development. The roles and responsibilities of the staff are interchangeable so that all pupils are used to working with a range of adults. Pupils go happily to both their chosen activity and to the teacher or assistant, become involved and concentrate well on what they are doing. All this is achieved with no time wasted, which both prevents any lapse into unsuitable behaviour and maximises the time available for pupils to learn.

The provision for promoting positive attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development is very good and threaded throughout the work of the school.

13. Central to the work of the school are several important factors which combine to promote pupils' personal development very effectively.

14. Staff value each pupil as an individual person and relationships between the staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are treated calmly and with warmth and respect, but firmly enough to help them conform and take part in class work. The small size of the school means that all staff know all the pupils well, which contributes very well to the safe, secure atmosphere. This encourages the pupils to relax and learn. Pupils are praised when it is deserved, and encouraged to do their best at all times. The staff recognise that each individual pupil has a personal "best" and do not make unrealistic demands on them, although pupils are always encouraged to go one step further in all that they do. This positive ethos supports the very good relationships between the pupils themselves. On several occasions, pupils were observed playing contentedly alongside one another, showing each other items, and touching each other affectionately. This is a great achievement for many of these pupils.

15. The staff recognise the importance of helping pupils overcome the challenges of their autism so they can learn more effectively. They give clear instructions and information to the pupils, for example going through their picture timetable several times during the day so that the pupils know exactly what is happening. This reduces anxiety and contributes very well to pupils' positive attitudes to their work and their very good behaviour. Staff consider carefully how much direct intervention they should give at any one time. On one occasion, a

movement to music lesson with reception-age pupils was planned to have low levels of staff assistance. Staff barely intervened, but nevertheless, the pupils mostly participated in the entire 15 minute session. This was followed by an active physical education session on the soft play equipment in which high levels of intervention were planned. As a result, staff joined pupils enthusiastically and energetically in their play and the pupils clearly had a wonderful time and made good gains in their physical skills and personal development. The staff recognise how difficult transitions from one activity or place to another can be for the pupils, and plan to minimise these to help reduce their anxiety. One good example of this was when a pupil arrived in school a little distressed, he was left alone for a few minutes. He was then shown a picture to let him know what he would be doing, and supported gently but firmly to join the rest of the class. He did this successfully, and joined in the mathematics activity that was going on. Too much pressure when he first arrived would have increased his distress, and prevented him from taking part until later in the lesson.

16. The school strives to work in partnership with parents at all times. There is frequent communication between home and school, and problems in either place are tackled together which parents find very helpful. Pupils recognise the close relationships between home and school, and this contributes to their security and well-being which in turn impacts positively on their personal development.

17. The school is keen to offer pupils a high quality education to help them achieve as much as possible. Provision for their personal development is given priority within this. There are two developments in particular that have made a significant contribution. Firstly, the school is committed to providing regular opportunities for all pupils to share in learning and play with pupils in mainstream schools. Evaluations of the outcomes of these links have shown them to be of real benefit to pupils' personal development – for example in sharing and co-operation. Secondly, the staff have worked very hard to improve the provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development as these were identified as relative weaknesses in the last inspection. Both these areas are now very well catered for. Staff take advantage of unexpected moments to increase pupils' spiritual awareness - for example when considering the tragedy of the destruction of the twin towers on September 11th 2001 - as well as planning provision in particular sessions such as RE and assemblies. Much is done to support pupils' cultural development and multi-cultural awareness; for example, a visiting artist from Ghana ran a music workshop, and pupils have taken part in Indian dance. Other aspects of cultural development are also well addressed through visits and visitors to school. Since most of these are done in conjunction with pupils from mainstream schools, the benefits to pupils' personal development are very significant.

The opportunities provided for shared learning with mainstream pupils are excellent.

18. Hinderton has welcomed the local and national drive towards inclusive education, and has systematically increased the opportunities it provides for pupils to share in learning and play with their mainstream peers. For the past two years, the school has set itself targets for pupils' inclusion in shared learning; this year, the goal is for every pupil to have the opportunity of at least five sessions of shared learning. The school's closest link is with an infant school within close walking distance, but joint activities have taken place with several local schools.

19. The aim of this inclusive education is that the Hinderton pupils will have full access to a social and academic life shared with mainstream pupils. The school expects them to experience and welcome acceptance and real opportunities for friendships and positive relationships, as well as sharing good learning experiences. So saying, staff, governors and parents also recognise the importance of each pupil's entitlement to an education that best suits his or her special needs, and that Hinderton has an important part to play in this.

20. The systematic drive for increasing inclusive opportunities began two years ago, and started with an after-school club for the Year 1 and 2 Hinderton pupils and half of the Year 1 pupils from the local school. This pilot was closely observed and evaluated by both schools' staff. All noticed that there were many benefits; pupils from both schools increased the amount of sharing, co-operation and interactions with each other. For example, pupils from both schools sometimes chose a pupil from the other school as their special partner. Thus the aims of the project were met. On the basis of this success, the school planned for increased opportunities for shared learning. Reception-aged pupils from the infant school joined pupils at Hinderton to take part in their everyday curricular activities. This year, a development due to start at the end of October sees more pupils coming over to share in activities; this will go on until the end of the summer term. There will be further monitoring and evaluation, including by an external professional, and learning targets applicable to pupils from both schools have been formulated for each shared session and will be evaluated by the respective school's staff.

21. During the past year, there have been various joint "one-off" projects which have been of great benefit to the personal, social and cultural development of pupils from both schools. For example, there has been a joint workshop with a music focus run by a Ghanaian artist, culminating in a presentation for parents of pupils from both schools; a trio of musicians from Manchester worked with pupils from both schools, which also ended in a joint presentation to parents; and pupils from Hinderton have taken part in Indian Dance at another local school.

22. Alongside these, however, run longer-term opportunities for shared learning which also promote pupils' personal development very well. The focus of both these and the "one-off" projects is equal participation in activities and situations by pupils from Hinderton and mainstream partner schools. The most recent involved pupils staying to lunch at each other's schools, and going out to play together. This very much fulfils the school's aim for pupils to share social as well as academic life. The two school sweatshirts are the same colour, and Hinderton has changed the size of the logo on theirs so pupils' uniforms are largely indistinguishable from each other. The phrase *Learning Together* has been introduced into the school logo as an indication of Hinderton's commitment to inclusive learning.

23. As the shared learning opportunities have been extended, staff of the schools involved have also increasingly benefited. The headteachers of Hinderton and the link school have carried out joint staff training, and a member of the Hinderton staff who has already done a particular course is joining the infant school's staff training day instead of repeating it with her Hinderton colleagues. This supports the relationships between the schools, and further opportunities for inclusion, and gives both schools' staff a valuable understanding of the nature of each others' work. Informal support and suggestions to help pupils with challenging behaviour in the mainstream school have been given by Hinderton staff to their colleagues. Both schools' staff are currently learning about the many different ways in which children learn, for example visually, orally and through movement. This is of equal benefit to all teachers, and to pupils in both schools, and supports staff in mainstream in meeting the needs of all pupils with special needs

Parents hold the school in very high regard and they support the school very well

24. Parents' views of the school, as expressed at their meeting with the Registered Inspector, by the questionnaire returns and in separate notes and letters are almost entirely highly positive. The school gives very high priority to establishing and maintaining positive relationships with parents. Staff recognise that parents are the prime educators of their children, and strive to work in partnership with them at all times. Before pupils start at the school, parents complete a *Parents in Partnership* form where they give important details about their child's likes and dislikes, and outline their expectations of the school. These are used to help staff work productively with pupils from the moment they first start attending the school, and is evidence of the school's "no time-wasting" approach and genuine concern to help pupils achieve. As a result parents feel that they are in close partnership with the school from the beginning which sets the pattern of the home-school working relationship very well. As a development, the school plans to ask parents of pupils moving on from Hinderton whether the expectations outlined in these forms were fulfilled. The managers intend to use this as a measure of parents' satisfaction, and a basis for planning improvements, if necessary, which is good practice in the management of development planning.

25. Parents feel that they can approach the school at any time with a problem or questions, and that they will be well-received and supported. They are welcomed at all times, with or without an appointment, and are grateful to the school staff for their understanding approach to both their children and themselves. Parents consider teaching to be good, and as a result, that their children make good progress, grow up fast and learn to behave. They say this makes them much easier to manage at home. Comments expressed include that their children make "fabulous" progress, especially in personal development, self-care skills, confidence and independence. One example among several given was that at the last Christmas Show, all pupils participated and stayed in the hall, whereas not long previously, a few pupils could not even tolerate being in the same room as others.

26. Parents say that they are kept very well informed about their children's progress and achievements. The home-school books tells parents what their children have been doing daily, and are used as a means of sharing concerns and addressing them both at home and at school. Parents feel that this joint approach helps greatly in their children's development. Phone-calls are exchanged regularly, particularly if there has been a problem either at home or at school. Parents feel that there is a spirit of openness at the school which encourages them to ask for help if they need it. They do not feel criticised or embarrassed. Pupils' individual education plans are very thorough, and parents find the priority targets helpful and a good measure of their children's progress. They consider the annual reports to be extremely informative, and a true representation of their children's skills.

27. In all, parents' views are well summed up by the following quotes from letters to the inspection team:

"... I can honestly say that the school has surpassed itself in every way. I feel proud to be associated with the school....."

"We are very pleased with the school and the commitment of the staff. The head teacher is a tremendous asset to the school. He is very approachable and has formed links with local mainstream schools which we believe are most beneficial to our child and to the other children"

"The staff are extremely sensitive to the needs of the children. The whole atmosphere of the school is friendly, caring, secure. ... My son has progressed far beyond

what I expected over his first year at the school. This has given him more confidence and made him more receptive to learning. I feel I shall be forever in their debt..”

“...Overall, I can't praise them enough at the school. Our family's experience of Hinderton has been a wonderful and enriching one....”

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Curriculum planning

28. Curriculum planning is over-complicated at times, and does not always support the setting of clear learning objectives or tie in closely enough with the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum for nursery and reception age pupils.

29. The school teaches all the areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and subjects of the National Curriculum through topics, which is a good approach for this age group.

30. A topic is planned for the term, and the main features of what will be covered in each subject, mostly associated with the topic in some way, are identified in an outline plan. For example, the Year 1 and 2's autumn 2002 term's topic is *journeys* and in science, the pupils will focus on *Investigating forces – pushing, pulling, speed and direction*. Further detailed planning for the term's work outlines *learning targets* within each subject. These are taken from the school's schemes of work which are very extensive, but do not differentiate clearly between activities, experiences, and learning objectives. Consequently, neither do the topic plans. As a result, for example, the science component of the *journeys* topic has eight learning targets, which are an outline of experiences or activities to be covered. However, there is insufficient focus on what pupils should learn from the activity – i.e. that *things can be moved by pushing and pulling*. Furthermore there is no natural lead on to assessment of whether the pupils have learned what was intended.

31. The school's *Pupil Records* which chart each individual's achievements throughout their time at Hinderton have very well worded learning outcomes in some subjects, including science. However, these do not match with those expressed in the curriculum planning. In practice, the skill of the staff ensures that the pupils do learn appropriately from their activities, but the documentation does not reflect or support this.

32. In addition, the topic plans refer loosely to the National Curriculum. This in itself is insufficient as it does not relate precisely enough to which key aspects are being addressed. It is therefore not easy to check that all aspects of the prescribed curriculum are included or to identify areas pupils find more difficult so that plans can be adapted to reinforce them further. Similarly, the three class timetables are in different formats and contain different amounts of information. This makes the monitoring of the time spent on each subject difficult.

Assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects other than English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and personal and social education - and their corresponding areas of learning in the curriculum for nursery/reception pupils.

33. Meticulous records are kept of pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding in some areas of the curriculum, starting with extensive notes written on pupils' responses in the classroom. These link together very well, and culminate in very accurate records of pupils' achievements. This is both in relation to the personal targets set in their individual education plans, and also to curriculum knowledge and understanding in English,

mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and personal and social education - and the corresponding areas of learning in the curriculum for nursery/reception pupils. However, this degree of record-keeping does not extend to the other areas of the curriculum. Consequently, without this information, there is sometimes insufficient focus on planning to systematically develop individual pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This means that the progress they make in these subjects is not always as good as in those subjects where the careful records and assessments are made, although staff skills do still ensure that pupils achieve well. Similarly, reporting on pupils' achievements, and what they know, understand and can do at any particular time in these other subjects is not underpinned by systematically documented records as is the case with the other subjects.

34. Whilst it would be unrealistic to keep up the same degree of record keeping in these other subjects of the curriculum, nevertheless, more focused learning objectives in the schemes of work would lead automatically to a system where staff can say whether pupils have learned or achieved what was intended. This would be a very good basis for more formal assessment in these subjects and would support pupils' achievement very well as planning could be more closely focused on individuals.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. In order to further improve the quality of education and learning, and build on the many strengths identified in the inspection, the headteacher, school staff and governing body should:

1. Revise and simplify the schemes of work for each subject / area of learning to ensure that:

- what pupils are expected to learn in each subject or area of learning during each topic is clearly specified, and distinct from the activities they will take part in;
- there is a direct carry-over from these learning targets into the assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in each subject/ area of learning;
- a cohesive overview is maintained of how the topics add together over time to cover all aspects of each subject of the National and Foundation Stage curricula.

2. Develop a system for the assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, related to the revised schemes of work, in subjects other than English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and personal and social education - and their corresponding areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

When planning for these developments, the school should take into account the very small number of teachers available to do this work, and set realistic timescales for its completion

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	4	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	60	27	13	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 one 6 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	20
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.0	School data	0.6

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	*	*	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	3	2	2

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	3	3	3

* Numbers omitted where the number of boys and girls is below 10.

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	19		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
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			

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-Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.25
Average class size	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YN- Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
Total income	340731
Total expenditure	313893
Expenditure per pupil	14947
Balance brought forward from previous year	32612
Balance carried forward to next year	59450

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	20
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	7	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	29	0	7	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	64	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	29	7	7	14
The teaching is good.	86	7	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	79	14	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	93	0	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	21	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	79	14	0	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	14	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	14	0	7	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	21	0	0	14

Care should be taken when interpreting these results as 7 percentage points represents one person's answer.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are deeply concerned about their children moving on from Hinderton to the next stage of their education