

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ALFRETON PARK SCHOOL

Alfreton

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 113040

Headteacher: Rosemary Mackenzie

Reporting inspector: Rosemary Eaton  
15173

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 249352

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alfreton Park Wingfield Road Alfreton Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE55 7AL
Telephone number:	01773 832019
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Francine Franklin
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15173	Rosemary Eaton	Registered inspector	Design and technology Educational inclusion	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	English History Religious education	
10668	David Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography	
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Modern foreign language Music Physical education	
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science Art Citizenship Post-16 provision	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Alfreton Park is a school for girls and boys aged two to 19 with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Since May 2002, the local education authority has provided additional funds for a class of pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism. At present, this is made up of two pupils in Year 1. Currently, 53 pupils attend the school. None are in the nursery and reception years and there are ten post-16 students. When they join the school, the attainment of most pupils is well below average. They all have statements of special educational need, the majority having severe learning difficulties. However, four have profound and multiple learning difficulties, ten are autistic and two have emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups or with English as an additional language. Pupils' homes are in a very wide area of Derbyshire – up to an hour's journey away. Sited within a public park, the school's name was recently changed from 'Parkwood School'. The present headteacher has been in post for just over two years.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Alfreton Park is a school with many good and very good features. It provides a sound quality of education. Pupils often learn well during lessons, because the quality of teaching is good. However, their achievement is satisfactory over time, because the curriculum does not ensure that they learn about all the necessary parts of every subject. Post-16 students achieve well. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Staff consistently encourage pupils to communicate, using a range of methods, such as signs and symbols.
- The school prepares post-16 students well for leaving school.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are very good, because the school works very hard to promote these aspects.
- Pupils achieve very well in physical education and in speaking and listening.
- Very good links with other schools enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' progress and personal development.

#### **What could be improved**

- The plans for what pupils will learn in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, science and religious education are incomplete.
- The oldest pupils and the post-16 students do not have their achievements recognised through nationally accredited courses.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have enough opportunities to learn a modern foreign language.
- Toilets and changing areas do not afford pupils sufficient privacy and dignity. There are no showers for pupils to use after physical education lessons.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was previously inspected in July 1997. It has developed satisfactorily since then. Achievement has improved in English and information and communication technology and there is now a greater proportion of very good teaching. The very high standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have been maintained.

The key issues from the previous inspection were tackled successfully, although there is now a need for areas such as reports and subject plans to be looked at again.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school set targets for individual pupils to achieve in 2002. The degree of challenge they presented was variable. Several were not met and others were exceeded. Recently, a more accurate method of measuring progress has been adopted and staff are being trained to make better use of targets.

Pupils and students often make good progress during individual lessons. Their overall achievement is only satisfactory because of weaknesses in the curriculum. Pupils achieve well in English and very well in physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is good in mathematics and art. In Years 9 to 11, achievement is unsatisfactory in science. During Years 7 to 9, a modern foreign language is taught only very infrequently and there is insufficient evidence on which to base judgements of pupils' achievements. Post-16 students achieve well in their courses. Pupils with autism, profound and multiple learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties make progress at the same rate as those with severe learning difficulties.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school and taking part in lessons and activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behave very well throughout the day, including when they are on visits or working in mainstream schools.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils gain confidence and learn to be increasingly independent. Post-16 students accept responsibility very well. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils are seldom away unless they are ill.

Pupils learn to behave appropriately in a range of social situations – for example, in shops and cafes. They appreciate the need to keep themselves safe and know about eating healthily.

Post-16 students have very mature attitudes, understanding that people have similarities and differences.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 14
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

English and personal, social, health and citizenship education are taught well. Mathematics and science teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Physical education is taught very well. The skills of communication, including literacy are taught well. Numeracy teaching is satisfactory. Post-16 courses are taught well. During lessons, the needs of all pupils are met well, because the work they are expected to complete is usually pitched at a suitable level. Activities are interesting, so pupils concentrate well on their tasks. The teamwork between teachers and learning support staff is highly effective and, as a result, pupils are handled consistently. Behaviour is managed very well. As a result, teaching time is not lost in lessons. Occasionally, the ends of lessons are rushed and learning is not reinforced.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There are strengths and weaknesses in the learning opportunities provided in Years 1 to 11. For instance, the physical education programme is wide ranging and very effective but plans are not as complete for all subjects. The post-16 curriculum is good, preparing students well for the next stage in their lives.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Moral and social development is provided for particularly well. Spiritual and cultural opportunities are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All staff work hard to ensure pupils are safe and happy.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. However, the reports it provides to them on their children's progress are limited.

There are very extensive and successful links with mainstream schools. Lessons, activities and daily routines all contribute to the very good personal, social, health and citizenship provision. A good range of visits and clubs enriches the curriculum.

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not provided with enough modern foreign language teaching and the science curriculum is too narrow in Years 9 to 11. Currently, there are no nationally recognised examinations or courses for the oldest pupils and the post-16 students. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have opportunities for work experience.

Good behaviour and attendance are encouraged very strongly. Bullying is not tolerated. The open nature of the site poses hazards when pupils are arriving and leaving.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully established a climate in which teachers accept more responsibilities and share common approaches – for example, to planning. The senior management team is developing well and plays an increasing part in leading important aspects of the school.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and bring relevant experience and expertise. They are developing ways of finding out more information at first hand. Statutory requirements are not all met – for example, in the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are good systems for checking the quality of teaching. Methods of keeping track of how well pupils are achieving are developing well and are beginning to enable the school to compare its results with other similar schools. The curriculum is not checked carefully enough to make sure pupils learn about every aspect of the National Curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Finances are used well to support the school's priorities – for example, increasing the number of computers and providing technical assistance.

The school is well staffed. Resources are satisfactory but the accommodation is unsatisfactory. In particular, changing and toilet facilities are poor and there are no showers for pupils to use after physical education. The school works very hard to make improvements but the building is in need of further repair and there is no fence between the school and the public park.

The school applies the principles of best value well.

The views of all staff groups are gathered and taken into account when plans for the future are made.

There is a good in-service training programme, well linked to the school's development plan.

Day to day administration is very efficient.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Parents feel they can approach the school with questions or suggestions.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• It is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Activities outside lessons are good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents are concerned about the reliability of their children's transport to school.</li> </ul>

In many ways, the inspectors agree with the parents' very positive views. However, there are a number of important areas that need to be developed. For example, annual reports do not provide enough information about how well pupils are getting on. The school shares parents' concerns about the occasional unpunctuality of transport and keeps a close eye on the situation and liaises with the local education authority.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The school set targets for individual pupils to achieve in 2002. Using a nationally recognised scale for keeping track of small steps in learning leading up to National Curriculum levels, teachers predicted how much progress each pupil would make in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. The outcomes were varied and no consistent patterns emerged. Pupils did not meet some of their targets, but exceeded others. A more accurate system has recently been adopted and teachers are receiving training to help them agree standards and make increasingly effective use of target setting in order to help individual pupils, subjects and the school to move forward.
2. Overall, pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve satisfactorily during their time in school. Their progress in individual lessons is often good, because they are taught well. However, in a number of subjects – science, art, design and technology, geography, history and religious education – the lack of suitable or complete whole-school plans means that pupils' learning does not necessarily build on what they already know, understand and can do. Planning is more established in Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve better as a result, especially in mathematics and art. A modern foreign language is taught only infrequently in Years 7 to 9, so pupils are obviously not able to learn sufficient skills and knowledge.
3. Throughout the school, pupils do well in English. Achievement is very good in speaking and listening. This is because there is a great emphasis placed on communication, in lessons, activities and routines, throughout the day. Alternative methods, such as signs and symbols, are used effectively to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. Achievement in reading is good. Again, in addition to structured programmes during English lessons, teachers capitalise on opportunities provided by other subjects – for example, pupils read recipes during design and technology. Writing is less strongly promoted across the curriculum and pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to record what they have learned and thus practise their skills.
4. During Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well in mathematics, because teaching is good and subject plans are carefully structured. In Years 7 to 11, progress and achievement are satisfactory, because teaching and the curriculum are not as well developed. For example, the secondary aged pupils do not have a daily mathematics lesson. This means that their learning is not reinforced regularly throughout the week. The picture is similar in science, in that progress and achievement are good in Years 1 to 6. However, although progress in lessons is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 9 to 11. This is because, although individual lessons are taught satisfactorily and pupils do well in learning about environmental education, they do not learn enough about the other aspects of science.
5. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in physical education. This is partly because the quality of teaching is very good but is also an outcome of the heavy emphasis placed on the subject. Similarly, personal, social, health and citizenship education features prominently in the curriculum, as timetabled lessons and through day to day activities, such as lunchtimes. Because activities are very

well planned and pupils are taught very well overall, their achievement is very good. Achievement is satisfactory in other subjects.

6. Overall, pupils' achievement is similar to what it was at the time of the previous inspection. However, there have been some significant improvements. For example, standards have risen in English, physical education and religious education. In particular, in information and communication technology, where achievement was reported previously as poor, pupils now make good progress in lessons and their achievement is satisfactory. This improvement is the result of a concerted effort by the school, resulting in enhanced resources, increased staff expertise and the support of a skilled technician.
7. Post-16 students achieve well in their courses. This is because they are taught well and their curriculum is well planned and highly relevant to their needs and age. A weakness, which also applies to the pupils in Years 10 and 11, is that students' achievements are not currently recognised through external accreditation. The school has identified a suitable unit award scheme, which is to be introduced shortly.
8. There is no evident difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Teachers work hard to provide equal opportunities for them to contribute to lessons and make progress. Similarly, there are suitable arrangements for the pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism – for example, effective use of a picture exchange system to support their communication. Good, individual arrangements are made for particular pupils – to have, for instance, music therapy – in order to help them to make progress. For the most part, the very small number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are taught alongside other pupils of the same age. Teachers usually modify the curriculum appropriately to meet their needs and enable them to make progress at equivalent rates, although in much smaller steps. Because the pupils with challenging behaviour are managed so well, lessons are seldom disrupted. This means that these pupils, and the others in their classes, can benefit from lessons and continue to make progress. Harder work is provided for the higher attaining pupils, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, these pupils too are achieving satisfactorily overall.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they enjoy coming to school. A busy atmosphere pervades the school at the start of the day as pupils go to their classrooms and get ready for work. In discussions with groups of pupils and students, they stressed how much they liked school although they do, they said, find the work very hard, and the subject of homework was not greeted with delight. Dance, especially, is enjoyed and appreciated across the school. The faces of pupils and students, when they are thinking about their next move or following the rhythm of the dance, are a mixture of wonder and delight. They cannot wait to get up and onto the dance floor. Pupils concentrate well on activities. For example, in a Year 5 and Year 6 science lesson, pupils used their senses very well to explore and recall the sounds made by dropping objects into 'sound pots'. Post-16 students worked together to advertise a coffee morning to raise funds for their holiday in Somerset. They came up with a stream of ideas for where to put up posters and then focused very well on designing and making the posters themselves.
10. Behaviour is also very good. Last year, there were two fixed period exclusions for one pupil, but she has now left the school. Pupils know that they can approach staff, if they have any concerns. A few pupils have challenging behaviour, as a result of their special needs. However, taken as a whole, the school is very happy and secure

and pupils state that they feel safe. Behaviour at lunchtime and break times is very good. On trips out pupils and students behave very well and this enhances their learning. Year 9 to 11 pupils in a design and technology lesson were making bookends in a mainstream school. They behaved very responsibly with the woodworking tools, observing the health and safety rules of the workshop. Pupils understand the expectations of Alfreton Park. Those with autism are able to point to the rules on classroom walls, indicating that they know what behaviour is acceptable in school.

11. Pupils' and students' personal development is very good and is supported strongly by the excellent relationships in school. They become increasingly confident and independent. Pupils with autism make good use of symbols and their timetables to show what they want to do next. For example, one pupil, after her swimming lesson, went straight to her communication book to fetch the symbol for a snack and cereals, indicating, 'I want cereals. It is time for a snack.' Because these pupils are becoming less frustrated, their behaviour and progress are both improving significantly. As pupils become more responsible for themselves, they learn the need for personal safety. In a personal, social, health and citizenship lesson, Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils were identifying the situations where they should say 'No!' They used role play to help them imagine situations in which they might, for example, be offered drink or drugs and they were emphatic in demonstrating how they should respond. Pupils have taken on board the concept of 'healthy eating', consciously choosing foods that are good for them at lunchtime. This is helped by the sympathetic attitude of the school canteen staff. Pupils make good use of the drinking water available and have their own bottles in class. They are aware of the changes that occur in themselves and their families when they grow older. For example, in a history lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils, they displayed a good understanding of the realities of growing up. Post-16 students assume adult responsibilities very well. On a trip to a bowling alley, a student with responsibility for the class chequebook signed and paid for the activity for the whole group. Missed opportunities for pupils to practise aspects of citizenship are reflected in the lack of a school council, but the plans for developing this are in hand and pupils and students are looking forward to having a say in the running of their school. Post-16 students display a very mature understanding of their own and their friends' special needs. They are very tolerant of the fact that not all of their group want to join in activities or tasks, and accept each other's idiosyncrasies with humour and kindness.
12. Attendance is satisfactory, both in the main school and in the post-16 class. Last year, absences were limited to just a few pupils, but because they were linked to severe medical conditions, all of these absences were of a lengthy nature. Unauthorised absences are much lower than the national average. Overall, pupils are punctual to school. On the few occasions they are late, the problem is invariably linked to the late arrival of transport. During the week of the inspection, snowy weather prevented a few taxis from collecting pupils from home but parents had brought all of these pupils in by mid morning.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

13. The quality of teaching is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. However, the proportion of very good teaching has increased from one in five to one in three lessons. As a consequence of the high quality teaching, pupils throughout the school make good progress in lessons. Teaching is consistently very good in physical education. A particular improvement has been made in the teaching of information and communication technology, which was weak in 1997 and is now good. In this subject, teachers' confidence and knowledge have increased

significantly as a result of the school's investment in training and resources. The school has developed a policy for teaching and learning which sets out useful guidance for teachers – for instance, about making sure that lessons have distinct beginning and endings.

14. Throughout the school, teachers generally structure lessons carefully, so pupils' learning is controlled and systematic. For example, introductions to lessons settle the pupils and explain what they are about to do. Teachers also use this time to remind pupils of previous learning and check their understanding. For example, before post-16 students left for a session of ten pin bowling, using community facilities, the teacher explained fully the purpose of the visit. She set out her very high expectations for students' behaviour, involvement and independence. As a result, the experience was very successful, leading to very good progress in students' physical and personal development. Pupils are frequently brought together at the end of lessons, to review what has been learned and celebrate their efforts and achievements. After a religious education lesson, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 thought hard about their activities and a higher attaining pupil remembered that the patterns used by Hindus to decorate their hands, are called 'mendhi'. The teacher showed the class examples of pupils' patterns, pointing out what they had done well. This successfully encouraged them to take pride in their work and boosted their self esteem. Occasionally, teachers are over optimistic about what they can fit into a lesson. This can mean that the ending is rushed or the important rounding off stage is omitted.
15. These whole-class discussions are a useful way of sharing information between staff, especially when pupils have worked in small groups, each supported by adults. The teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants is very good and is a significant factor in the good progress made during many lessons. The school actively promotes communication between the staff who work in each class, allowing time for the team members to liaise and plan jointly. Support assistants are given important responsibilities. This is a measure of their quality and the value placed on them. For example, in the absence for several weeks of one of the Year 1 and 2 teachers, the second teacher took charge of both classes. This arrangement relied heavily on the availability of high quality support staff. The school had considered very carefully the alternatives and decided that the pupils' learning and personal development would be disrupted if an unfamiliar teacher was brought in. During the inspection, these temporary arrangements worked very well and pupils in both of the Year 1 and 2 classes made good progress, with day to day routines running smoothly. For example, in an action packed food technology and art session, all the pupils took part in both activities, working in groups led by the teacher or support assistants. The teacher had organised the lesson very effectively to ensure that each pupil received the support he or she needed and worked in an appropriate environment. Three pupils with autism stayed in their classroom, because the food technology room would have been too distracting. As a result, they were able to focus on the task of smelling, tasting and observing dried and canned apricots, making very good progress in their willingness to take part in new experiences.
16. The close match between pupils' individual needs and the work they are expected to do is another strength of much of the teaching. Staff know the pupils very well indeed and are able to judge accurately the amount of support they require in order to take part in whole class activities. However, best progress is made where teachers adjust the tasks to suit the pupils, so they build on what they have already learned. For example, in a very good English lesson with a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils with very diverse needs, the teacher had planned for them each to do some writing. Pupils chose sentences from the book 'Peace at Last' and reproduced these

according to their own particular stage of development. Prompted by a support assistant, lower attaining pupils used a computer program in order to write with symbols. Others wrote over the top of the teacher's words, whilst the most able copied from cards. As a result of the teacher's determined encouragement, one pupil moved from writing over to underneath words, making very good progress.

17. Staff make good use of signs and symbols to enable all pupils to contribute to lessons and make progress. This is an important factor in the development of pupils' communication skills and allows them to benefit from experiences that might otherwise be unattainable. For example, during a design and technology lesson in a mainstream secondary school, a support assistant interpreted the teacher's instructions by signing to the Year 10 and 11 pupils, so they understood clearly what they had to do. Throughout the school, the effective use of symbols is especially significant for the pupils with autism. For instance, staff draw their attention to daily timetables, which are made up of symbols for each activity. These prepare pupils effectively for events and add to their feelings of security.
18. Despite the presence of a number of pupils with challenging behaviour, owing to their special educational needs, lessons are seldom disrupted. Teachers plan interesting activities, so pupils want to join in. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Staff demonstrate clearly their respect for pupils and they in turn try hard to please. Pupils trust their teachers and so are prepared to try out new experiences. This is seen very clearly during swimming lessons, where pupils are confident that they will be safe and so are willing to tackle challenging activities. Because classroom staff teams work together to plan approaches to handling individual pupils' behaviour, each person knows how to avert or respond to incidents. Consequently, pupils experience consistency and gradually learn to take increasing control of their own behaviour.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 11 are satisfactory overall. The primary programme contains all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is not fully in place and there are gaps in what is available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. The post-16 programme is good. It prepares students well for leaving school. However, as in Years 10 and 11, there are no national certificates or awards that recognise students' achievements, though plans are under way to introduce a unit award scheme. The school is particularly successful in promoting pupils' and students' communication and literacy skills. The approaches used are varied and well matched to pupils' learning needs and stages of development.
20. In Years 1 to 11, there are areas of subject planning that are not fully developed. In the plans for teaching themes and those for teaching individual subjects, specific National Curriculum programmes of study references are generally not used to check that legal requirements are in place. Plans for teaching design and technology, history, geography and religious education in Years 1 to 9 are not yet complete. In Years 7 to 9, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to learn a modern foreign language. Year 9 pupils, who are taught in the class with pupils in Year 10 and Year 11, are not receiving the full breadth of National Curriculum subjects to which they are entitled – in art, for example. In Years 9, 10 and 11, science does not appear on the timetable. Here, science is mainly focused on environmental education and is not planned well enough to show that the statutory

requirement for science is met. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have no work experience opportunities.

21. There are very extensive and successful links with mainstream schools and almost all pupils have opportunities to participate. Currently, 16 schools and colleges are involved. Strong links with the community extend and enrich pupils' and students' learning experiences. There are visits to, for example, an airport, shops, cinema, a drama workshop, and residential stays. Work experience for post-16 students is with the National Trust, local hotels and shops, for instance. The service for careers education and theatre groups visit school and contribute well to the range of opportunities available to pupils. On 'house days', pupils divide into four all-age groups to experience a particular theme for a day – music, dance, books or science, for example. These successfully enhance the curriculum. Last year, specialist science teachers from mainstream school visited and presented pupils with new experiences based on fire, water, air and earth.
22. There has been satisfactory improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection report. Opportunities to use computers and to learn religious education have both improved, as has the planning for primary aged pupils. Planning in the primary phase is appropriately based on themes. Plans for teaching these themes – for example, 'Buildings' or 'Transport' – now clearly identify how separate National Curriculum subjects contribute.
23. The post-16 curriculum is good. It is well matched to students' learning needs and prepares them successfully for leaving school. At the headteacher's instigation, the recent introduction of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and religious education has added important relevance to the post-16 curriculum. There is a good balance of academic study and the development of students' personal and social skills and independence. This year, the school's college link is not as extensive as in previous years. This has unfortunately narrowed students' options significantly. Now they only participate in a sports option. Previously they have experienced woodwork, photography, art and craft, drama, music and painting and decorating. The school is planning to overhaul its 14-19 curriculum. It will be important to preserve the good quality post-16 provision.
24. Overall, the planned opportunities for personal, social, health and citizenship education are very good. The high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained, and extended with the effective introduction of citizenship education. Opportunities for learning are wide spread. There are separate lessons for this subject as well as much learning in other subjects. Learning also takes place at break and lunchtimes, during visits to other schools and the community, during clubs at lunchtime and after school, on residential visits, and as an important aspect of physical education. The governing body has adopted a well written policy for sex and relationships education, where there is an appropriate emphasis on values. In Years 9 to 11, for example, pupils learn about suitable behaviour with friends and about the changes in their bodies as they grow. There are still a few gaps in what is provided. Drugs education is not as well developed as that for sex and relationships education. Staff have had appropriate training, and a policy on drugs education is in preparation, to guide the writing of plans to meet pupils' ages and stages of learning. Older pupils already learn about the effects of harmful drugs.
25. All pupils and students' statements of special educational needs are regularly reviewed and revised in accordance with their changing needs. They undergo an initial assessment in communication and literacy, numeracy and personal and social



development soon after they join the school. Individual education plans are drawn up from this information and targets set in English, mathematics and personal development. These are reviewed and modified termly, in line with the progress that each pupil or student has made. The great majority of targets are specific and measurable. The arrangements made for pupils with other than severe learning difficulties – mainly autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties – is satisfactory overall, with a few good features. For example, there is good support for a Year 6 autistic pupil, through additional swimming sessions. A music therapist visits each week and provides therapy for a small group of pupils and students. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils and students have equal opportunities to learn and succeed and reach their full potential. However, on rare occasions, pupils' and students' needs are not met – for example, when lessons do not include suitable sensory activities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

26. The school makes very good arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is appropriately considered in many areas of the curriculum and in the daily life of the school. Each class has a daily act of worship, which, although brief, affirms the importance of consideration for others' beliefs and values. Prayers are chosen to be meaningful to pupils – for example 'Loving Father on this day, Make us happy in our play'. The school teaches pupils about a variety of other religions while effectively promoting the Christian faith. This results in pupils learning to relate to each other with sensitivity and respect. Around the school, displays call for tolerance, and are well illustrated by a Sanskrit poem in the main hall. Its theme is that all the world's population is under the 'same sky' and has been put up at a time of global unrest. Value is placed on family relationships and post-16 students have recently created delightful pressed flower pictures for their parents.
27. Moral development is very strongly promoted through a caring school ethos, built on mutual respect. The school places a high priority on equipping pupils with a clear set of moral values and effective policies for behaviour ensure that staff have a consistent approach and high expectations. Science and personal, social, health and citizenship education both emphasise care of the environment and the necessity for clear rules and responsibilities. The provision for social development is also very good. Teachers demonstrate respect for all pupils, and take every opportunity to encourage them towards a positive self image. The provision and planning for residential visits – for example, to Somerset for the post-16 students – and activities such as dance, are particularly effective in developing pupils' social skills. Their awareness of their place in the wider community is enriched through the schools' association with the local community in various activities and in the wide range of links with schools and colleges. Many useful opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibility, including helping in the dining hall, bringing back registers, and running the school tuck shop. Pupils show visitors around the school, with cards to remind them of the route to take. Older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones in the playground and the post-16 students prepared a Christmas party for the primary aged pupils. Pupils are guided towards showing concern for others less fortunate than themselves through fundraising events. For example, they raised funds for the 'Love Russia' charity, through their performance of Babushka, a traditional Russian story.
28. Cultural opportunities are good. At the time of the inspection, the Chinese New Year was being celebrated and throughout the school, Chinese writing and lanterns, for example, were on view. Art lessons make good contributions, extending pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions. Similarly, they learn a wide range of dance styles – such as line-dancing, ballroom and Latin American. The school has

close links to the multi-faith centre in Derby and has shared occasional coffee mornings with a mainly Muslim school, also in Derby. Pupils study a range of faiths in religious education. A recent music day brought a steel band and an Arabic dancer into the school, to enable pupils to experience the richness and diversity of culture in the area.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

29. Care procedures are good. Child protection procedures are well thought out and the headteacher and deputy headteacher are well placed to support the school nurse in her role as designated person. Although all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting concerns and most have a clear knowledge of this aspect, the headteacher has identified the need to provide up-to-date training for all staff, including lunchtime supervisors. Health and safety arrangements are secure and the health and safety co-ordinator has a well organised rolling programme of checks, servicing and risk assessments for equipment, buildings and activities. The school is researching alternatives for the arrival and dismissal of pupils, as the current arrangements (with shared car parking and flow of private vehicles through the area) pose a number of hazards for pupils. The hydrotherapy pool benefits from a daily routine of safety checks and an emergency contact telephone has been installed to counter the lack of a fire alarm in the pool building. Most staff have completed emergency first aid training and the school nurse is in the process of drawing up individual care plans for pupils who require them. Arrangements for recording the dispensation of medication are precise and secure and organised by the nurse.
30. Staff demonstrate a commitment to ensuring pupils receive the personal support they need in order to progress. Teachers and learning support assistants place an emphasis on creating opportunities to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and, as parents say, 'see pupils as individuals, with individual needs'. For example, visits out of school are made not only for their academic value but also as a means of developing pupils' personalities and providing them with social experiences. Parents are especially pleased about this as they feel that, for example, regular outings to cafes and shops build their children's confidence. An emphasis is placed on healthy eating at lunchtimes and the tuck shop, run by the post-16 students, only stocks fruit and healthy snacks.
31. Good behaviour is promoted and monitored very effectively. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated and the discipline policy is being revised to emphasise this further. Detailed and individual records of incidents of poor behaviour are kept and are used to decide if there has been, for example, any deterioration in a pupil's behaviour or if behavioural targets or programmes need to be amended. Parental support is seen as important in modifying pupils' behaviour. Investment in staff training in behaviour management strategies is given high priority and amongst the staff are trainers in restraint and behaviour management programmes.
32. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and a strong feature of the school. The education welfare officer is fully involved and provides valuable support for families. Daily records are kept of all phone calls from families about each pupil's absence. Parents were particularly impressed that the school insists on contact with them on the first day of their child's absence. Attendance records are computerised and the school uses them to rapidly identify patterns of punctuality and attendance.
33. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' and students' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory, as at the time of the previous inspection. In most subjects,

teachers have agreed methods of collecting evidence about what pupils have learned. They make annual assessments of pupils' achievements. These are linked to a nationally recognised scale to indicate the small steps of progress leading to the early National Curriculum levels. The teachers are in the process of comparing their assessments, in order to achieve parity of judgements between them. Pupils' and students' work is usually discussed with them during lessons, but only a few pieces of work are retained as evidence in pupils' records of achievement. Additionally, those that are retained do not show consistently the date completed, the degree of independence or the nature of support that had been given to enable the pupil to achieve the task set.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

34. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They report that they are comfortable in approaching the school with any questions or problems. They are particularly pleased that their children like school, and with the fact that the teachers expect their children to work hard. Parents are delighted by the social confidence that their children gain and with the quality of relationships, not only between pupils and staff, but also amongst pupils. They appreciate the opportunities for their children to go on residential holidays, and that the staff are capable of handling any behavioural difficulties competently and calmly. The office staff and nurse maintain a very close link with parents. Strong support for the school comes from the Friends Association. This small group has raised large sums for the school through a variety of activities such as the Summer Fayre and outside stalls at Belper Victorian Christmas Market. The new playground for the youngest pupils is the latest testimony to their efforts and many of the improvements to the swimming pool originate from funds raised by the Friends. Because of distance from the school, few parents are regular helpers in the school, but one parent has read stories in the library and a few have supported riding and swimming activities. Links with pupils' homes are supported by the frequent use of home/school diaries and student planners. Parents use these to chat about any problems they are having, send messages, read what work their children have been doing that day or what has been planned for the week. Parents appreciate the training in signing offered by the school and the formation of a parents' support group.
35. Formal consultation evenings and annual review meetings are well attended by parents. They appreciate that the school shares their children's individual education plan with them and that they are kept up to date with any new targets. Annual written reports do not include every National Curriculum subject or always set out clearly what they have learned since the last report.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

36. Since her appointment, just over two years ago, the headteacher has devoted considerable time and energy to developing a culture in which teachers accept leadership and management responsibilities and are more committed to whole-school systems and approaches. For example, previously, subject leaders had few responsibilities beyond managing resources. They have now had training in their roles and are beginning to develop a view of what the school provides and how pupils are achieving in their subject. A few have had opportunities to observe lessons across the school and identify areas for development. This is all a major shift from the position when each teacher worked independently in his or her classroom. Nevertheless, in most cases, subject leaders do not yet have sufficient awareness of what pupils are learning as they move up through the school. In several cases, this is partly owing to fairly recent changes of leadership. However,

more significantly, in a number of subjects, each teacher's planning does not show clearly which aspects of the National Curriculum they will cover with their class. This means that the co-ordinators – and hence, the headteacher, senior staff and governors – cannot be sure that pupils are learning the required skills, understanding and knowledge. This lack of certainty is unsatisfactory.

37. Staff have not all welcomed opportunities to take on responsibilities. This has made the headteacher's task more difficult and has slowed down the rate of progress. For instance, teachers previously had very little involvement in the school's planning for future developments, seeing this as role of the headteacher. Gradually, they have come to realise the importance of the school development plan as a working document, providing a focus for the efforts of all staff and governors. Moving the school to the current position has taken time and determination. The climate is now such that the majority of staff appreciate that they each have a vital role to play in moving the school forward and that continuous improvement and development are necessary.
38. The priorities set out in the school's development plan are entirely appropriate. However, the actions to achieve these are frequently described too vaguely. Similarly, a generous amount of time is often allowed for tasks to be completed. In a few cases, this has resulted in the pace of change being too steady. For instance, pupils in Year 11 and students post-16 have not gained external accreditation since 2001, because a replacement system has not yet been implemented. As staff are beginning to consider the next round of planning, it is evident that they understand more clearly their responsibilities and the priority they should give to each. The senior management team has changed significantly in recent months and responsibilities re-allocated. These senior members of staff – including one of the learning support assistants – are also improving their leadership skills and playing an increasing part in initiating and managing whole school developments. They understand their roles and are committed to the school. Through planned links with various groups of staff – such as midday supervisors – the views of all staff are canvassed and considered and are having a direct impact on the way the school provides for pupils. The school clearly values all pupils and is strongly committed to maintaining links with other schools in order to enable pupils to have wider experiences. For the past two years, funds from the local education authority have supported this aspect of the school's work.
39. The headteacher has successfully attracted more governors to the school. This enlarged governing body includes members with very relevant experience and expertise – for example, in business, human resources, the police service, and parents. Periodically, governors establish working parties to support the school over particular issues – for example, designing a new logo to reflect the school's change of name. Additionally, governors are bringing new ideas and perspectives. For instance, in a particularly innovative move to reduce staff absence, the governing body offers financial support to enable staff to receive stress management counselling. The headteacher keeps governors well informed about day to day issues and they make regular informal visits to classes. Governors are presently considering ways of obtaining more information at first hand. However, they have not set up systems to ensure that all statutory requirements are met – for example, related to the curriculum and annual reports on pupils' progress.
40. There are good arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching, with senior staff making regular observations of lessons. In order to support subject leaders in fulfilling their role, they are offered structured opportunities to take part in this process, which has the additional benefit of enabling good practice to be shared

between more teachers. Together with effective performance management procedures, these classroom visits are enabling individual teachers to develop their skills and have helped to establish whole-school approaches to the way in which lessons are structured. The school has previously made a satisfactory attempt to analyse and make use of data about pupils' achievements. Recently, a more sophisticated system has been adopted, which is beginning to enable comparisons to be made with other schools and allows the progress of individuals and groups to be tracked more accurately.

41. Financial planning is good and is linked to the school's priorities. This high standard has been maintained since the previous inspection. Funds are being built up appropriately to help to develop the accommodation. The chair of governors, the finance committee, headteacher and school secretary work closely and effectively together to set and manage the annual budget, whilst the headteacher maintains an oversight of the whole process. Routine administration is very effective and ensures the smooth running of the school on a day to day basis. As a result, the headteacher and staff can focus their time and effort efficiently – for example, on teaching and learning. The latest auditor's report was comprehensive and made minor recommendations, which the school has implemented fully.
42. The school's income last year was slightly above the average amount for similar schools nationally. Specific grants are used well for the purpose they are intended and are clearly accounted for in the financial records. For example, citizenship has been introduced to the curriculum, as have an after school dance club and a lunchtime information and communication technology club. Information and communication technology is used effectively to set out the financial accounts for the governors' finance committee, which in turn presents the figures to the full governing body. This works well, particularly as the school secretary is clerk to the governors and is on hand to answer any queries personally. At least termly, all school budget holders, such as subject co-ordinators, receive updates, allowing them to keep track of their spending.
43. The school understands and applies the principles of best value well. For example, the headteacher tries hard to make comparisons with other special schools by using data from the local education authority, Ofsted and the Audit Commission's web site. The school consults with parents at annual reviews and on other occasions – for example, asking for their opinions when writing a new sex and relationships policy.
44. There is an adequate number of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils. Teachers have good experience and knowledge of teaching pupils with special educational needs. There are high quality support staff who integrate well into the life of the school and play an important part in promoting pupils' development. The recent appointment of an information and communication technology technician is proving successful, promoting staff knowledge and skills as well as pupils' progress. The school employs a swimming instructor. This is very efficient because, as well as developing pupils' swimming skills, their speaking and listening, stamina and concentration, personal development, signing and communication skills are also improved through these regular lessons. All staff are included in the school's performance management arrangements. These encompass a good in-service training programme for all staff in order for them to develop additional skills to meet the needs of the pupils, taking into account the changes in population the school is experiencing. New staff have supportive induction programmes. Visiting specialists who promote, for example, different sporting activities and dance, enhance the staffing.

45. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Changing and toilet facilities for pupils and students are poor and deny them an acceptable level of privacy and dignity. There are no showers for pupils to use after physical education lessons. The hall is a main thoroughfare, which results in a high level of interruption for pupils and staff when it is in use for lessons. The area available for school transport to park and drop pupils off or collect them is shared with the neighbouring day centre, whose transport also arrives at the same time. This area is further restricted by the random arrangements for car parking for both school and the day centre, and creates a hazardous environment for pupils at the beginning and end of the day. There is still no specialist accommodation for science or art as reported in the previous inspection, but there is a good food technology room, swimming pool and exciting new playground for the primary aged pupils. External areas of the building require repair, but the school has worked very hard to adapt or renew the accommodation where possible. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Storage is limited and toilet areas are occasionally used. Library facilities are good and there is a good range of reading materials, especially big books.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

46. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should

I. ensure that programmes of work are completed for science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. (paragraphs 2,20,69,70,71,75,76,77,84,91,95,115)

II. provide suitable opportunities for the oldest pupils and the post-16 students to have their achievements recognised through external accreditation. (paragraphs 7,19)

III. ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 9 have regular opportunities to learn a modern foreign language. (paragraphs 2,20,100)

IV. continue to work with the local education authority to ensure that (a) toilets and changing areas are improved, so pupils' privacy and dignity are safeguarded, and (b) pupils are able to take showers after physical education lessons. (paragraphs 45, 111)

In addition, the following issues should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan

- Ensure that written reports on pupils' progress indicate clearly to parents how well they are learning in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. (paragraphs 35,71)
- Continue to develop the role of subject leaders, so they are more aware of the quality of teaching and learning, curricular planning and pupils' achievements, in order to help them when making plans to move each subject forward. (paragraphs 36,70)

## POST-16 PROVISION

47. Students make good progress and achieve well. The quality of the teaching is always at least good and frequently it is very good.

### Key strengths

Students make good progress developing academic, personal and social skills.

The promotion of students' communication and literacy skills is very well matched to individual learning needs.

Students respond very well to the discrete provision, and mature into caring, compassionate and responsible young people.

A consistently high standard of teaching, and learning support, helps students to develop a broad range of relevant knowledge, understanding, and skill in preparation for leaving school.

### Areas for improvement

Students do not have opportunities to gain enough nationally recognised certificates.

The range of college link courses is too narrow.

48. Following recent developments initiated by the headteacher, the post-16 programme provides a good balance of opportunities to develop academic, personal and social skills and independence. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and computer skills are promoted well during discrete lessons and through other activities. The content of what is taught is very relevant. Methods take full account of the range of learning needs. English as a discrete subject is taught very well. In one lesson, students successfully read, discussed and wrote about topical events. They showed great compassion, during discussion about a child killed by a falling tree in recent storms. They learn about the many social signs in the community – for example, 'emergency exit', 'fire escape', 'no smoking'. They learn to fill in forms, write letters and diaries. In their student planners, they write about the week ahead at school, for discussion at home to parents. Students' communication skills are promoted very well across the breadth of their experiences.
49. In a well taught numeracy lesson, students learned addition of single, double and triple digit numbers. They also learn to use timetables and calendars, handle money and budget. Each week they apply their banking skills when they visit a bank in the town. Students receive high quality support from the computer technician to help them search the Internet for news of current events. They recognise the Prime Minister in an article about the conflict in Iraq, and can locate information about their favourite football teams. They use the computer to design posters to advertise their coffee morning.
50. The concern that students develop for others is reflected very well in their awareness of, and response to, the learning needs of those with autism and the most profound and complex learning needs. They display tolerance and respect for each other and value the contribution that lower attaining students make to the group. For example, they appreciate the work of an autistic student who shops for the food they use during the weekly home skills lesson when they prepare and cook lunch. They welcome his contribution – shopping, making drinks and setting tables. During these lessons, the personal and social skills of sharing, taking turns, working co-operatively, and conversing over lunch are re-enforced very well. Students practise their social skills in the very well organised and successful occasions when

they visit the sixth form of a local mainstream school, to play table games and socialise.

51. Students have access to an extensive range of leisure pursuits, including residential experiences. There is football, cricket, basketball, aerobics, fitness training and horse riding. Students take regular exercise, including walking, orienteering and nature trails. Good use is made of local leisure facilities for swimming and ten pin bowling. Higher attaining students can swim several lengths of the pool and they develop good stamina in water. Lower attaining students continue to develop their confidence in water. Students learn ten pin bowling skills during lessons and apply their skills when visiting the bowling centre again with a local youth club. During the inspection, a student with autism made excellent progress by travelling with other students for the first time, and by successfully knocking down pins.
52. Opportunities for careers and vocational education and guidance are good. Students take part in work experience, for which they are prepared well. For example, they use a range of symbols, signs, pictures and photographs, to write curriculum vitae. Higher attaining pupils practise reading what they have written, ready for mock interviews with personal advisers from the specialist careers service. The latter provide good support for the students, well matched to their learning needs. Students use a range of signs and symbols to write a diary of their placement. In this way, careers education not only develops vocational skills, but also contributes well to the development of communication, literacy, personal and social skills. Students learn to be responsible in the workplace, so contributing to citizenship education. Individual placements include hotel, retail and leisure centre work, and in-school placements. Additionally, the whole group works at a local National Trust centre.
53. Citizenship education is good. In self advocacy lessons, students take responsibility for organising fund raising events. They run a weekly 'healthy' tuck shop, raising the awareness of younger pupils to healthy food. They organise Christmas lunch and a Christmas party for younger pupils. They fill shoeboxes for charity at Christmas. In English, students read newspapers and discuss current affairs, learning about life beyond their immediate environment. These sessions demonstrate the students' growing compassion for the plight of other people. At college and on work experience they learn what will be expected of them when they leave school. Students attend the annual review of their statement of special educational need and present their views. Parental support at the reviews is excellent.
54. Post-16 is well led and managed. Students value their discrete provision, including the opportunity to have their own common room, and to have lunch on their own. This year, financial constraints have had a marked impact on college links. Currently, students only attend a sports option. In previous years they have had access to art and craft, music and drama, painting and decorating, photography and woodwork.
55. Students take part in a local award scheme, 'The Peak Award', undertaking a variety of challenges – such as household tasks, community projects, and physical and outdoor challenges. Work is in progress to introduce a unit award scheme.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	20	25	14	1	0	0
Percentage	0	33	42	23	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	53
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	18

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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



### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	53
Number of questionnaires returned	16

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	40	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	29	8	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	30	30	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	38	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	12	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	23	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	44	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	31	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	31	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	19	0	0	13

At the parents' meeting, a few parents expressed concerns about the unreliability of transport to and from school.

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

### **ENGLISH**

56. Pupils make good progress and achieve well overall, in line with the quality of teaching.

#### Key strengths

Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in communication skills such as speaking and listening.

Achievement in reading is good and has improved well since the previous inspection.

Teachers use computers well to promote pupils' progress in reading.

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are interested in books.

#### Areas for improvement

The oldest pupils do not have their achievements celebrated through recognised certificates and courses.

Pupils' writing is not promoted as strongly as their reading and speaking and listening.

The school has a good library, but it is under used for enhancing pupils' reading and independent learning skills.

57. A strength of the school is how very well pupils develop their speaking and listening and communication skills. All staff consistently promote communication, throughout the day. By the end of Year 2, pupils, including those with additional special needs, pay attention and respond very well to others. They learn to communicate using a wide range of methods, including eye pointing, signing and using a picture exchange system. They develop their ability to recognise and respond well to objects linked to the topics they study – such as building a house from sand, after listening to the story of the Wise man and the Foolish Man, during a religious education lesson. All teachers and support staff consistently use pictures, photographs and symbols effectively to gain successfully the attention of the lower attaining pupils. Visual timetables provide a successful structure for the school day and enable pupils with autism to understand what is happening next. Pupils express their feelings through signing, vocalisation, and body movements. Year 6 pupils with tremendous expression read out a poem – 'Teef Teef' – pretending to be toothless, helped enormously by the teacher's imaginative use of a very large set of false teeth. A Year 7 girl stated that she hates parrots and when prompted by the teacher, explained that they scare her. This very good progress continues in Years 10 and 11. For example, higher attaining Year 11 pupils talked animatedly about seeing the film 'Austin Powers' on the television the night before. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties increase their vocabulary by extending their signing, supported by skilled staff and regular opportunities to practise.
58. Achievement and progress in reading are good throughout the school. Reading is taught well and pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills, in lessons across the curriculum. Teachers have studied the documentation of the National Literacy Strategy and adapted it well to meet the needs of all the pupils. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils can, with support from staff, read individual words and match them to the text in books. Others, with more severe learning difficulties, recognise class and family members and pets from photographs. As pupils progress further up the school their reading skills improve. By the end of Year 6, higher

attaining pupils read simple books, achieving Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Less able pupils match flash cards depicting the characters from their reading scheme. Many pupils match simple words on the computer, identify key words and recognise their own names. Reading is promoted well throughout the curriculum. For example, during a design and technology lesson, Year 6 pupils read out the names of fruits, recognising more common words and using letter sounds and clues from pictures to help with others. Teachers use symbols and objects well to help pupils with autism understand stories. For instance, a Year 7 pupil understood exactly what was asked of him during a literacy session and mimicked the sound of a monkey when the teacher produced a soft toy monkey. Pupils continue to progress as they move up the school. High attaining pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 read key words from the story 'Green Eggs and Ham', projected onto a white screen. During a science lesson, two pupils were able to go to the library independently to collect a book about animals. Pupils' love of books has been actively encouraged within literacy lessons. However, the good library is under used for developing pupils' reading skills. The achievements of the oldest pupils are not recognised through external courses and certificates.

59. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. In general, teachers do not provide enough planned opportunities for pupils to record their work in lessons across the curriculum. Older, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to develop their independent writing skills. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to write over their name, with support, whereas lower attainers produce vertical, circular and horizontal lines. As pupils progress, the Year 6 high attainers sequence sentences correctly. During a science lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils tried very hard to record the results of an experiment. Depending on their stage of development, they used a range of skills, such as independent copying, over writing and mark making. By the end of Year 9, two high attaining pupils can put three words in the correct order to make a sentence – 'Biff couldn't sleep' – and copy this independently. Year 9 pupils are encouraged to write their weekend 'news'. Lower attainers dictate their news to staff and make marks under the written word. By the end of Year 11, many higher attaining pupils write legibly. One pupil independently copied a shopping list to help him shop for ingredients for the group's cookery session. Another wrote an account of a visit to a farm. However, it is difficult to track pupils' progress in writing, because their work is often not dated or annotated by teachers, to show, for example, how much help they received.
60. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. However, she does need to be more aware of teaching and learning in other classes throughout the school. Pupils' targets for literacy are in the main very clearly stated in pupils' individual education plans and these are regularly reviewed and altered when the pupil has made progress. English lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The subject overall has improved well since the previous inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

61. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory, although good in Years 1 to 6, where mathematics is taught well.

### **Key strengths**

Teaching is good for pupils in Years 1 to 6.  
Pupils enjoy their work in mathematics.

The subject is well led and managed.  
The teamwork between teachers and learning support staff is highly effective.

#### Areas for improvement

Teachers do not always make the most of opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning at the end of lessons.

Not every class has a daily mathematics lesson.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow nationally recognised courses.

62. When they join the school, primary aged pupils often have little mathematical knowledge and they lack confidence in their ability. However, skilful teaching ensures that they learn well and enjoy their work. They make good progress because lessons are well structured and move on quickly. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, a session of oral and mental work rapidly focused pupils' attention and developed their ability to recognise and order numbers to ten. The lesson's main activity was clearly introduced, with the majority of pupils sorting socks from gloves and going on to match pairs. Lower attaining pupils were well supported as they sorted items into groups according to their colour. Pupils' good progress is continued in Years 3 to 6. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well, taking good account of what pupils have already learned. Classroom routines are very well established and staff are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour, so lessons proceed smoothly and no time is wasted. The effective use of a variety of resources makes mathematics interesting. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked in pairs and compared lengths of rolled dough, threaded beads and footprints. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher made sure that they remained interested throughout by judging accurately when to change activities. As a result, pupils were fully involved and made good progress in early addition and subtraction. Higher attaining pupils were given the opportunity to move on more quickly, through the use of a computer program that introduced subtraction and addition to 20.
63. The guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted throughout the school and is proving effective. However, the secondary aged pupils do not have a daily mathematics lesson and teachers here have not mastered the timing implications, so that sometimes the oral 'starter' is too long. More often, the time given to the summing up is squeezed, so that learning is not regularly reinforced at the end of the lesson. However, teachers do usually provide a few moments in which pupils are rewarded with a quiet word of praise for their behaviour and effort. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 build on the secure basis established in the primary department and make satisfactory progress in learning. All pupils show sound understanding of time, naming the days of the week, while higher attaining pupils know the months of the year and the four seasons. These higher attaining pupils know that when the big hand of a clock points to 12, the little hand shows the hour. Relationships between pupils and staff are of a very high order and both teachers and learning support staff ensure that pupils with complex learning difficulties can be fully involved in the lesson. Older secondary aged pupils pair gloves and shoes, before sorting them into left and right. Pupils have such good attitudes to the subject that they persevere with tasks for considerable periods and are keen to succeed. However, their achievements are not recognised through nationally recognised courses.
64. Mathematics is used during lessons throughout the school day. For example, pupils use counting and basic numeracy in English, science, art and physical education and measuring length in science. Literacy skills are reinforced well in mathematics, especially by the correct use of mathematical terms, such as 'long', 'longer' and 'longest'. Such vocabulary is carefully introduced and explained in mathematics

lessons, and questioning throughout the sessions develops the pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. Most adults are skilled in signing so pupils with communication difficulties are able to take a full part in the lesson. The good role models of staff together with activities which require pupils to work together in pairs or small groups, thinking about the needs of others, enable mathematics to contribute well to the moral and social development of pupils.

65. The sound development of the subject since the previous inspection has been well led and managed. Teaching and learning have been observed and a suitable plan produced to develop the subject further.

## **SCIENCE**

66. Pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in lessons because the teaching is effective and curricular plans are most developed here. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11.

### **Key strengths**

Resources are imaginative, well prepared and well used in lessons with pupils in Years 1 to 6.

Pupils with autism in Years 1 to 3 are motivated to learn because activities are interesting.

There is a positive learning atmosphere in lessons because pupils are managed very well, relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and pupils care about each other.

Learning support assistants make strong contributions to pupils' progress.

### **Areas for improvement**

Pupils' experiences are not well balanced across the full range of National Curriculum science, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11.

The school does not provide a nationally recognised qualification for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Staff do not annotate pupils' written work to support their assessment of pupils' achievements.

Annual reports to parents do not consistently refer to learning in science.

67. During Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress in lessons because they are taught well. Their achievement over time is satisfactory, because there is not enough planning to develop their enquiry skills and because the amount of time for science is below the average for special schools. Girls and boys with severe learning difficulties and autism in Years 1, 2 and 3 achieve well in lessons about light, shadows and electricity. They are fascinated by images of their hands and bodies when these are projected onto a screen. The pupils with autism are motivated especially well by these activities. Higher attaining pupils recognise the first letter of their name, numbers up to ten and shapes of familiar animals when these are projected onto the screen. They know that when the projector is switched off, the light goes out. Learning in the classroom is adversely affected by the absence of blackout blinds. Learning in the 'sensory room', which has special light effects, is more effective when pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties use this facility separately, because their individual needs are met more easily.
68. In a lesson about the sense of touch, girls and boys in Years 2 to 4 showed great trust in their teacher. They were blindfolded, then encouraged to feel inside a box in order to identify familiar objects with different properties – a ball or soft toy, for example. They found it very difficult to name the objects correctly. In Years 5 and 6,



girls and boys achieved very well in a lesson about hearing and sound. The class included pupils with complex and severe learning difficulties, autism and visual impairment. The activities were interesting, resources were very well prepared, and learning support assistants were very well deployed and effective. Relationships were very good, pupils were very well managed and they thoroughly enjoyed the lesson. Speaking and listening skills were promoted very well. Pupils chose materials from the range presented. They each filled a pair of black pots until there were two pots containing rice, two with seeds, and two with coins etc. Pupils then listened and guessed the contents of each other's pots. Finally they used their listening skills very well to find similar pairs of pots after they had all been jumbled up. This very effectively developed their understanding of sound and their ability to take part in investigations.

69. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. In one lesson, two girls with severe learning difficulties learned how to group animals according to where they live – on land, sea or in the air. They responded well to being taught in a small group in the classroom, where communication skills are promoted well and relationships are very good. However, the range of resources used overall was too narrow to provide a truly stimulating learning environment. A visit to a farm for a boy with autism and a boy with profound and multiple learning difficulties was fun and valuable for their personal development. However, the expected science learning was not planned sufficiently or pupils' learning measured. Work on materials does not appear frequently enough in plans for Years 7 and 8.
70. In Years 9 to 11, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because science is not planned and taught as a separate subject. Pupils learn well about environmental education because this aspect is taught weekly. However, they do not learn enough about materials and physical processes. They use number skills to measure and record root growth of hyacinth bulbs. In personal, social, health and citizenship education, pupils learn about their bodies and how they change, contributing to their learning in science. There is no external accreditation in science.
71. Improvement since the previous inspection has been generally satisfactory. Leadership and management of science are also satisfactory, by a relatively new co-ordinator. Planning is improving and is best in Years 1 to 6. In all years, plans do not show clearly how pupils are to develop enquiry and investigative skills. The use of computers is mentioned in plans but no use was observed in practice. The required information about pupils' progress in science is not always included in the annual report to parents.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

72. Progress and achievement are good overall. Teaching is at least good – often very good – in Years 1 to 6.

### **Key strengths**

Primary aged pupils learn well how to paint in the style of famous artists because the quality of teaching is good.

Art contributes well to the cultural development of these pupils, because they are introduced to the work of many artists.

Learning support assistants provide good quality support.

Attractive displays around the school celebrate pupils' good progress in art.

#### Areas for improvement

Year 9 pupils working with those in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their full entitlement to National Curriculum art.

Completed work is not annotated to show what pupils have achieved.

National Curriculum references are not included in teachers' plans for art.

73. Boys and girls with autism and severe learning difficulties in Years 1 to 3 achieve well as they combine natural materials with paint. Teaching is good and resources are prepared creatively to motivate the pupils. Pupils use leaves, twigs, flour, sand and washing powder mixed with paint, for example, to create pictures with lively use of colour. The class created a group painting very well in the style of the action painter Jackson Pollock. Their work is linked well to other subjects. For example, they paint winter scenes and snow flakes in their study of weather and the seasons and make collages of one duckling or five currant buns, to support their number work.
74. In Years 3 and 4, boys and girls with severe learning difficulties, and a boy with autism, concentrated very well for a whole lesson, creating faces using salt dough. Resources were very well prepared. Pupils first learned about the features of the face. They then looked at a photograph of a black baby and a white baby, choosing the colour of dough they wanted to work with. This was a good opportunity for pupils to learn that people do not all have the same colour of skin. Higher attaining pupils were at times over directed to materials for creating the features of the face and were not given enough opportunity to work more independently. Art in this class is interesting and introduces pupils to a range of media, including textiles. Again, art is linked well to work in other subjects.
75. Teaching, learning and progress is very good in Years 5 and 6. Support and activities are very well matched to pupils' different stages of development. Pupils paint in the style of an excellent range of artists. For example, they are encouraged to think and talk about what is happening in the paintings of Van Gogh, Holbein, Rubens, Renoir and of Joseph Wright, a local artist, posing for photographs in which they mimic the style of the people in the paintings. They study 'The castle of Muiden in winter', by the Dutch painter, Jan Beerstaaten. A higher attaining boy decided to paint the castle. Others tore black tissue paper to create pictures of the skeletal trees in the winter scene. Pupils learn about Rodin and his sculpture of hands, and create their own hand sculptures using plaster and rubber gloves. Then, with meticulous care, they paint the hands, choosing gold, copper or silver paint. There is bold use of colour in pupils' interpretation of Rousseau's 'Tiger in a tropical storm'. Pupils are helped to capture the mood of the painting by listening to music and hearing a reading of William Blake's 'The Tyger'.
76. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have made collages and completed paintings to support their work in science, on the solar system, and in geography, about rainforests. They have visited the local cathedral to look at stained glass windows, then re-created these back in the classroom. In a topic on buildings, the pupils paint castles and other structures. The range of art experiences is not as extensive as in Years 5 and 6. There is not enough art for the Year 9 pupils who are in the upper school class with Year 10 and Year 11 pupils. There is no requirement to teach art in Years 10 and 11, but what is taught occasionally is not well planned.
77. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who leaves the school at Easter, is enthusiastic and creative in her promotion of the work of famous artists and sculptors. Plans in Years 1 to 6 have improved but none of the plans across the school contain specific references to National Curriculum art.

## CITIZENSHIP

78. Overall, pupils are making good progress in citizenship education, because the school is providing good opportunities for them to learn and teaching is good.

### Key strengths

Secondary aged pupils make good progress in citizenship lessons, learning about rules and the law and saying 'No' to strangers.

Primary and secondary pupils behave very responsibly, in school, in other schools and in the community.

Pupils are learning to enquire about and discuss current affairs, and participate in the community – raising funds for charity, for example. Teachers and learning support staff provide good support and encouragement.

The introduction of citizenship education has begun well.

### Areas for development

The school has not compared the existing programme with the statutory programmes of study for citizenship education, in order to identify any gaps.

The governors have not yet adopted a policy for citizenship education, to help them track developments in this subject.

79. During Years 7 and 8, pupils make good progress understanding social signs in the community. They learn that many signs – such as the colours of traffic lights – represent rules. They recognise and recall a good range of signs seen during their visits into the community: house for sale, toilets, and a telephone, for example. They understand that there are consequences if rules are broken and if they misbehave at home. Pupils know that there are courts of law, and understand the meaning of innocent and guilty. They know that a judge passes sentence when rules are broken. Learning is brought to life by using role play, dressing up, acting out a courtroom drama, and passing sentence on the prisoner. Reading to pupils about current events from newspapers motivates them to listen. A visit to a magistrates' court extends their understanding of rules, regulations and the consequences of rules broken.
80. In Years 9 to 11, pupils are learning about situations where they must say 'No' to strangers. They rehearse how to be assertive and learn that it is all right to say 'No'. Pupils were very well motivated and made good contributions to a very effective introduction to one lesson. They discussed possible dangers at home, in traffic, with animals, and with drugs, medicines and alcohol. They know it is wrong to steal, to cause damage, and to be led away by strangers. Their learning is supported well by the use of role play, by good use of signing to aid communication for the lower attaining pupils, and by good relationships. Learning support staff are well deployed to ensure that pupils who need the most help get it. There are high expectations of pupils. They are motivated by interesting tasks that hold their attention. As a result pupils behave and learn well.
81. Across the school, pupils are learning about social and moral responsibilities and about involvement in the local community. They learn very well how to manage their behaviour in lessons, in the many opportunities they have to work in mainstream schools, and when in the community. Pupils learn to take responsibility for classroom routines, to take registers and messages, and do jobs in the dining hall. They learn to care for one another and share. They learn to behave as part of the school, a class and as part of a family. Secondary aged pupils find out about ways of

caring for the environment and raise funds for charity. They develop their awareness of the world beyond the immediate locality, and of human rights.

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory and a good start has been made to introducing the subject. The school has not yet written a policy or finalised plans to show how all that is already taught supports the three main areas of citizenship education.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

83. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory, in line with the quality of teaching.

### Key strengths

Staff consistently encourage pupils to be as independent as possible.

Food preparation skills are taught carefully.

A link with a mainstream secondary school provides pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 with good opportunities to work with textiles and resistant materials.

### Areas for improvement

There is no clear picture of what pupils are learning as they move up through the school.

Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use resistant materials and to develop designing and planning skills.

There is too much emphasis placed on pupils making sweet dishes such as cakes and biscuits.

84. All pupils have weekly lessons in the food technology room, where they learn and practise a range of food preparation skills. Work in resistant materials and textiles has much less prominence and is often part of a rotation with other subjects. As a result, pupils make good progress in learning to use kitchen equipment and carry out skills such as mixing and cutting, but much slower progress in their designing and planning skills and the knowledge and skills associated with textiles and resistant materials. In Years 9, 10 and 11, pupils take part in a well established link programme which enables them to benefit from specialist teaching at a mainstream secondary school. During the inspection, groups worked in a textiles room or a resistant materials workshop, designing and making a cushion or wooden bookends. They made good progress in designing and learning to use resources – such as powered tools – not available in Alfreton Park, working alongside mainstream pupils. In contrast, their food technology work provides fewer opportunities for pupils to develop the ability to make decisions, plan what they will do and apply the practical skills they have learned.
85. As the basis for their planning, teachers use a published scheme for pupils with severe learning difficulties, supplemented by additional food technology work. This provides a great deal of freedom and scope for matching activities to the needs of the pupils in each class group. However, at present, there is no clear overview of what pupils of different ages are learning. The co-ordinator has begun to collect teachers' planning but there is no mechanism for ensuring that what pupils learn builds systematically on what they already know, understand and can do.
86. Food preparation skills are usually taught carefully, with a very strong emphasis on hygiene and safety. For example, in a lesson with less able pupils in Years 5 and 6, two learning support assistants taught them to make a fresh fruit salad. Their knowledge of each pupil was used very effectively in order to allocate the tasks. A

pupil with especially significant needs cut up a banana, whereas others dealt with the more resistant pineapple and fiddly strawberries. Pupils were required to be as independent as possible and this is a feature of all food technology lessons. In this instance, one pupil was asked to 'Go and find one large white bowl.' This encouraged his listening and numeracy skills as well as his ability to recognise equipment. Additionally, the staff used signing and symbols effectively – for example, to check pupils' knowledge of the names of fruit. In this class, pupils have regular opportunities to prepare simple savoury dishes, such as coleslaw and sandwiches. However, most teachers' plans indicate a very significant emphasis on sweet, fatty recipes – cakes, biscuits and puddings. Pupils are taught in theory about healthy eating but their design and technology lessons miss opportunities to reinforce this message.

87. The co-ordinator is providing satisfactory leadership and management, considering that the subject has not yet been a focus for whole-school development and she has only had this responsibility for just over one term, Teachers make satisfactory, if inconsistent, use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. There are a number of good examples, as when pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with autism, learn about remote control toys. Food technology makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88. It is evident from teachers' planning, pupils' work and wall displays that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

### **Key strength**

Pupils are taken on many trips and visits to help them develop their understanding and skills and to reinforce their learning.

### **Area for improvement**

Teachers' planning does not include clear references to National Curriculum programmes of study, to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement.

89. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about rain, snow, sunshine and other common weather conditions, the clothes worn in different weather and the games they play. They explore the school to find their way around the school's environment safely. In Years 3 to 6 they learn about people who help, such as the fire service and the police, and are excited by a visit to a fire station. They look at some of the different forms of transport by land, sea and air and enjoy a visit to a local airport. Older primary aged pupils compare their homes to the school and talk about the route from home to school and what they see on the way. They learn their own address.
90. During Years 7 and 8, pupils find out about life in the rainforests. They also learn to identify different weather symbols used in the television forecasts and study what type of weather conditions to expect in each of the four seasons. They investigate how other countries have climates different from our own and how the weather affects people. In Years 9 to 11 geographical studies are included in work on 'Communities and Lifestyles Further Away'. There is no external accreditation for geography.
91. Overall, the management of the subject is satisfactory. There is a suitable outline programme of work, though it does not yet show where, for example, visits will enhance the general planning, and links to the National Curriculum programmes of

study are not clearly referenced. The co-ordinator is a relatively new appointment and has a number of subject responsibilities. Geography has not progressed recently as might have been expected, because it has not been a focus for development. The timetabling of geography does not help pupils to make good progress, as there are often long gaps between units of work. Use is made of worksheets in some lessons, but older, higher achieving pupils are not always given sufficient opportunity to produce independently written work. Satisfactory use is made of computers – for example, to enable older pupils to carry out research.

## HISTORY

92. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make good progress in lessons, because they are taught well.

### Key strengths

History supports pupils' cultural development well, by encouraging them to think hard about local historical issues.

Computers make good contributions to pupils' learning.

### Areas for improvement

A whole-school programme of work is not complete.

Pupils' learning is interrupted by the way in which history is timetabled.

93. Teachers often plan interesting, practical activities, which motivate pupils to try hard and help them to learn. This good teaching and learning was evident in a Year 5 and 6 lesson, when pupils were developing a collage of themselves as babies and as they are now. They worked very hard at choosing and sticking down pictures to illustrate their needs as babies – dummy, cot, buggy – and their current interests – dancing, riding a bike. Staff used their very good knowledge of each pupil to provide just the right amount of physical or verbal prompting. Again, they had high but varying expectations of pupils, depending on what they had each already learned. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced dressing up in Victorian clothes on a trip to nearby Belper Hall and studied transport through the ages – from camels in Ancient Egypt, through horse drawn and electrified trams, to aeroplanes.
94. During Years 7 and 8, pupils study the Second World War, using key words to describe pictures of Hitler and Churchill. Older pupils, from Years 9 to 11, work on a topic entitled 'On this day in history'. This helps them appreciate the concept of time. In one lesson, very good use was made of information and communication technology, when photographs and pictures were shown a screen and pupils use their numeracy skills to work out how old a famous person, like Mendelson, would be today. These older pupils were encouraged to develop investigative skills by using computers to research people who were born or who had died on the day in question. Previously, on a visit to Derby Museum, they handled objects from the past and looked at old copies of the 'Derby Citizen' newspaper, dating back 200 years. This helps them to appreciate the history of their locality.
95. There appears to have been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, when achievement was reported to be good. However, a new co-ordinator was recently appointed and she has begun to develop a new policy and programme of work, showing how the National Curriculum requirements are covered. At present, in Years 1 to 8, history is taught in a rotation with geography, which makes it harder for pupils to build on their previous learning. Nevertheless, with the good (occasionally very good) teaching and learning seen during the inspection week, history is beginning to develop well. The subject makes a good

contribution to pupils' cultural and spiritual development through the content of lessons and the approaches used.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

96. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils make good progress in lessons and their achievement is satisfactory.

### Key strengths

Pupils benefit from good quality teaching, often in very small groups.

They are very enthusiastic about using computers.

Teachers make good use of computers to help pupils learn in many other subjects.

### Areas for improvement

Resources have improved significantly, but still more computers are needed.

97. Information and communication technology is used across the curriculum throughout the school. Much of the teaching occurs when individuals or groups of two or three pupils work with the technician. Teachers' plans usually indicate which software is to be used, but not always the skills that are to be taught or consolidated. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use programs that catch their attention and they learn that they can control what happens on the screen by the use of a switch or click of the mouse. This not only introduces basic computer control, but also increases their concentration and interest in the subject. In the remaining primary years, pupils improve their skills and operate software that supports their learning in other subjects, such as mathematics and art. Motivation is high and this nearly always leads to long spells of concentration and effort to succeed. Good behaviour management routines enable one or two pupils to work at the computer screen without disturbing the attention of the other pupils in the class. They know how to switch on a radio or tape recorder. Higher attaining pupils can move the cursor using a mouse and find their way around simple programs. In a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, a pupil started doing simple addition by moving objects on the screen. He completed the early tasks quickly and correctly so that the program moved on to subtraction, which he also did successfully. Highly motivated, he bravely attempted multiplication, but was sensitively stopped and the program reset by the learning support assistant. Whilst teachers note the new skills that are used by the pupils, this has only recently been set out using a common format, so progress can be securely tracked.
98. Computers continue to motivate pupils in Years 7 to 11. They show proficiency when using the Internet for research or pleasure, in the lunchtime computer club. The Manchester United Football Club's site is often visited. Other pupils enjoy the games sites provided by the BBC. More seriously, the Year 7 and 8 pupils use the Internet as part of their study of the rainforests in geography and learn to use a digital camera and photocopier. Lower attaining pupils experiment with cause and effect, using switches and a touch screen. The Year 9 to 11 pupils discover the climate and customs of several different counties as they study 'Communities and Lifestyles Further Away'. Higher attaining pupils use word processing skills to write up a short part of a diary and are given support to make use of the scanner. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good and they can be trusted to use the computers responsibly. They do not have dedicated information and communication technology lessons, to enable their learning to progress more rapidly.
99. The leadership of the subject is good. The enthusiasm and commitment of the co-ordinator and the very good expertise of the technician combine to ensure that

pupils are making good progress. At present, the programme of work is adequate, but it will require further revision as the number of computers increases and as the pupils' expertise improves. Information and communication technology has been a major focus for the school and it is still considered a developing subject. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and further work is planned.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

100. Very infrequently – during one term every three years – a modern foreign language is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9. This is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to enable firm judgements to be made about pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching.

## **MUSIC**

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is also satisfactory.

### Key strengths

Teachers make good use of music in other lessons.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards music.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent.

### Areas for improvement

Reports to parents do not indicate clearly the progress made by pupils.

The co-ordinator does not yet have a clear view of teaching and learning across the school.

102. In the very small number of lessons seen, pupils responded very well. In singing lessons for pupils in Years 1 to 6, they had positive attitudes and the relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils themselves, were very good – at times, excellent. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked very hard, responding to the teacher's high expectations, choosing instruments such as drums, bells and blocks and deciding whether to play them loudly or softly. Pupils took pride in their work and showed tremendous enjoyment. Teachers move lessons on quickly, challenging pupils to make an effort to the very last minute.

103. Music is used effectively in other lessons. For example, in swimming, for pupils for Years 1 to 6, music is used effectively to encourage them to move in the water – fast, slow, backwards and forwards. Pupils regularly sing songs and perform actions to them.

104. The co-ordination of music is satisfactory. However, this year the co-ordinator has been responsible for supporting pupils during lessons in mainstream schools. As a result, music has not been of the highest priority for development. The co-ordinator does not yet have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning in music across the school, as each class teacher teaches their own music lessons. Music is not reported as a separate subject. This means that parents are not clear what progress their children have made.

105. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many of the pieces of music pupils play and listen to are uplifting and stimulating, allowing them to express their feelings and emotions. Socially and morally, music gives pupils opportunities to mix, share and take turns. Music therapy facilitates



communication, and is used to enhance interpersonal skills and relationships. Culturally, opportunities are offered to pupils to play and listen to music from many countries, such as African drums and Arabic dance music. Older pupils have been to musical shows such as 'Grease' and 'Oliver!' Each year the school holds a musical performance, such as 'Babushka', in which every pupil participates.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. The quality of teaching is very good. As a result, pupils of all attainments make very good progress and achieve very well.

### Key strengths

Staff have excellent relationships with pupils and their use of questioning and signing is skilled.

Pupils of all levels of attainment work very hard to improve their performance.

Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities.

Pupils develop very good attitudes to sport and physical activities and appreciate the benefits of regular exercise.

Swimming is a particular strength of the subject.

### Areas for improvement

There is very little opportunity for pupils to gain nationally recognised certificates for their achievements.

Changing and showering areas are inadequate and the hall is unsuitable for physical education.

107. Pupils of all ages and abilities work very hard to improve their performances. For example, a Year 6 pupil with autism made very good progress in the school swimming pool. He listened well, followed instructions carefully and by the end of the lesson was responding verbally to the instructor's prompts and signing. Very good use of music was made as the teacher sang action songs. The pupil tried his best to join in and complete the actions. He could point to his nose as they sang '*Put your finger on your nose, on your nose*', and pointed to other body parts as they completed the song. The instructor made very good use of praise and encouragement, contributing to the pupil's enjoyment and progress.

108. In all lessons seen, pupils had very positive attitudes to their work. In dance, for example, pupils work extremely hard, perform individually and in small groups and are very creative. In one dance lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, relationships in class were excellent. As a result of very good prompting, questioning and signing, pupils responded very positively. They concentrated well, worked very hard physically and persevered to complete tasks and improve their performance. They showed increased confidence and self esteem.

109. A wide range of opportunities is provided for pupils. As well as programmes of study linked to the National Curriculum, opportunities are provided by visiting teachers bringing their skills and knowledge into school. For example, local authority sports staff come into school every term and enhance the curriculum by offering pupils hockey, basketball, athletics and cricket. A professional dance teacher teaches lessons and offers an after school club. Many pupils achieve dance awards but otherwise, their very good achievement in physical education is not externally accredited.

110. The quality of teaching and learning in swimming is consistently very good. Pupils gain confidence and self esteem. They start from a very low base, building up water confidence and safety in lessons with their teachers and the swimming instructor. As pupils get older and move up through the school, they follow their swimming programme at the local leisure centre. They increase their personal and social skills and they learn to undress and dress, take turns, listen carefully and follow instructions, increasing their communication skills.
111. During the inspection, pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 had a particularly good movement and dance lesson, working very hard physically to improve their performances. However, as the lesson closed, the lack of changing rooms or showers meant that pupils had to return to their classroom for the next lesson, without the benefit of showering and changing. This applies to all pupils across the school and is unsatisfactory. Additionally, the indoor space for physical education is very restricting and the hall is a thoroughfare, so lessons are inevitably disturbed.
112. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils' progress was described then as good, and is now consistently very good. The present co-ordinator is still relatively new to the school but leadership and management are at least satisfactory. The subject is a strength of the school and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

113. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They often make good progress in lessons, in line with the quality of teaching.

### **Key strengths**

Religious education is taught regularly to all pupils.

Pupils visit different places of worship, extending their awareness of other cultures.

There are good artefacts for pupils with additional needs to use.

### **Areas for improvement**

Pupils produce little evidence – for example, writing or drawing – of what they have learned about.

The school's programme of work is incomplete.

Lessons are occasionally too short.

114. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when religious education was reported to be unsatisfactory across the school. Last September, a new co-ordinator was appointed, who has written a draft policy document. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Programmes of work are in the process of being written and these are based on the Local Agreed Syllabus, suitably adapted. There is a good balance of activities such as learning about different religions and thinking about issues of personal morality and human behaviour. The needs of pupils with additional educational needs are catered for well, using special resource packs about bible stories such as Jonah and the Whale and the Good Samaritan.
115. At the present time, the length of lessons varies throughout the school. In a few classes, not enough time is set aside for the subject. In addition, there is limited evidence of pupils' work – either written or photographic – on which to base judgements about their achievement. Nevertheless, it is evident that the subject is beginning to develop well.

116. During a Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils learned in a very active way about the moral message within the story of the 'Wise Man and the Foolish Man'. Pupils made houses out of sand and construction kits. Two Year 2 pupils with additional special needs showed that they appreciated how fragile the sand house was, repeating the words 'Foolish, foolish man, building his sand house.' Year 3 and 4 pupils compare the differences and similarities in the celebrations of Christians and those of other faiths. During one lesson, they described how they had celebrated Christmas – 'My Mummy and Daddy danced' said one high attaining Year 3 pupil. They listened intently while the teacher explained about the significance of Ramadan and were all involved in painting her hands with mendhi patterns.
117. Wall displays around school depict visits to support the curriculum. Pupils have visited the local parish church, Derby cathedral, the crooked spire in Chesterfield, a mosque and a synagogue. The subject contributes very well to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils.