

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HILLSIDE SCHOOL**

Portslade

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114687

Headteacher: Mr R Wall

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Whitehead  
21061

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Inspection number: 249360

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 and students:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils and students:	Mixed
School address:	Foredown Road Portslade East Sussex
Postcode:	BN41 2FU
Telephone number:	01273 416979
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms A Wells
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21061	M G Whitehead	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' and students' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils and students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
19650	S Thomas	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils and students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
4989	L Lewis	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious education</p>	
2512	B Emery	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Post-16 provision</p>	
8056	H Probert	Team inspector	<p>Art and design</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>The Foundation Stage</p> <p>Educational Inclusion</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
20024	P Wright	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p>	
28106	M Majid	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?</p>



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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hillside school is a day special school for boys and girls with severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties whose ages range from 4 to 19 years. Many pupils and students have autistic spectrum disorders and additional complex medical needs. There are 76 pupils and students on roll comprising 49 boys and 27 girls. All pupils and students have statements of special educational needs or are being assessed for such statements. Approximately a quarter of the pupils and students have additional sensory impairment and approximately a third of the pupils and students are entitled to free school meals. The pupils' and students' attainment levels are very low when compared with pupils and students in mainstream schools as is to be expected for pupils and students with such severe learning difficulties. There are four pupils and students for whom English is an additional language. There are two groups of post-16 students and one of these groups is educated in off-site provision (Cherry Trees). There is a large proportion of pupils and students who are 'looked after' by the local authority. The school is situated in Portslade and serves a wide catchment area.

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

Hillside School is a good school with many very good features. The progress made by the pupils and students is good overall and very good progress is made by a significant proportion of pupils and students. The headteacher provides a very high quality of leadership, being very well supported by his senior management team. They work very effectively together and enjoy the support of all staff and governors. The management systems operated within the school are very effective and efficient. The school provides a good curriculum that is very relevant to the pupils and students and their special educational needs. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and there are many areas in which the teaching is very good indeed. Taking account of the very strong leadership and management of the school, the high quality of the teaching and the good progress that the pupils and students make, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher, governors and senior management team provide very strong leadership of the school.
- The school enables pupils and students to make good progress in all subjects.
- The teaching is good overall and often it is very good; literacy and numeracy skills are taught very effectively throughout the school.
- The school is very effective in ensuring the welfare of the pupils and students.
- Relationships within the school between all staff and pupils and students are excellent.
- There is very strong commitment shown by all staff and they have a very high capacity to succeed.
- Provision is very good for the post-16 students and is a strength of the school.
- The school's provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.



### What could be improved

- The accommodation is poor. There is insufficient storage space and there are no specialist teaching rooms for science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology, physical education and music to pupils who are in Key Stages 3 and 4.
- There are not enough opportunities for the most able pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 to follow nationally accredited courses.
- The school needs to present a clear policy and structure statements to support the good quality curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage in order to explain the school's provision for these young children.
- Planned use of ICT in 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 last inspected in 1997 and, since that inspection, the school has made good progress overall. In some areas, the progress has been very good. For example, the quality of teaching has improved greatly and is now good overall with many very good features. In four of the 76 lessons that were observed, the teaching was excellent because the teachers' commitment, enthusiasm and high level of skill were enhanced by their specialist subject knowledge. There has also been a significant improvement in the teaching of English, mathematics, geography and art and design. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. There has also been very good improvement in the way in which teachers plan their lessons and assess the pupils' and students' work. However, there has been no significant improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection and it is still poor. This has a limiting effect upon the teaching that can take place for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. The school is very aware of these problems and has been seeking a solution through discussion with the local education authority since the time of the last inspection.

### STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils and students achieve well in all subjects and at all key stages. The pupils and students do not take part in the national tests as they are inappropriate for pupils and students with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties.

## PUPILS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils and students are very positive about their work. As far as they are able, pupils and students concentrate in lessons and enjoy what they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and students, and between pupils and students and staff, are excellent. All pupils and students are valued highly and treated with respect and dignity. Personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils and students are keen to come to school.

Pupils and students are well motivated, and they respond well to teachers. Pupils and students respond well to the school's high expectations of how they should behave in and around the premises, and this has a positive impact on pupils' and students' learning. Relationships throughout the school are excellent.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils/students:	Foundation Stage	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education is good for all pupils and students. There are many lessons when the teaching is very good and, in English and science, excellent teaching was observed. The skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy, are taught very well. Teachers have a very clear understanding of the special educational needs of the pupils and students and show extremely high levels of commitment, enthusiasm and expertise in their work.

During the inspection, 100 per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, 93.4 per cent was good or better and 44.8 per cent was very good or better. The quality of pupils' and students' learning followed exactly the same pattern as the teaching. Pupils and students make good progress in all subjects. The teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is consistently good or very good and they all make good progress towards their goals. Students in the post-16 classes receive very good teaching and follow courses that are carefully matched to their special educational needs as they prepare for leaving the school and going into further education, further special needs provision, or the world of work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides good breadth and balance, and the quality of curricular planning is very good. There are good policy statements for all subjects. The scope of the curriculum is good and pupils and students find it stimulating and enjoyable. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good but the policies and documents to support it are in need of further development in order to give a true reflection of the good work that takes place in the school.
Provision for pupils and students with English as an additional language	The few pupils and students with English as an additional language have good provision. Staff take account of their needs when planning lessons and steps are taken to ensure that there are no language difficulties with parents.
Provision for pupils' and students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Self-worth is very strongly promoted. There is a clear moral code, which is the basis for all behaviour. Pupils and students are helped to appreciate the wonders around them and to value the contributions of others. A wide range of experiences promotes pupils' and students' cultural development very effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils and students	There are very effective systems for monitoring pupils' and students' personal development, and communication needs are met very well

The overall contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home is good. The use and monitoring of the home/school books have a good impact on pupils' and students' progress and wellbeing. An extremely high proportion of parents and carers attend the annual reviews of the statements of special educational needs of their children and take part in the formulation of the termly targets on their individual education plans.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The leadership provides a very clear focus and educational direction. A very high priority is given to school improvement, and there is a very high level of shared commitment to school improvement.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very strong and effective in the way it discharges its duties. Governors make very good use of their professional skills and expertise, and they are fully involved in making important, strategic decisions, which affect the future direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The strengths and area of the school which require development are very well understood by the governors, and targets for school development and improvement are set very regularly. Monitoring school improvement is very high on the governors' agenda, and frequent contact with the school is a feature of the governors' strategy.
The strategic use of	The strategic use of human, material and financial resources

resources	throughout the school is very good.
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The overall number of staff and their range of teaching qualifications are very well matched to the subjects they teach and the present number of pupils and students on roll. Teachers and staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are very effective in meeting the special educational needs of the pupils and students. Administrative and other staff are well deployed, and very good use is made of their talents. The headteacher provides very strong leadership for the school. The school is extremely effective in applying principles of best value.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• It is easy to approach with problems.</li> <li>• The staff have high expectations of the children and their achievements.</li> <li>• The good information that they receive concerning their children.</li> <li>• The tracking system for wheelchairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• The amount of speech and language therapy.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents and carers. The school provides an appropriate amount of homework for the pupils and students and this takes many forms, including the sharing of strategies for coping with their difficulties to improving their academic skills where appropriate. The school provides an appropriate amount of very high quality therapy for the pupils and students. The therapists work very closely with the teaching staff and their assistants to ensure that their recommendations and guidance are implemented very effectively.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Throughout the school the young children in the Foundation Stage, the pupils in Key Stages 1 to 4 and the students in the post-16 classes achieve well, taking into account their special educational needs. The report will give examples of what the pupils and students know, understand and can do at the end of each key stage and their progress is measured against their own previous best performance. Because of their special educational needs, the standards that they reach are understandably very much below those achieved by pupils and students of a similar age in mainstream schools
2. Pupils and students with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils and students in the school who have very serious conditions which can lead to regression in all areas of skill development have very generalised targets which aim to maintain existing skills for as long as possible. These pupils and students have full access to lessons as a result of the well-targeted support they receive from therapists and support staff.
3. There are four pupils and students in the school for whom English as a second language. Two with Arabic, one with Farsi and one with Cantonese as their first languages. All four are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The progress made by these pupils and students is good and in line with that made by other pupils and students in the school. The progress of all pupils and students in the school is analysed and monitored carefully. Appropriate targets are set which take account of their annual reviews and the progress that they have already made in their lessons. The school also ensures that support staff and therapists are appropriately involved. The positive ethos of inclusiveness in the school helps all pupils and students to gain confidence and integrate quickly.
4. The headteacher, governors and parents have discussed the national scheme of testing pupils and students and have agreed that these tests are inappropriate for the pupils and students of Hillside School. However, there are times when they are able to gain nationally recognised awards, particularly in swimming and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The pupils and students have enjoyed a range of successes in these areas.

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

5. Pupils' and students' attitudes to school and their work are very good. They enjoy their work. Pupils in Year 5 showed great pleasure in feeling and trying on 'Joseph's clothes' in religious education. Children with the highest level of disability are attentive in class, particularly where the teaching is well planned and stimulating. They respond with smiles and laughter. Older students have a mature approach to their work. They talk willingly to staff and visitors about their work.
6. Behaviour is good overall. Staff have high expectations and pupils and students usually respond well. In a minority of lessons, pupils and students do not concentrate and distract others by calling out or running out of the classroom. There have been no exclusions over the last five years. Pupils and students move around the school in an orderly manner ensuring they make way for those in wheelchairs.

7. The school's ethos respects the value of each pupil as an individual. This is noticeable throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils and students are excellent. Pupils and students are courteous and respectful to adults and fellow pupils and students. Students at Cherry Trees encourage each other to achieve. All staff treat pupils and students at all times with respect and dignity. Those who help children with personal hygiene and feeding do so sensitively and carefully. Escorts on the buses and taxis are friendly, polite and alert to pupils' and students' needs.
8. As a result of the school's positive ethos, pupils' and students' personal development is very good. Their confidence and social awareness increases. Staff encourage them to be as independent as possible. Older pupils and students make drinks for each other at break. At playtimes they are given the responsibility to ensure that other pupils and students have a friend to play with if they want one. The school council is an effective means of encouraging pupils and students to think of others and take responsibility for their school.
9. Pupils and students are keen to come to school. Attendance is good. Most of the parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that their children liked school. The main reason for authorised absence is caused by medical problems. Unauthorised absence is very low.
10. Pupils and students with additional special educational needs demonstrate good attitudes to school and learning. In cases where pupils and students have behavioural problems, both teachers and support staff work diligently to implement agreed behaviour management plans to ensure that, as far as possible, their needs are met within the classroom setting. This policy helps to ensure that these pupils and students enjoy school and are able to develop relationships with their peers.

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

11. The quality of teaching and learning at Hillside school is good overall. Throughout all classes there is good and often very good teaching. The teaching of students in the post-16 classes is very good overall. Teachers plan for and provide good educational inclusion for all pupils and students.
12. The teaching of English throughout the school is good. The school has introduced very good strategies across the school for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and all staff have been trained in the presentation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The planning of lessons by the teachers has improved very much and is now very good. Literacy and numeracy lessons follow the 'numeracy strategy' patterns though there are occasions where the time has to be adjusted appropriately to meet the needs and difficulties of the pupils and students. Throughout the school, across all subjects, the teachers strive to improve pupils' and students' literacy skills. They encourage pupils and students to speak wherever possible; they support their speech very effectively with signing and encourage the pupils and students to do the same.
13. The teaching of mathematics throughout the school is good. It is not confined to the numeracy and mathematics lessons. There are many occasions when teachers of other subjects encourage pupils and students to reinforce their knowledge of number, shape and position. Pupils and students enjoy the success that they have in these areas and make good progress at all ages. Each pupil and student has an individual education plan in which there are clearly written targets. These targets cover not only the subjects that are taught but also behavioural targets designed to help pupils and students to overcome their behavioural difficulties. The targets are well written and the

progress that pupils and students make towards achieving those targets is carefully monitored and recorded.

14. The work of the teaching assistants is invaluable within the school. They work exceptionally well with the teachers and are vital to the wellbeing and development of the pupils and students. Many of the teaching assistants work closely with individual pupils and students to make sure that they can take a full part in the lessons. They give support and guidance to the pupils and students as well as assisting the teachers. The relationships between the teachers and support assistants are excellent and their shared commitment shines through the quality of provision in the classrooms.
15. The quality of teachers' planning has improved greatly since the last inspection and is now very good overall. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and students and are constantly striving for the very best outcomes during lessons. They modify National Curriculum targets and plan learning in small steps to ensure that pupils and students can build on their earlier experiences. Consequently, the pupils and students work hard and learn well. Very good use is made of the time during the day. There is no time wasting and every possible minute is used as a teaching and learning opportunity. This is true of break-times, lunch-times and at the beginning and end of the day. During the day, a great emphasis is also placed upon social development. Pupils and students are encouraged to greet each other and the staff when they arrive each morning. They arrive in a bright and cheerful frame of mind, keen to get to school and keen to begin lessons.
16. Teachers make good use of the home/school books to exchange information and ideas between school and home. In many ways, this forms part of the pupils' and students' homework as strategies that are employed at school are encouraged at home. In this way, this 'homework' is an extension of the school day. This applies to developing speech and communication skills as well as maintaining behaviour management strategies where they are appropriate.
17. Pupils and students with additional special educational needs are taught effectively in all sections of the school. Consistency of planning and the setting of targets appropriate to their individual needs ensure that pupils and students with severe learning difficulties and those with more complex needs and medical conditions all obtain the types of support they require in order to be able to take a full part in all lessons.
18. The quality of the teaching for pupils and students who have English as an additional language is good and individual termly targets are set which take account not only of their curriculum needs but also their personal development and behaviour needs. The quality of support for pupils and students with English as an additional language is good and this helps them to take a full part in all lessons.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils and students is good with some very good elements, such as the teaching of basic skills, the effectiveness of teachers' planning, the quality and use of ongoing assessment and the management of pupils and students. There are regular curriculum meetings covering such areas as policy documents, target setting and the school improvement plan. The school also provides a good curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum is not supported well enough by the school's policies and

general documents. The school does not reflect sufficiently its own good practice through its documentation.

20. The school covers five and sometimes six key stages and there is a high proportion of pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). There is a wide range of ability from PMLD to moderate learning difficulties (MLD). All National Curriculum subjects are taught and there is a suitable balance of time within and between subjects. For pupils aged five to seven years, the curriculum runs on a two-year cycle whilst for those aged eight to sixteen years, their curriculum runs on a four-year cycle. These are all planned to include National Curriculum Programme of Study and termly targets for each pupil. These targets are based on literacy, numeracy, personal, social and health education, ICT, behavioural targets and other priority targets, and they are monitored regularly by the deputy headteacher. At present, there are no nationally accredited courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11.
21. The planning ensures that all pupils and students have an equal opportunity to study all subjects. PMLD pupils have some physical education lessons with the severe learning difficulties (SLD) pupils and a group of pupils goes horse riding each week. There are plans to make improvements by including any more able PMLD pupils in other appropriate lessons with SLD classes. The co-ordinator for the secondary curriculum has ensured literacy and numeracy are regularly timetabled and that long-term plans are in place to give a breadth and balance to the curriculum. However, the curriculum is severely limited by the accommodation because there are no specialist facilities for science, ICT, design and technology, music or art and design, and the hall is unsuitable for physical education as it is used as a passageway. This is a major area for improvement as it is having a negative impact on the curriculum that can be offered by the school.
22. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus and the teaching of personal, social and health education is particularly good. There is a good programme of careers education in which both education and guidance are provided over a four-year programme for the pupils and students in Years 9 to 16. For example, one module is on 'introducing myself' and another on 'the world of work'. There is a 'careers board' situated in the resources room and this is regularly checked by the careers co-ordinator. The school has purchased a careers package specifically for SLD pupils and students covering self-awareness, decisions and choices, action planning and the world of work. This enables pupils and students to work in the same way as their peers in mainstream schools.
23. The school provides very good and sometimes excellent enrichment through a range of extra-curricular activities. Older pupils have taken part in educational visits for history, geography, science, art and design and personal, social and health education. Visits are made to local exhibitions and leisure facilities and pupils visit local shops, fast food outlets and leisure centres to practise money handling and number and communication skills. Educational and drama groups visit the school and the older pupils take part in an annual photographic competition. Pupils have taken part in a dance festival in Brighton and visited the Imperial War Museum in London. They have taken part in a boat trip around Chichester harbour, visited Chessington World of Adventures and used a local fast food restaurant to make pizzas. Some of these activities are celebrated with photographic displays. Lunch-time clubs offer Makaton, music and 'girls' club'. Pupils have class residential visits where there are opportunities not only to practise many of their independence skills, but to socialise with other pupils and adults.



24. Pupils and students with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the work of the school and the provision is good. The work of the inclusion co-ordinator has ensured that all possible steps have been taken to ensure special educational needs pupils and students have full access to the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. For example, after-school clubs are open to every pupil. Lessons are planned very carefully to make sure that the work is pitched at an appropriate level and that the work expected of each pupil is sufficiently challenging without being too difficult. The behaviour programmes are intended to facilitate and enable access for all. Similarly, the co-ordinator sets termly aims and forecasts to ensure that when new activities are planned and objectives set for that term, issues of joint planning and access are fully considered.
25. There are very constructive links with partner institutions. Ten pupils from the school attend a local independent school to work alongside pupils of their own age in animal husbandry, conservation and swimming. The pupils learn to behave appropriately, for example how to greet the staff and pupils in the right way. Detailed reports are kept of these visits, with observations of the pupils' progress and suggested areas for development. For example, it is planned for the school to develop further information exchange on disability awareness to the pupils at local schools. Joint discussions between these schools are also planned. The school is also linked with another SLD/PMLD schools and has literacy, numeracy and ICT links with the adjoining primary school.
26. The governors' monitoring of the curriculum is very good. The curriculum committee monitor the school's development planning and schemes of work. There are also governors responsible for literacy, numeracy, ICT and inclusion. The whole school is inclusive and supportive and has a very positive way of looking at pupils with suitable expectations of behaviour.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

27. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as a whole.
28. Provision for pupils' and students' spiritual development is good. The school is successful in creating an environment where all pupils and students can grow and flourish; spirituality taking an important role in this. Staff, pupils and students treat each other with respect and genuine concern. Opportunities are taken through quiet periods using music and light to reflect on events. Issues of illness and bereavement are carefully and sensitively addressed. Collective acts of worship and celebrations of the wonder of the world help to develop a good sense of spirituality. Teachers use the curriculum effectively to promote spirituality, for example in an art and design lesson, the teacher produces flowers not only for the pupils to look at, but to smell and feel. In a session with post-16 PMLD students, the topic of the 'stars and beyond' used music and colour effectively to give a sense of the wonder of the universe.
29. The provision for moral development is good and provision for social development is very good. They are closely linked, and taught well throughout the curriculum, with focus on personal, social, health, sex education, and religious education. Moral issues, including friendship, bullying and behaviour management, provide a framework against which the progress of pupils and students can be measured effectively in small steps. A sense of community is fostered within the school and in the links with local schools. Pupils and students look outside of their personal world to recognise their feelings and the feelings of others. They learn appropriate behaviour in social situations. For

example, the post-16 students at Cherry Trees practise shopping and eating out in the community, and learn how to deal with people and situations. Pupils and students visit schools and colleges, take part in local competitions and music festivals and raise money for charity. Relationships within the school at all levels are excellent and make a significant impact on the success of the school. In lessons, there is a strong emphasis on sharing, taking turns, helping each other and respecting others' views and difficulties. Arrangements at the start of the day, pupils delivering milk and many experiences of care and concern all contribute to a sense of wellbeing where social and moral concerns are evident.

30. Provision for pupils' and students' cultural development is very good. The school celebrates the festivals of the Christian church as well as festivals of other faiths and cultures. Music, from classical to pop, is used to set the mood and contribute to learning in many lessons. Traditional songs are sung during lessons. Very well displayed artwork reflects the influence of European artists but also artists from around the world. Cultural development is very well supported by visiting performing artists, as well as by visits to local theatres, galleries and crafts people. Pupils learn of their own heritage through visits, such as those to museums, and geography provides the opportunity to study people from around the world. Pupils prepare and eat food from other cultures; as part of a physical education dance module, pupils learn American line dancing. In art and design lessons, pupils become familiar with the work of particular artists; one class made excellent imitations of a flower picture by Georgina O'Keefe. They also learn about other cultures. For example, one of their parents has added enrichment by talking to pupils about their own culture and bringing artefacts to illustrate their way of life.
31. Pupils and students with English as additional language are provided with the full range of curriculum opportunities open to all other groups in the school. These include opportunities to develop both their literacy and numeracy skills.

### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship**

32. The provision for pupils' and students' personal, social and health education is very good. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are delivered through formal termly targets as a separate subject, and also through the everyday routines of the school. There are individual personal, social and health education targets for each pupil and these are assessed termly. The scheme of work was devised by the subject leader and is based on the National Curriculum, QCA documentation and the local education authority's schemes of work.
33. The school provides very good development of aspects such as attitudes, citizenship, health and relationships for all year groups. Their development is particularly enhanced through the continuous emphasis on teaching the subject, and the opportunities taken during other lessons, at break-times and lunch-times.
34. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are introduced to different aspects of personal, social and health education, covering such topics as 'my body' and 'people who help us'. In a very good Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to gain an awareness of their own bodies by identifying body parts by speech and gesture. This lesson was very well planned and effective questioning ensured the involvement of all pupils. These aspects are developed for older pupils; for example in a good lesson for Key Stage 3, pupils were given photographs of parents and the police. The more able pupils used worksheets to identify people who help us. Pupils also learn about personal hygiene, relationships and drugs education. Sex education is ongoing and is taught throughout the curriculum at an appropriate level, and parents are given the opportunity to discuss this with the school.

35. Personal, social and health education is incorporated into the routines of the day. Older pupils have targets related to their social progress, such as 'to continue to walk to and from school and home, with diminishing adult help', or behaviour targets, such as 'to remove himself from a situation when he is angry'. Younger pupils learn to lay places for dinner and to wash and brush their teeth independently. In Class 2, pupils each chose a toy from a box and were encouraged to share them with others.
36. Citizenship has been included as a part of the personal, social and health education curriculum and includes modules such as 'all sorts of people' and 'money, money, money'. During the module on personal safety, the pupils learn the main rules of road safety by walking to a busy road and identifying features on and near the road which will keep them safe.
37. The school makes use of the local environment. For example, by visiting the local shops, the recycling centre and the fire station and there are also visits from a local mother and baby as part of sex education and health programmes from the school nurse. A lunch-time 'girls' club' is run for a block of four weeks each half term for older pupils to promote self-protection skills and gender awareness. This includes distinguishing between private and non-private parts of the body, knowing the main changes which take place for girls at puberty and being aware that there are consequences to actions.
38. The well-informed and enthusiastic subject leader has had relevant and recent training for citizenship; this has been the subject of staff in-service training. Future staff development this year will include sex education. There are comprehensive sex, relationship and drugs education policy documents. The sex education policy shows links with science in all key stages and there is an appendix relating to the pupils' specific needs. The subject leader monitors progress and each teacher gives feedback concerning the appropriateness of content to the class group and what has been achieved.

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

39. The school continues to provide a very supportive, caring environment which ensures the welfare of the pupils and students. As a result, all pupils and students can grow and develop. All staff are vigilant in ensuring the welfare of the pupils and students. Staff know pupils and students well. Pupils and students trust the staff and have confidence in them. Personal development continues to be monitored through termly targets which contain relevant, achievable goals.
40. Procedures for monitoring behaviour are very good. All staff are aware of the behaviour policy which is applied consistently throughout the school. Where necessary, pupils and students have behaviour management plans which are implemented effectively. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service provides effective advice and support for parents, pupils and students and teachers.
41. Attendance procedures are good. Most parents understand their responsibility to notify the school of reasons for absence.
42. Measures to ensure the protection and health and safety of pupils and students are very good. Personal hygiene procedures ensure pupils and students are treated with dignity and privacy. Teachers give proper attention to health and safety in lessons. All staff are vigilant about potential child protection issues and receive regular training.

43. The procedures for assessing pupils' and students' attainment and monitoring their progress are very good. Record keeping is very good and pupils' and students' files contain a comprehensive range of information, which provides an overall picture of what each pupil and student knows, understands and can do. In all subjects, pupils' and students' achievement and their progress is good because each year their attainment is assessed effectively by teachers. This information is analysed to identify trends, set targets for improvement and to inform curriculum developments. For example, a small number of pupils are achieving in literacy and numeracy at National Curriculum Levels 1 and 2. From this, the school recognises that it will need to develop opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to have access to externally accredited examinations. The school has also identified trends, such as the positive impact that the implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have had on standards, and it has a clear picture of areas where individual pupils appear to have reached a plateau in their learning and are able to plan targets which maintain progress.
44. The good quality of assessment information enables the school to prioritise and address areas for development and identify effective teaching and learning. Teachers establish an individual programme of work for each pupil which covers all the areas of learning of the curriculum. Activities and experiences are planned effectively to enable pupils and students to make progress and achieve the targets that have been set for them. These assessment procedures are precise, and enable teachers to measure pupils' and students' progress accurately. Assessment systems are firmly embedded in numeracy, literacy, personal, social and health education and physical education. The school is developing an assessment system that is able to acknowledge the very small steps of progress being made by the pupils and students in other subjects but these require further development to ensure the same level of accuracy. The school effectively links the targets in individual education plans to the annual reviews and annual reports on pupils and students. The targets set in annual reviews are shared very effectively with pupils and students through simple statements written in symbols. This enables pupils and students to develop an awareness of their own achievement and progress. Pupils' and students' records of achievement are of good quality. They provide a comprehensive photographic, video taped and annotated record of their experiences throughout their time at school. The school is involved in a pilot project using nationally recognised assessment procedures, the outcomes of which are submitted as part of an initiative to provide benchmark information about attainment in special schools.
45. The monitoring of academic progress is very good for pupils and students with additional special educational needs and medical needs. Carefully agreed targets that are specific and measurable ensure that the work builds in small steps and contributes to good progress. The review process for all pupils and students is thorough and keeps all interested parties fully informed about progress.
46. The school has effective arrangements for assessing pupils and students with English as an additional language. Like all other pupils and students, they have termly targets which take account of their annual reviews alongside the regular assessments made by the teaching staff.

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

47. The school has created a very effective partnership with parents. Eighty-seven per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire feel the school works closely with parents. They continue to receive regular information about school events and their children's development. Ninety-seven per cent of parents who returned the questionnaire feel they are kept well informed about their child's progress. The school supports parents well. Home visits are made as necessary. Pupils' and students' annual review reports are comprehensive. They give a very good picture of a child's abilities. Review meetings are conducted sensitively ensuring that parents have sufficient time to make their contribution. The combined school prospectus and annual governors' report contain the statutory information. However, its presentation is unattractive and unlikely to encourage people to read it.
48. Parents' involvement with the work of the school is good. Parents are supportive of the school. Most have signed the home/school agreement and made the commitment to work with the school for the benefit of their children. They use the home/school book well to communicate with the school. Almost all parents attend their child's review. The Friends of Hillside arrange social events such as the summer barbecue. These are usually well attended.
49. Parents make a valuable contribution to their children's learning. Some parents of children whose first language is not English come in to talk to pupils and students. All four parent governors' posts are filled. A number of parents complement the work of the school and help their children at home with their activities. However, only 46 per cent of parents feel that their children get the right amount of work to do at home.
50. Parents of pupils and students with extra medical and educational needs are kept well informed about the progress of their children and are fully involved in the review process. Information is provided to pupils and students and parents in ways that take account of views expressed by pupils and students and parents. In addition, there is a termly newsletter that informs parents about the work on inclusion carried out by the school. For example, videos of the Brighton and Hove Dance Project were made available and photographic evidence of all related activities is available to parents when they visit the school. There is evidence to indicate that parents are pleased by the school's provision and plans to meet the needs of their children. They acknowledge that the progress being made by their children is good.
51. The school has good links with the parents of pupils and students with English as additional language. Regular letters are sent home informing them about the school events and pupils' and students' progress. Home/school books are also used purposefully.

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

52. The Hillside School vision statement which speaks of 'working together as a dynamic team to provide the best for all learners', is now a reality thanks to the dedication and hard work of the headteacher, his senior management team, the governors and staff. Staff teamwork is a very significant strength. A very high priority is placed on the inspiration and motivation of staff, and the leadership helps provide a good example. The quality of leadership is a reflection of the published aims and values of the school. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities to staff is very effective. The senior management team is aware of the school's priorities for further development, and

senior staff set consistently very high standards. Consequently, the progress that pupils and students make is always good as it reflects the staff commitment and expectations.

53. The governors have responded very well to the previous inspection and all the key issues have been addressed successfully except the issue concerning accommodation. The headteacher works very closely with the governors and he has appropriate targets to meet.
54. The governing body works very efficiently under the very strong leadership of the chair. Governors make very effective use of their professional skills and expertise to support the school and they help to shape the strategic direction of the school. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are very well understood by the governors, and targets for school development and improvement are set regularly. Monitoring school improvement is high on the governors' agenda, and they have very many contacts with the school. The governing body ensures that it fulfils its statutory duties. The relationship between the headteacher and the governors is very good and the governors have responded very well to the previous inspection.
55. Overall, the management and co-ordination of special educational needs provision are very good, and this provision is managed on a day-to-day basis to ensure that pupils' and students' changing needs are met effectively. One of the governors has been given specific responsibility for special educational needs, and appropriate training has been effectively used to support this role. The school is fully aware of the changes arising from the revised Code of Practice and has already taken action to take full account of these innovations.
56. Governors and staff monitor and evaluate the school's performance very regularly. This has a very positive impact on the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. The development of good teaching practice is monitored and evaluated well by the headteacher, the deputy head and the governors. The governing body monitors the effectiveness of spending and reviews the outcome of expenditure to make sure it matches the intended objective. Appraisal and performance management procedures are very good, and all the teaching staff have clear performance targets. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching in their own subject areas. The priorities for development are matched to the needs of staff and pupils and students. The steps taken to meet the school's targets for improvement are very effective. The management team and all other members of staff are very committed to improvement and demonstrate a very positive capacity to succeed. The induction of new staff is of the highest quality. A newly appointed teaching assistant felt she had benefited greatly from an experienced colleague who was her mentor. Staff development has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
57. The strategic use of resources, grants and other funding is very good. Educational priorities are supported through the school's very good financial planning, which is closely linked to the school improvement planning. The efficiency and effectiveness of the financial administration systems are very good, and all the issues raised in the most recent auditor's report have been addressed. The governors, headteacher and senior management team review the school finances very regularly. Staff training with new ICT is well established, and the school's administration and pupils' and students' learning are well supported by new technology. The school ensures specific grants are used for their designated purpose and this has a very positive impact on the education of the pupils and students, especially in the development of ICT throughout the school. The effectiveness of the way the school spends its money is monitored very well, and the school's plans are carried out very effectively.

58. The principles of best value are applied extremely well in this school to further the opportunities open to the pupils and students. The school almost always compares its costs with those of other schools and makes maximum use of benchmarking to make further efficiencies. The school almost always engages in competitive tendering, and the staff are required to justify their use of resources and identify further needs for their subjects. The school consults widely on major expenditure decisions.
59. The school is very well staffed. Many of the subject leaders are specialists with wide knowledge and experience of working with pupils and students with profound and severe learning difficulties. There is a very good number of teaching assistants who play a vital role in ensuring that those pupils and students with the greatest need are able to benefit from the rich and varied learning opportunities. All staff are appraised under performance management and their training needs based on the requirements of the school and subject development plans. There is a strong feeling that the school runs as a secure and supportive family for all of the staff. When new staff join the school, they have a very well-managed induction. These enable them to work very effectively, seek support and guidance if they feel it is necessary, and settle into the school very quickly. This mentoring support is available for as long as staff feel that they need it.
60. Accommodation is poor. Despite various adaptations to the building and an attractive sensory garden, the building and site are cramped. There is limited access to the site and insufficient parking for staff and visitors. The appointment of a traffic manager has made it less hazardous for arriving and departing school transport. The three adjoining classrooms for SLD pupils and students are very small and have limited access for pupils and students with physical disabilities. The school hall acts as a corridor and restricts access to other parts of the building when it is used as an ineffective teaching area. There are no specialist rooms for science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and music. This shortcoming limits learning opportunities especially for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Storage space is very limited and corridors, kitchens and toilets are all used for this purpose. The library is housed in a corridor and is not suitable for study or teaching but there is no alternative space. There are many attractive, well- presented displays in the classrooms and communal areas of the school, all of which are related to pupils' and students' work.
61. The school has worked hard to make best use of the accommodation. However, there are still considerable difficulties concerning access generally around the school buildings. The site has been improved by the addition of a sensory garden and there are plans to develop a courtyard area at the far side of the building. However, the grassed recreational area behind Class 1 is not accessible to wheelchair users because of a steep bank immediately outside the rear doors. It is also very difficult for the non-ambulant to gain access to the wheelchair swing which is an underused resource.
62. Despite the limitation of specialist accommodation and storage space, resources for learning are good and in mathematics they are very good. This is good improvement since the last inspection. There are, however, insufficient learning resources for ICT. The strategic use of the resources they have is very good.
63. The headteacher oversees the work related to pupils and students with English as additional language. Although the school does not receive specific grants that may be allocated to support the learning of these pupils and students, the school does have access to the local service for English as an additional language (SEAL) which is concerned with their support. The school policies place a vital importance upon ensuring that all pupils and students have full access to the whole curriculum. Teachers, support

staff and therapists, including the speech and language therapist, all work collectively to ensure that English as additional language pupils and students are fully involved in both the curriculum and the life of the school. The school's ethos ensures that every pupil is valued and supported according to their needs.

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

64. In order to improve further the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Continue to work in conjunction with the local education authority to improve the accommodation by:

- creating areas where equipment may be stored without impinging on the movement of pupils and students around the school,
- creating areas that can be used for the specialist teaching of science, ICT, art and design, design and technology, physical education and music for those pupils who are in Key Stages 3 and 4.

(Paragraphs 21, 53, 60, 61, 69, 100, 112)

(2) Create opportunities for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 to follow accredited courses.

(Paragraphs 20, 43)

(3) Explain clearly the school's provision for the children in the Foundation Stage by:

- producing a clear policy and written statements to show how the school provides for these young children.

(Paragraphs 19, 74)

(4) Increase opportunities for the use of ICT by:

- ensuring that the use of computers and suitable programs is planned into lessons wherever possible to give pupils and students a greater opportunity to use computers and gain basic computer skills.

Paragraph 124)



## POST-16 PROVISION

65. Post-16 provision is very good and a strength of the school. It takes place in two locations; PMLD students are taught in a group within the school and the higher attaining students are located in separate off-site provision some three miles from the school. The post-16 provision as a whole provides a very relevant and flexible education and care programme that fully meets the needs of the students. Students' achievements are good and they make good progress. The PMLD students engage in a wide range of activities designed to stimulate and encourage participation in learning. These activities during the time of the inspection covered ICT, music, art and design, physical education, personal, social and health education and life skills. Students also attend a local college of further education where they work with students from other post-16 settings in, for example, drama and movement sessions. Students attending the off-site provision are also engaged in a wide range of activities which, reflecting their higher attainment, are designed to reflect the further education nature of the provision; indeed the provision is referred to in school documentation as the Cherry Trees Further Education Centre. At Cherry Trees, students undertake a one-year course designed to prepare them for transition to the next stage of their lives. Their work has a focus on developing and improving their self-esteem and confidence, independence and general life skills.
66. In both post-16 settings, the teaching and support staff are very dedicated and capable and the quality of the teaching is never less than good, often very good and on occasion, excellent. The teaching assistants in both post-16 settings provide very effective support to staff and students. The management of the students' behaviour and personal needs is very good and the teaching is characterised by a sensitive but challenging approach. At Cherry Trees, for example, where the students mix more independently in the community, the staff are rigorous in demanding behaviour and attitudes which will be acceptable in settings away from the centre. The students respond very positively to this approach as their attainments in a range of accredited courses, such as Open College Network (OCN), English Speaking Board and the Duke of Edinburgh Award, are good and indicate the success of the approach taken by staff. Within the PMLD setting, students benefit from the highly skilled and sensitive approach of the teacher and care assistants who elicit good responses from even the most profoundly disabled students.
67. The curriculum for the post-16 students is highly appropriate and of good quality. It provides a focus on communication and awareness in the PMLD department and on life skills as part of the transition to the next stage of their lives for the students at Cherry Trees Further Education Centre. This entails a minimum level of competency in reading, using numeracy in real-life situations and a very extensive range of activities within the personal, social and health education curriculum. Work at Cherry Trees is in the form of units which address a wide range of areas, for example current affairs, making choices and planning, world of work, safety, personal fitness and leisure, ICT, time management, media studies and work experience. Religious education and citizenship are given an appropriate focus and social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues are addressed within these units. In the PMLD group, the students undertake a range of activities. These are designed to stimulate their interest in the environment. For example, in an art and design lesson based on the topic 'the stars and beyond', an interesting cross-curricular range of activities focused students' attention and developed their ability to fix and track movement and learn to recognise certain shapes. In a music lesson, the students indicated their recognition of, and pleasure in, music from the radio by fixing or grasping the equipment. Both these lessons were characterised by very good teaching.
68. A major strength of the post-16 provision in both settings is the quality of the relationships evident between staff and students and, at Cherry Trees, between staff

and students and between students. The PMLD students clearly feel secure and relaxed as a result of their relationships with adults, and the higher attaining students at Cherry Trees have, in a short time, (since the start of term) begun to relate well to each other, respect each others' views and respect the staff they work with. For example, in work on English Speaking Board activity, students listened carefully to each others' contribution and respected what was said. In work on personal, social and health education, the strong relationships are very evident when, for example, personal and sometimes sensitive issues are addressed. Students clearly feel comfortable when addressing such areas as personal hygiene and sex education. A strong feature of the relationships between staff and students at Cherry Trees is the manner in which the students respond to the challenging nature of much of the teaching. Although they sometimes find the value of the tasks very difficult, nevertheless they remain involved and give their best effort. Good examples of this were observed in a health and fitness session when students responded extremely positively to the excellent, very challenging teaching in the gym and, in another lesson, when students were describing what they had before them on a card to the rest of the group in an English Speaking Board exercise. In this lesson also, high quality, challenging teaching insisted on high standards of presentation and the students responded positively.

69. Both post-16 areas are extremely well managed by teachers who have a deep understanding and concern for their students and insight into their personal and learning needs. The climate for learning in both areas is very good. The accommodation for the PMLD students is good, the staff make full use of a large and useful area which is very attractively presented. The accommodation at Cherry Trees is unsatisfactory, only the concerted efforts of the staff have secured a good learning environment but the lack of outdoor space, storage space and parking area present staff with a number of challenges. Resources at both settings are generally adequate although ICT equipment at Cherry Trees is inadequate, being outdated and insufficient for the range of students' needs and abilities.
70. There has been good improvement in the curriculum and the monitoring procedures for students in the post-16 groups. This has resulted in an improvement in progress and greater understanding by the students of their own learning. However, the accommodation shows no improvement.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils and students	58

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	30	37	5	0	0	0
Percentage	5.3	39.5	48.7	6.6	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils and students

Pupils and students on the school's roll	No of pupils and students
Number of pupils and students on the school's roll	76
Number of full-time pupils and students known to be eligible for free school meals	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils and students
Number of pupils and students with English as an additional language	4

Pupil and students mobility in the last school year	No of pupils and students
Pupils and students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils and students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	9.0
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School data	0.3
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### **Ethnic background of pupils and students**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils and students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	53	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	14	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

### **Financial information**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.8
Number of pupils and students per qualified teacher	5.9
Average class size	7.5

#### **Education support staff: YN – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	36
Total aggregate hours worked per week	814.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1,070,992
Total expenditure	1,123,325
Expenditure per pupil	16,280
Balance brought forward from previous year	75,397
Balance carried forward to next year	36,798

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	31

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	19	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	32	10	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	23	16	10	29
The teaching is good.	65	29	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	32	0	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	16	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	39	6	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	71	16	10	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	16	3	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	29	0	3	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	26	13	3	6

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents are delighted with the new electronic tracking system that has been installed to help pupils and students navigate around the school in their wheelchairs.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

71. The provision for children is good. At the time of the last inspection, there were no under five children on roll. Currently, there is a very small number of children placed in two of the classes. In the one class, there is one full-time child and two part-time children. These children all have PMLD. In the other class, there are two part-time children who are physically more able but there is little likeness between these children. Accordingly, the children in the Foundation Stage start school with a wide range of learning needs. Effective teaching and a wide range of learning activities provide a supportive and varied learning environment where young children can feel safe and gain confidence. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure the children gain a good start to their career. The school provides a positive, individualised learning experience for these children. This leads to good progress towards the first steps of the Early Learning Goals.
72. All members of staff are highly focused on meeting the needs of all the children whatever their difficulties. As a result, they make good progress. All children are involved in a wide range of activities. The quality of the teaching and learning is always good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned to provide interesting activities that use a varied and stimulating range of materials to which the children increasingly respond. Staff form very caring relationships with children. This ensures that the children 'blossom' and become stimulated, happy and relaxed, and are then able to benefit fully from the activities.
73. The provision is co-ordinated by the headteacher. He is supported by the deputy head who is responsible for the monitoring of targets for all pupils. This includes the children in the Foundation Stage. Termly meetings with each class teacher ensure that progress is reviewed and new targets set to maintain their learning impetus.
74. The provision for the five children in the Foundation Stage in two separate classes reflects the overall pattern and organisation of the school. It is important for staff and parents for the school to further clarify its policy and structure statements related to the Foundation Stage.
75. The outdoor facilities for children in Class 1 are limited. There is no grassed area or outdoor provision for large toys and equipment or wheelchair access to the play area.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

76. Children start with a wide variation of personal and social skills, but because of the way staff work, all children make good progress. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. All the staff involved promote children's personal and social development very well while they are in school. They provide good role models as they treat the children warmly and sensitively. This ensures that children of all abilities begin to respond to staff. Classroom routines are clearly planned. For example, taking the register to check 'who is here' with their own 'little man' helps to develop their sense of place and their awareness of others. Staff spend time touching and using close eye-contact with them to ensure that they are aware of their presence. The work in the two



classes varies considerably to take full account of those children who are not ambulant and those who are physically more able. Throughout the time they are in classrooms, every opportunity is taken to develop children's personal and social skills as individuals and, at the same time, increasing their awareness of the class group.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

77. When the children start school, the skills of the children in communication, language and literacy are underdeveloped. Staff in the two classes focus upon this area of learning effectively. All the teaching methods are designed to encourage children to develop a communication system through gestures, signing or speech. For example, in one lesson, a child was able to give one to one interactions by looking at the teacher while stopping his self-stimulatory activities. He was able to fix his gaze on an object then transfer his gaze to a second object when it was introduced. In another lesson when the class were working with coloured paints, one child was able to use gestures and body language to respond and communicate to simple instructions. Because of consistent and varied experiences, some children with the more complex needs begin to indicate their preferences, such as turning towards suspended toys or lights in the dark room, or, at other times, they indicate 'no' by pushing away objects.

### **Mathematical development**

78. This area is effectively supported by good or very good teaching and, in both classes, the children make good progress. Throughout all activities, staff encourage children to respond to experiences. Through handling and touching objects and playing games, children are encouraged to gain awareness. For example, in one lesson observed, the children were focusing upon counting and, in particular, one and two. Using three toys, a monkey, teddy and a dragon, they were developing their recognition of shapes in the classroom environment and becoming familiar with the process of counting through the use of singing and rhyme to stimulate interest.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

79. Consistently good or very good teaching based upon effective planning of a wide range of activities, both in the classroom and the wider environment, encourages the children to use all their senses. This effectively introduces the children to a world of exciting experiences and they learn well. Visits outside the classroom and stimulating resources make a significant contribution to learning. For example, one pupil with support and using his walker, was able to visit the sensory garden to explore and investigate lavender and other textures and features in the garden. He examined the leaves and, by touch and smell, found out more about them. Both in the classroom and in the sensory room, children use their senses to explore light, movement and change in a different environment. They also, with support, begin to learn how a switch can be used to change an environment. Because staff are continually monitoring and responding to the children's responses, they make good progress.

### **Physical development**

80. A wide range of activities and therapies effectively support this aspect of development and make a significant contribution to children's physical progress. Aromatherapy sessions, for example, in a relaxing environment, stimulate the sense of the non-mobile children. Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy sessions, planned and supported by specialist staff, help to develop body awareness and control. In one lesson, children were provided with good opportunities to handle and explore paint, texture and colour

with their hands. Children's attention is sometimes fleeting. The staff intervene at these times continually encouraging and guiding the children which results in good progress over time. The children are all beginning to work towards the first steps of the Early Learning Goals.

### **Creative development**

81. Children's creative development is promoted through painting, music and a wide variety of activities using the senses. Skilled encouragement by teachers increases children's confidence to explore a wide variety of mediums. For example, children who are initially reluctant to explore paint become increasingly interested. They show pleasure in feeling and exploring different textures and colours. Music effectively stimulates children's responses and is used frequently during the day. In one lesson observed during the inspection, the children were all taking part in active music-making sessions. The teacher sings 'pass the bells around the circle' while she uses a chromoharp as each child has two opportunities to shake the bells and other instruments. They begin to gain an awareness of sound and activity as a source of enjoyment, and progress towards the first steps of the Early Learning Goals.

### **ENGLISH**

82. Pupils' achievement in English is very good. The quality of teaching and learning of communication and speaking and listening skills is very good across the school and, occasionally, it is excellent. Consequently, pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening, good progress in reading, and good progress in writing. Writing skills are less well developed in the school because of the greater emphasis placed on speaking and listening, but are nevertheless good. Communication skills are promoted very well in English lessons. There is effective planning to ensure that pupils whose first language is not English can communicate effectively and join in lessons fully. Many pupils receive effective additional support in the development of their communication skills and use of language through working with speech therapists. Pupils who have additional learning difficulties use communication devices which allow them to greet friends or produce sound effects to join in with favourite stories. They provide a mixture of individual programmes on a withdrawal basis and work with larger groups in class. Teachers have very good information on how well pupils are developing skills in literacy and are able to help pupils to improve further when they teach other subjects. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. There have been very significant improvements in English and it is now a major strength of the school. Staff have responded positively and energetically to areas of development identified in the last inspection. Teaching and learning are now consistently good.
83. Pupils make very good progress in developing their communication skills because all staff ensure that there are many planned opportunities for pupils to develop them. As pupils move through the school, they listen more carefully to each other, learn to take turns in discussions and develop confidence in talking to others. For example, pupils in a good Year 7 class discuss answers to the teachers 'silly question' – 'can a pen hop?' They develop very good communication skills during other lessons, such as in history. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, they listened carefully to the teacher and responded with interest and enthusiasm to her challenge to explain the differences in clothes worn by rich and poor Ancient Egyptians. The provision made by the school for alternative and augmentative communication users is very good and enables them to participate fully in the learning opportunities offered. The use of symbols, signs, objects of reference and speech output devices, such as single switches ensures that pupils are actively involved in lessons. This enables them to make the same progress as other pupils in

the school. Staff are very patient and always give alternative and augmentative communication users sufficient time to respond.

84. Pupils develop their literacy skills well in other subjects. For example, symbols are used in numeracy and reading tasks in geography and this is a positive aid in developing knowledge and concepts. Very good personal, social and health education work takes place in which pupils are encouraged to develop an awareness of personal issues. Pupils in a good Year 6 lesson discuss the difference between 'strangers' and 'familiar' people and use drama to highlight possibly dangerous situations. Teachers have a good knowledge of the teaching of literacy, which enables pupils to increase their knowledge and skills during lessons and over time. Teachers make good use of symbols to assist pupils with their reading and writing and they usually sign as they talk to pupils. However, the use of signing by pupils is inconsistent and is not developed sufficiently by all teachers. Pupils, including those with PMLD, have very good opportunities to take part in interactive drama sessions, where teaching is frequently very good. For example, Year 5 pupils experience a very good range of sensory experiences in a drama session giving pupils the opportunity to participate in an 'underwater adventure' in search of buried treasure.
85. Teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy effectively, helping pupils to achieve well and make good progress in reading. Teachers have adapted some of the school's reading books to symbols so pupils who find reading difficult make good progress. Pupils learn to recognise letters and the sounds they make. They enjoy reading and take pleasure in handling books and listening to stories. As they progress through the school, they are motivated by the good use of books and they become increasingly accurate at matching the names of characters to illustrations. They listen attentively and join in with familiar stories, suggesting what will happen next and showing their understanding of the plot. Higher attaining pupils read simple books, for example pupils in Year 10 read the big book 'Who am I' with support from the teacher. The school has an appropriate range of reading resources. However, the current position of the library is totally unsuitable as it does not allow for pupils to read quietly without distractions.
86. Pupils of all ages with PMLD make good progress in all areas of the English curriculum. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing sensory awareness. Teaching assistants often work with small groups or individuals and they make a significant contribution to PMLD pupils' success. In the best lessons, teachers carefully record and analyse any small steps in progress and they summarise the pupils' learning in well-designed assessment folders. There is clear enjoyment of learning, particularly when teachers use resources imaginatively. For example, in a very good Year 11 lesson, PMLD pupils experienced the illustrations and text of 'The Whales Song' displayed on a screen in a darkened room accompanied by appropriate sound effects and sensory experiences.
87. Pupils make good progress in writing and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is now a good emphasis on encouraging pupils to write independently. Pupils are progressing well towards targets to improve writing skills. Those in Years 1 and 2 copy letters and show that they have remembered these from previous lessons. They practice handwriting skills by painting the initial letter of their name onto T-shirts. Good planning ensures that the wide range of attainment of pupils in each class is catered for. For example, lower attaining pupils can succeed in their writing tasks where higher attaining pupils are able to complete extension work in the form of more complicated writing tasks. For example, higher attaining pupils in a Year 8 class are

given the opportunity to develop their handwriting skills and understand the term 'a curve' in terms of forming letters.

88. The English curriculum is well managed by the co-ordinators who collaborate very well and share a clear vision for the subject. This is reflected in the aims in the subject development plan. They have established a very good range of resources, adapted to meet pupils' needs. Staff have received good training to support and develop literacy skills. English makes a good contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. The structure of the scheme of work ensures that teachers use relevant texts, reading materials and sensory activities to teach English successfully. There has been improvement since the last inspection, with planned opportunities for language, communication and discussion. However, the use of ICT is not sufficiently identified in planning and does not effectively support pupils' learning. Monitoring of the curriculum by the subject co-ordinators is very effective. Assessment is comprehensive in each class, and is linked to a whole-school system of assessment. The procedures to assess and record pupils' achievement are thorough and show clearly the progress that pupils are making.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89. The provision for mathematics, including the quality of teaching and learning, is very good. As a result, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. This very good achievement is the result of teaching that is good overall, and often very good. Pupils' positive attitudes and the use of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school contribute well to very good achievement. From Year 7 onwards, pupils are taught mathematics within groups according to their attainment levels, and this arrangement is effective in promoting progress in the subject.
90. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy framework in all mathematics lessons provides teachers with a structure which enables them to reinforce skills from previous lessons, particularly mental and oral skills. Group work enables pupils to be carefully monitored and encouraged by teachers and teachers' assistants. The plenary sessions are used effectively by teachers to assess and reinforce learning and also to help pupils to be aware of what they and others have achieved.
91. By the end of Key Stage 1, because lessons are planned very effectively and there are very good methods that ensure they are learning well, pupils are making very good progress. More able pupils can count to five in rote counting and can understand one-to-one correspondence. They can join in familiar songs and know vocabulary such as 'on' and 'under'. They can pick out a circle and a square from a selection of shapes and can use one pence in shopping for items up to five pence. They can copy a simple mathematical pattern with help. Some less able pupils have a clear understanding of cause and effect and will blink in anticipation before knocking down a pile of bricks. Pupils with PMLD are able to reach out and touch toys or an interesting object with help and some can visually track a moving light or object.
92. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils with PMLD achieve well by paying close attention to instructions, making a good effort in following them and by enjoying participating. For example, in a very good lesson, one Year 5 pupil responded to 'one, two, three' and anticipated 'catching' a big ball. This pupil pushed the ball back without help and was rewarded with an extra go. Throughout the lesson, pupils responded with delight to the calm environment and the encouragement of the teacher and teacher's assistants. They continue to develop and use skills related to recognition of textures, starting and stopping

and choosing between big and small items. Less able pupils are helped to understand how to sequence events of the day. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, pupils acted out getting up in the morning, washing, getting dressed, having breakfast and getting the bus to school. Pupils were encouraged to match the activity with the corresponding word and symbol. More able pupils have a good knowledge of numerals up to ten and are beginning or order them with a visual guide. They can count up to five, sometimes with a little prompting, and can write numbers when tracing. They can select a square, circle and triangle with ease and have a good knowledge of colour. They have a good understanding of the routine of events during the day and some understanding of the days of the week, especially when there is a special event, such as 'swimming on Friday'.

93. Continuing very good progress means that by the end of Key Stage 3, some more able pupils are able to count independently to 20, count backwards from 20 to 0 and recognise the number of dots on flash cards from one to ten. Most pupils can name shapes such as square, circle and triangle. Pupils with PMLD continue to be helped to explore tactile stimuli independently and to show anticipation through facial expression. They are learning to recognise people they know and can remember learned responses. Very good use was made of numeracy by a Year 8 pupil, who, with the help of the deputy headteacher, correctly marked out how many cartons of milk to deliver to each class by finding out how many pupils were present. In one class, he took four cartons in and then was able to calculate correctly that he needed one more. By Year 11, less able pupils are able to join in rote counting to five, and pupils with PMLD are encouraged to make progress in a sensory and practical way and are demonstrating an awareness of cause and effect. More able pupils continue to make very good progress. Teachers encourage basic number skills by using a variety of methods. For example, in one good lesson, one group of pupils succeeded in playing a game of dominoes with the teaching assistant while all were able to say how many were left when singing 'ten footballers standing in a row'. The pupils look forward to their lessons and one said with excitement, 'I love numbers'.
94. The very good progress results from good and sometimes very good teaching in mathematics. Everyone is given an opportunity to participate, while good use of questioning and adaptation of tasks allow pupils to work at an appropriate level with suitable challenges. Thus, in a very good lesson with Year 1 and 2 pupils, more able pupils were able to point to 1, 2 and 3 on a number card with help, while a less able pupil was encouraged to beat the drum three times. One more able pupil was able to place five play-dough biscuits on the tray of an overhead projector to display them next to the number 5 on the screen. A major feature of the good teaching seen was the very high quality of the relationships between pupils and teachers. Other strengths of teaching were the good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, the detailed planning and the recognition of the specific needs of each individual pupil. ICT was used effectively to support learning in some of the lessons seen, but use of computers should be specified in all planning. The school has very good individual behaviour plans to help with the management of some very difficult pupils and these are followed carefully by all staff although, in one lesson, the behaviour resulted in the progress being only satisfactory.
95. The good development that has taken place since the last inspection is largely the result of very good leadership in this subject and the school as a whole. The co-ordinator is well informed and has attended a number of relevant courses. There is now an effective scheme of work that is being regularly reviewed and adapted. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy have been incorporated well into mathematics lessons and there is now a good combination of mental mathematics and practical tasks. The curriculum is well planned and covers all attainment targets. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for a scheme of work in the form of a four-year plan for the PMLD department and this is

recognised as a priority and is due to be put in place during this academic year. Teaching is monitored well, although time constraints restrict the amount that takes place. The achievement of pupils is also recorded accurately and monitored using learning targets for each pupil and the nationally recommended 'P' scales. The targets are specific, for example 'to be able to place all 12 numbers on the clock face with help', and in most cases, these are used to inform future planning. However, the school is still developing its systems for assessment in other subjects so that they are in line with those being used for literacy and numeracy. This is an area where there is still some room for improvement. The resources are very good and this is partly due to the initiative of the designated teaching assistant.

96. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection is very good. Pupils' achievements are now very good across the school, whereas previously they were satisfactory, and the continuing improvement in the planning and co-ordination of the subject is a strength.

## **SCIENCE**

97. Pupils' achievement in this subject is good with some making excellent progress in lessons. A perusal of pupils' work and subject records indicate clearly that achievement in science is consistently good for all levels of capability. Pupils show confidence in recalling learning from previous lessons of a module and are gaining knowledge and understanding of the functions and purposes of organisms and a realisation that human beings fall within this category. In the last inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress overall and some made good progress. There has been a significant improvement in the achievements of pupils since the last inspection.
98. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and, at times, they are very good or excellent. This shows a distinct improvement since the last inspection when teaching was deemed to be satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is consistently very good across the subject, which has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. Lesson plans give a detailed appraisal of the intended outcomes and this is often shared with pupils to reinforce their understanding of the concepts to be covered. In several lessons on the need for joints in the body, a skeleton was used to identify joints such as the knee and elbow. The teachers stressed the name of these types of joint and their functions. Pupils practised the movement made by knees and elbows and then splints or gaiters were strapped to individuals' arms or legs to prevent movement. Pupils were invited to walk or to eat with the stiffened limb and enjoyed the humour in their efforts as well as gaining a real insight into why we need these joints. The subject leader provides teachers with both long- and medium-term planning for them to interpret and utilise in their lesson plans. This allows teachers to plan effectively to meet the individual needs of their varying classes and to modify content to enable pupils to access the learning. This is a real strength in the delivery of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study to such a diverse range of special educational needs. All of the science lessons observed had good pace and matched closely the precision of the teachers' planning. The involvement of the teaching assistants in science lessons greatly improves the quality of access to the learning for the pupils and has a positive impact on the progress they make.
99. The leadership and management of the subject overall are very good. There is an excellent planning procedure that ensures that each teacher is delivering the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and provides a clear view that continuity and progression are very well matched. There is a very strong ethos of sharing and supporting amongst the teachers delivering the subject. The subject leader is also involved in agreement trials for 'P' level moderation in science and sees it as a positive

way forward for the school. The very high quality of subject leadership results from the post-holder being a science specialist with an impressive knowledge and understanding of the special educational needs of the pupils at the school. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in the quality of planning which has supported the non-specialists in their understanding and confidence to deliver an exciting science curriculum.

100. Accommodation for science is poor. There is no specialist room that deprives pupils in Years 7 to 11 of the opportunity of experiencing scientific experimentation in a laboratory setting. The storage of science resources is unsatisfactory being confined to a small corridor-like space used as a food servery and an emergency laundry for the nearby classes. Despite this, resources to support the science curriculum are good and include big books and a microscope that can be linked to a classroom computer. Little has changed in this area since the last inspection, although there is now consistency of planning and a scheme of work that is based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101. The provision for art and design is good. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are good. This shows very good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. This improvement is due to the improved quality of teaching and the development of policies and schemes of work which ensure planning, progression and continuity of work across the school. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were good and sometimes very good.
102. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils learn to explore a range of colours through the use of the senses. For example, in one lesson observed during the inspection, they were exploring green through different fabrics and textures, they created a green painting using marble and string paints and they tasted 'green' foods. Pupils were actively involved in handling the materials, feeling the different textures and exploring and manipulating the materials while listening to music from the rainforest tape. Pupils in Year 6 were creating a Nile journey through the sequential introduction of materials to be explored. Pupils with PMLD were handling sand to represent the desert, having water from a bowl poured over their hands to represent the Nile and contact with mud, straw, dates and honey to represent the journey's end. Before the end of the lesson, they had encountered and responded to a range of sensory experiences related to the topic. Another higher attaining group were looking at the work of the artist Georgia O'Keefe and looking at red flowers and still life similar to the work of the artist.
103. By the end of Year 9, pupils further develop their techniques and produce interesting work related to the topic on the USA. In one lesson observed, pupils were painting the red, white and blue American flag with stars and stripes. Others were handling and exploring a range of American foodstuffs including sweet potato, cranberry sauce, coke, waffle and burger. They made good progress with drawing and handling these materials.
104. No lessons were observed in Years 10 and 11 but a scrutiny of previous work indicates pupils develop their skills with collage using papers and other materials. For example, there was a patchwork quilt on display which had been constructed from papers and other materials to illustrate pupils' sleeping positions. Another piece of work was a colour picture of the Downs created by soaking papers and pouring paint from cups which had been stimulated after a visit to Devil's Dyke.

105. The quality of the teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. This has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and ensures that all pupils make good progress in all areas of study. They concentrate well and try hard during their lessons. No lessons were observed in Years 10 and 11 so it is not possible to make a judgement in these classes. There are a number of features which contribute to the good quality of the teaching in the classes observed during the inspection. Lessons are well planned and given a practical emphasis so that all pupils, including those with PMLD, can join in appropriately. Appropriate resources are assembled so that learning is frequently multi-sensory and practical. Teachers and support assistants work really well as teams so that all pupils become active participants in lessons. Staff encourage pupils to take part by using signing effectively and giving pupils time to respond.
106. There has been an improvement in the way art and design is led and managed. There is now monitoring and support for teachers in the classrooms. Teachers are provided with help and support in planning and given feedback on their lessons. The resources for the subject are adequate but the lack of a specialist art room does restrict the curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils' achievements are recorded at the end of each module but the assessment process overall is at an early stage of development. For example, sketchbooks are used in some classes but they are not used consistently across the school for developing skills and assessing progress of individuals and groups. Some use is made of ICT, for example the use of Colour Magic and Op Art involving computer generated backgrounds with pupils selecting shapes to overlay on their patterns was also observed. However, this aspect is still limited in general classroom use. There is evidence that a number of staff would benefit from support and training in basic concepts and skills related to the various aspects of the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. Due to timetabling arrangements, only two lessons of design and technology were taught during the course of the inspection. However, evidence from these lessons, from pupils' work, discussions with staff, scrutiny of teachers' planning and the scheme of work shows that pupils' achievement in design and technology is good across the school. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good and scrutiny of pupils' work on teachers' planning suggests that teachers provide pupils with a wide range of experiences. Pupils work with paper, paint, card, clay and other easily managed materials and, by the time they are eleven, pupils have investigated a range of materials, they have experienced cutting and shaping using scissors and they know that some materials such as clay and dough are pliable. In a Year 2 lesson for example, pupils experienced how dough can be squeezed and manipulated into shapes and colour added. This was a good example of pupils experiencing work related to activities in science. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils had to make choices about the ingredients they could use to fill a sandwich. This lesson involved a wide range of learning experiences; apart from making a sandwich pupils had to consider aspects of health and hygiene. Opportunities for pupils to address numeracy and literacy with design and technology are limited, but teachers seek every opportunity. Design and technology is taught over the year in two termly blocks. During the inspection, no Key Stage 2 design and technology was timetabled.
108. The subject is well led and managed by a subject co-ordinator. Good schemes of work and assessment arrangements are in place, subject knowledge is high and the subject has been successfully developed to include a wide range of work in different materials which promotes high standards. Resources are limited. Pupils have little opportunity to work with resistant materials and therefore are unable to cover some areas of the



National Curriculum other than in a superficial manner. There is no dedicated workshop area and the food technology area is a significant distance from many classrooms. In the absence of tool trolleys, workmate type benches and mobile food technology equipment, for example a cooking trolley, pupils' opportunities to experience some aspects of design and technology are limited. This shows very limited improvement since the time of the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in geography. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. This represents very good progress since the time of the previous inspection when pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan work effectively to meet individual needs. They use assessment well to build on pupils' knowledge and encourage active participation in lessons. The quality of learning is good because of the structured approach to lessons following a good long-term plan. Pupils understand what they are required to do in lessons, and they receive very good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Classroom organisation and the management of pupils with diverse educational and physical needs are good.
110. The teaching is good because the lessons are planned to contain relevant activities that pupils enjoy. Learning outcomes for different pupils are clearly identified. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged well and any initial frustration or reluctance are handled well to ensure that new learning takes place. Teachers relate previous lessons to current lessons to enable pupils to build on their knowledge over time. Very good methods are used to capture the pupils' interest and contribute to their very good attitudes as well as ensuring their understanding. The constant use of signs and symbols reinforces speech, and the close involvement of the high quality teaching assistants helps to keep pupils with additional special educational needs on task. Pupils' behaviour is dealt with well with staff consistently following the behaviour management strategies identified in the comprehensive behaviour support plans. Pupils with complex needs have experienced different environments and, by being given the opportunity to learn through all their senses, they are beginning to have some understanding of differences in their world.
111. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn mapping skills as they compile their daily timetable using symbols and they gain an understanding of their immediate environment in the classroom and around the school. In a study of farms, pupils identify farmyard equipment and animals and link these to stories such as 'Little Red Hen' and 'The Enormous Turnip'. Teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to understand in lessons and they make good use of resources to achieve this. They ensure that pupils who require alternative and augmentative communication systems are able to participate fully. For example, in a very good Year 8 lesson, pupils use speech, signing and symbols to identify products and food linked to the USA. The USA topic is used very effectively with pupils in the class for pupils with PMLD. They are given sensory experiences of the different weather conditions that they would encounter on a 'journey to Chicago, the windy city'. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11 are able to identify areas of the USA on a map and acquire a good understanding of its size with one pupil describing it as 'massive'.
112. Leadership of the subject is good and has contributed effectively to supporting staff and improving planning for lessons. This represents very good progress since the previous inspection when subject leadership was poor. Teachers' planning is monitored and formal observation of lessons takes place. This has a very positive impact on the quality

of the teaching and also on the learning and progress of the pupils. Pupils' social and cultural development is good through visits to the local area and further afield, including France, and by contrasting Portslade with other parts of the world. Resources for the subject have been developed; however, some have to be stored in the deputy headteacher's room due to the lack of storage accommodation within the school. This makes them difficult to get hold of at short notice. The curriculum is enriched and made more relevant to pupils through the extensive range of visits made within the local area.

## **HISTORY**

113. Pupils receive lessons in history and geography in alternate half terms. Only one lesson in history was observed because most pupils were studying geography during the week of the inspection, therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on the teaching of history. Judgements about the pupils' progress and achievements are based upon scrutiny of their work, discussions with pupils about their work and discussions with teachers. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' records, their completed work, including that displayed around the school, and the study of photographic records of visits and activities that have taken place, indicate that pupils achieve well. This confirms that there have been good improvements since the previous inspection when pupils made satisfactory progress.
114. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 respond to multi-sensory activities related to celebrations in their own lives. They recognise themselves in photographs taken in the recent past and associate objects and sounds with past celebrations. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have undertaken an interesting study of the Ancient Egyptians. For example, in the only lesson observed, pupils were given the opportunity to dress in Ancient Egyptian costume and were encouraged to contrast clothes worn by wealthy and poor people from that time. Pupils were given the opportunity to photograph each other in costume using a digital camera to add to their record of achievement folder. The provision of history contains some imaginative ideas which make the subject both relevant and accessible to all pupils. Examples of using tactile methods to make the subject both vivid and interesting to pupils are recorded for those pupils with PMLD.
115. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have studied Ancient Rome and how the Romans built roads and invaded and ruled Ancient Britain. Teachers have produced good photographic records of pupils' work undertaken in school and on out-of-school visits. For example, very good photographic records have been compiled of visits to Brighton and Worthing, which are linked to a study of Victorian Britain. Teachers have planned well for lessons, since wall displays cover a good range of artefacts such as examples of papyrus, hieroglyphics and a frieze of Egyptian Gods. There is a good plan of work for teachers to follow and this allows pupils to learn history progressively as they move through the school.
116. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, successfully reviewing and extending pupils' opportunities for learning since the previous inspection. The curriculum is appropriately based on multi-sensory communication and enables pupils to experience history as a development from themselves and their families. A very good range of visits to places such as Worthing museum to study Victorian clothes and Fishbourne Roman palace ensures that pupils are able to develop a sense of history from artefacts and demonstrations that bring history to life. There are good cross-curricular links with English, art and design, drama and geography. There is now comprehensive information to guide teachers in the content and assessment of lessons, with appropriate guidance on how to plan for pupils' differing needs in class. Resources are good; however, storage arrangements are unsatisfactory and make the access of

materials and equipment unnecessarily difficult. History is well led and organised. The co-ordinator is well aware of the areas for improvement; for example the need to improve the use of ICT to enhance opportunities for learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. The provision for non-computer based ICT is generally good, but only satisfactory in the use of the computer. Whilst the school meets statutory requirements concerning the teaching of ICT, the further development is limited considerably by the constraints of accommodation and resources. This is only a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but the school is aware of this and has identified ICT as a key area for development. There is a very good network with Internet capability and the computers are kept up-to-date, but there will soon be a need for upgrading of hardware and software.
118. By Year 2, more able pupils can operate a program using a touch screen with support. Some pupils with PMLD are able to reach out and play with the fibre optic curtain and to look at the lights in the multi-sensory room. There is good planning in ICT for Year 2, where a graphics program is used to create a colourful image to be projected around the classroom and pupils encouraged to recognise the colours. There are plans to use appropriate websites on the Internet for choosing images and printing them. The use of communication aids is specified for less able pupils. These are used well and have a very positive effect on the ways in which pupils learn and make progress. These aids enable the pupils to take a full and active part in lessons.
119. By Year 6, more able pupils are able to work with CD-ROMs, can aim the digital camera and take pictures with little support and are achieving very good mouse skills. In a Year 3 lesson identified as ICT, the pupils made good progress in choosing an object from a 'feely' box and making a pictogram of those who liked or did not like each object. Most pupils were able to stand up and say 'Who liked the ...?' and there was good sharing by one pupil who picked out chocolates and was able to hand one to each pupil, but the computer was not used as part of the lesson. Less able pupils can operate a touch screen with an adult present. One pupil with PMLD knew to touch the screen to start the program and, when given the choice of two pictures, knew that if there was no response from the first one he touched, he had to touch the other one. This pupil responded by smiling and laughing and he paid close attention to the screen. All pupils with PMLD are given opportunities to use the switch to operate the bubble tubes in the multi-sensory room. For example, during a good Year 6 lesson, two pupils with PMLD enjoyed their session in the sensory room and each pupil fulfilled his/her targets. For example, one pupil was able to use the switch to turn the bubble tubes on and off. Other pupils were able to make a sound on a music keyboard and use switches to interact with a story from a big book. This directly related to one pupil's target, 'to use a switch intentionally to operate equipment'.
120. More able pupils in Year 9 can use a wordprocessing program with symbols. During a good lesson with Year 7 on information handling, pupils acquired skills in using the photocopier. One more able pupil succeeded in placing the book in the correct position and a less able pupil was able to press the go button. However, the computer was not used as part of the lesson but only as an identified reward for good behaviour, although using an appropriate CD-Rom is identified in pupils' targets. The pupil using the computer showed very good mouse skills. Pupils with PMLD show awareness of cause and effect with switch operated toys and learn to operate a computer program with a switch with help. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and, by Year 11, more able pupils can locate and load programs from the hard drive, floppy disks and CD-ROMs. A more able pupil can copy sentences written by an adult onto the computer, using writing with

symbols. He can also use a graphics program to draw people, incorporating shapes such as a circle for the head. They have learned to access the Internet, although some need help in reading the text on the screen. Less able pupils are encouraged to use the touch screen to access programs and those with PMLD use switches to operate the projector on the sensory trolley. For example, a less able pupil in Year 11 used a touch screen to help him to recognise actual objects. There is planning for Years 10 and 11 identifying the use of a datahandling package and using E-mail.

121. Progress in non-computer based learning is good, as pupils learn to use the photocopier, tape recorder, remote control on the television and digital camera. The multi-sensory room is used well and pupils with PMLD make very good progress. Teachers use these resources skilfully to prepare pupils for life. However, little teaching of computer skills was observed during the inspection, although the computer was used appropriately in some numeracy and literacy sessions. For example, in one lesson, the teaching assistant worked well with the pupil, encouraging him to be independent and allowing him to achieve in his own time.
122. The subject is managed well by the knowledgeable and well-qualified co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher. Curriculum and development planning is very thorough and there have been significant improvements in organisation, but constraints of time, resources and accommodation have prevented the subject from moving forward.
123. There is good use of non-computer resources. For example, in a music lesson with Year 6, there was very good use of the video, as the pupils watched an excerpt from Fantasia and were amazed and delighted by the film. In art and design, pupils used the digital camera to record flower arrangements. There is very good use of the powered wheelchair, where pupils use a variety of switches to move indifferent directions. However, there is a need for more use of ICT throughout the curriculum and identification of ICT opportunities in planning.
124. There are various areas for improvement, all of which are recognised by the co-ordinator and included in the development planning process. These include greater use of input devices and improving the use of the digital camera and the range of software. However, improvement is seriously limited by the lack of suitable accommodation for an ICT room where discrete lessons can take place and pupils can have access to their full entitlement for ICT.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **FRENCH**

125. Overall, the provision of French for the pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. There is a particularly strong link to the residential journeys that are planned for these pupils. During the time of the inspection, there was no modern foreign language being taught. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, from discussion with the co-ordinator and through scrutiny of the school's documents, it is clear that the curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of the pupils.
126. The curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum and has been modified appropriately. French is studied as one module that lasts for a half term each year. The pupils also learn through a 'French club' during other times of the year. The curriculum is suitably modified for the pupils who have more profound and multiple learning difficulties. In these lessons, a sensory approach is used to make the teaching appropriate and the learning effective. For example, the more able pupils in the classes

learn to greet each other in French by saying 'Bonjour', they also learn to say or recognise their name in French with 'Je m'appelle .....'. The pupils who have greater difficulties develop a knowledge and understanding that France is a different country in which a different language is spoken. They also learn to recognise the French flag and compare it with the British flag. For some pupils, their success is limited to having the experience or hearing the language, whilst for others, they are successful in speaking a French word or a simple French phrase.

127. Records are kept of the experiences and successes of the pupils, which clearly show that they make good progress, each at his or her own level. The achievements of the pupils are recorded and celebrated; the information is also presented as part of the education report at their annual reviews.
128. The overall planning is good and the content of the Programmes of Study makes a very strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils experience the different food and menus of France. There are lessons in which they study such matters. The residential trips also provide an excellent opportunity for the pupils to experience the true culture of a foreign country and hear its language being used as a first language. The subject is well managed to ensure that appropriate Programmes of Study are provided.
129. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and there are adequate resources to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils.

## **MUSIC**

130. Achievement in music is good. Pupils' progress is good overall and can be very good. In some lessons, pupils respond to rhythms as teaching staff use a range of resources to increase the atmosphere and mood created by recorded music. Pupils experience a range of music from other countries. During the inspection, lessons concentrated on the music of the United States that ranged from Presley, West Side Story, Gershwin and Sinatra. Pupils responded to the range of moods and were assisted by staff to interpret the rhythms and beat of the differing musical styles. In other lessons, pupils are beginning to appreciate the basics of composition. They can play an instrument on command and are able to adjust the volume of their playing when required to do so. They are getting a very good grasp of how an orchestra works under a conductor. In the last report, pupils made satisfactory progress and the report stated that the most capable musicians were not progressing as well as the least capable. During this inspection, all pupils made good progress in line with their targets and, for some, it was very good.
131. The quality of teaching is good and often very good. Lesson planning is a strength with long- and medium-term plans created by the subject leaders and allowing colleagues to produce from these, short-term planning which meets the special and varied needs of individual pupils. This approach is helpful in supporting those teachers who lack confidence in delivering the music curriculum. During the inspection, it was encouraging to note the use of music across the curriculum. In one science lesson, the plenary session was delivered in song and proved a very positive and innovative means of revising what had been learned. In one lesson, pupils used recording apparatus and were able to adjust the volume when playing their own recordings. In the best lessons, teachers had a good range of subject expertise allied to a very good knowledge and understanding of their pupils' special educational needs. This means that the teachers and assistants are able to include every pupil in the activities of the lesson as they know

how to motivate them, communicate with them and motivate them well. In the last report, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory overall. There has been considerable improvement since then.

132. The subject is very well led by two part-time specialists who share a common belief of how music should be developed for pupils with very severe and profound learning difficulties. Their long- and medium-term plans, which are circulated to all teachers, provide an excellent basis for non-specialists to plan exciting and relevant musical experiences, based on the coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, for the varied special educational needs of their pupils. Since the last inspection report, the subject now complies with National Curriculum requirements. The subject leaders have a clear vision of where the subject is going and where they want it to be in a few years time. They are currently developing 'ongoing units' of basic musical skills that are to be trialled at Key Stage 2 next term. They are also planning twilight training sessions for staff in basic composition and graphic notation, teaching singing and the elements of music. They also plan to continue running a lunch-time music club.
133. Resources for music are good. This is a major improvement since the last inspection when resources were described as limited. However, there is still a weakness in the area of ICT equipment to support the curriculum. There is a good range of percussion and stringed instruments that are used very well. The subject leaders recognise the need to increase resources in the areas of ethnic instruments and electronic ones including ICT. The poor school accommodation creates problems with storing resources that poses major difficulties for this progressive subject. One important resource is the appointment of a music facilitator who is a subject specialist and a trained music therapist. She is able to provide music therapy where it is a statement requirement and responds to any need by which a pupil can benefit from a musical experience. The music within the school gives pupils an understanding of cultures other than their own. Music from other countries is used in different settings. There is also time for reflection during the music sessions, this adds a spiritual dimension to many events within the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. At the time of the last inspection, standards of achievement and progress were good. The good standards and pupils' progress have been maintained with some improvements. These improvements have been achieved because the school and the co-ordinator have worked hard to develop the scheme of work which is being consistently implemented across the school. This ensures that all pupils experience the four areas of physical education; physiotherapy and hydrotherapy, body awareness and interpersonal relationships, gross motor skill development and National Curriculum study. In addition, there is a good planning process which is monitored by the co-ordinator with assessments made at the end of each module. Additionally, the standards of teaching have improved overall, and particularly for Years 5 to 7.
135. From the earliest age, it is obvious that pupils enjoy physical activities. This enjoyment contributes to their achievement because they are prepared to work hard. By the end of Year 2, they develop their skills of hand function which improves their hand-eye co-ordination as they practice daily life skills. In the school hall, they develop their games and social skills. In one lesson observed during the inspection, they were using a selection of balls, including a large physiotherapy ball, to develop their skills of throwing, catching and intercepting the ball. They joined a relay race using large buckets and beanbags. By the end of Year 6, pupils gain experiences that help to improve their mobility and weight bearing. Pupils have individual programmes prepared by the

physiotherapists. In this way, all pupils, including those with PMLD progress and work effectively to implement their programmes. They stretch and move their limbs, helping to maintain flexibility and strength. Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils, in addition to their games activities, enjoy opportunities to dance. In one lesson, Year 7 pupils explored basic body actions and made single movements, combining movements using different parts of the body to perform a short dance sequence. Several of the pupils were on behaviour programmes but, before the end of the lesson, they had all enjoyed and participated in some American line dancing. By the end of Year 11, pupils have opportunities to learn to swim and become confident in the water. A group of Year 11 pupils visited the swimming pool and were learning to float and develop their swimming strokes. In the lesson, they were developing their skills in the water using floats. One pupil was able to swim the length of the pool. In another lesson involving American line dancing, higher attaining pupils were learning the steps correctly. By the end of the lesson, the majority of the pupils were able to participate with assistance in a short dance sequence. Pupils in wheelchairs participated in the dance with support.

136. The quality of the teaching and learning is always good and sometimes very good. Lessons have clear objectives and are well planned. A feature of the planning is the way teachers ensure that the needs of the pupils with PMLD and those of the higher attainers are met appropriately. At the end of every unit of study, progress is assessed and recorded. This information is used to direct future planning. Physiotherapists and support assistants work closely with the teachers to develop individual programmes and appropriate targets. A particular strength is the efforts made by staff to include pupils in links and activities with other schools and colleges. For example a senior group of pupils was involved in the Dance Link Project with the local sixth-form college. A large number of pupils were involved in a dance production as part of the Brighton Festival. The school also participated in a local football tournament supported by Brighton and Hove Disability Football Project.
137. The curriculum for physical education is broad and balanced and includes horse-riding sessions for pupils who will benefit. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 participate and learn to improve their balance and confidence. They also learn the importance of grooming and feeding that is necessary to keep animals healthy.
138. The co-ordinator's knowledge and enthusiasm have been instrumental in raising achievement in the subject. Good use is made of non-contact time during the year. He has been able to not only monitor short- and medium-term planning, but also to monitor the quality of teaching through direct observations. This has had a good impact upon staff confidence. The resources for the subject are adequate although more resources for some aspects of gymnastics are needed. The major difficulty that impinges on the quality of lessons is space. The size of the hall limits what can be achieved in some lessons and there is a serious lack of storage space for equipment. Staff make good use of the existing space, resources and facilities but, overall, the size of the hall does constrain the quality of what can be achieved in many lessons. However, the school makes good use of off-site facilities to extend pupils' opportunities.
139. Physical education makes an important contribution to pupils' social and personal development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. In the small number of lessons taught during the inspection, achievement and progress were good and, in one lesson, they were excellent. This judgement is supported through reports written for annual reviews, home/school news books, photographs, records of achievement folders, the curriculum album and teachers' feedback forms to the subject leader. In the last inspection report, progress was described as satisfactory. Pupils experience a very good, broad and balanced curriculum based on the locally agreed syllabus and delivered through schemes of work based on a four-year plan. Visits have been made to Chichester Cathedral and a local church. The scheme of work covers the six major faiths and pupils enjoy hearing and acting out biblical and other religious stories.
141. Teaching is good overall and can be excellent. Teachers plan very well to ensure that they take every opportunity for pupils to access the learning by imaginative use of resources. In one lesson, Joseph's life was acted out and pupils given sand trays to enable them to get a tactile experience of sand and the desert environment. When Joseph was given a beautiful coat by his father, pupils enjoyed wrapping themselves in multi-coloured cloth and seeing themselves in a mirror. They were then asked how Joseph's brothers would feel when they knew that their father had given his favourite son such a beautiful garment. One boy immediately responded with 'jealous'. It is clear that the high quality teaching produces very good learning and progress for the pupils. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them. Interest is maintained over lengthy lessons by the skilful use of multi-sensory resources. The lesson ended reflectively with music, a candle and a darkened room. In the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory.
142. The management of the subject is very good. The subject leader is a specialist who has a very good understanding of the severe and profound special needs of the pupils. The scheme of work is broad, balanced and progressive and therefore meets the diverse needs of the pupils. The medium-term planning has been a major support for teacher confidence in delivering imaginative and relevant lessons. The feedback forms which teachers return to the subject leader give a clear view that they find the medium-term plans helpful in their lesson preparation.
143. Resources are good but storage is a major concern as they are not readily accessible to all teachers. However, the use of resources in the classroom is very good. The subject leader acknowledges that appropriate commercial resources for PMLD pupils are difficult to find and that making them is time consuming. There is a good range of video and auditory tapes and of books and pictures that enable pupils to gain greater understanding of various religions. There are some resources for each of the major faiths and for some of the religious festivals. In the last report, resources are described as inadequate. This has improved considerably since then.
144. The subject makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. It provides an awareness of multi-faith issues, a sense of communion with nature, divinity and the unknown, an appreciation of mystery and pattern in the world, spirituality and the universe.