

INSPECTION REPORT

HORTON LODGE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Rudyard, Leek

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124496

Headteacher: Mrs C Coles

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 11th – 12th March 2003

Inspection number: 249408

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rudyard Leek Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST13 8RB
Telephone number:	01538 306214
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Harris
Date of previous inspection:	9 th March 1998

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Horton Lodge community special school is located in an idyllic setting in Rudyard village, Staffordshire. There are 59 pupils in total (31 boys and 28 girls) including 14 children in the nursery and reception age range. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or are undergoing statutory assessment. Large proportions of the pupils are described as having physical disabilities (44 per cent) or high dependency (37 per cent). A small number of pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. All the pupils, apart from two, are from white British families and none have English as an additional language. Currently ten boys and eight girls use the residential provision. The school is funded by Staffordshire local education authority (LEA) but the pupils are from Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Cheshire, Derbyshire and LEAs further afield. The school is involved in many local and national initiatives, notably the government project 'Transforming the School Workforce Pathfinder', and has received many awards, notably Beacon School status for leadership and inclusion.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstanding school. Pupils make very good progress, particularly in the key skills of communication and in relation to their physical disabilities. Teaching and learning are very good. Leadership is excellent. The school's approach to Conductive Education is unique and extremely successful. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils make very good progress overall. There is substantial evidence of this progress in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE), information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.
- The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent. This is because the school makes extremely effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development and the exemplary standards of care.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The school's use of Conductive Education methods maximises the pupils access to, and participation in, learning. Assessment procedures are very rigorous and effective and inform teaching.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. This is characterised by a relentless engagement in local and national initiatives and pursuit of additional funding to support pupils' learning.
- The school's curriculum is excellent. In particular, there is a total commitment to social and educational inclusion for pupils and excellent partnership with parents, other schools and the community at large.

What could be improved

- There are no significant shortcomings in the school's outcomes or provision.

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 March 1998, when it was described as 'a very good school with an outstanding ethos'. This inspection makes even more positive judgements about pupils' progress, teaching and learning and leadership than previously. Many other aspects of the school's work have been maintained at a high standard or have improved. Extremely effective action has been taken on identified issues related to ICT, music and physical education. Therefore, improvement overall has been excellent. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards and improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
Reading	A	A	good	B
Writing	A	A	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	A	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

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

Within the limited time available during a short inspection, evidence is that all children in the Foundation Stage and all pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress in:

- the key skills of communication;
- the key literacy skills of reading and writing;
- mathematics, particularly the key skills of numeracy;
- PSHE;
- ICT; and
- physical education.

This progress is in relation to precise individual targets and is seen in the very detailed individual records and collections of completed work.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school and clearly enjoy all the lessons and other activities. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident. Older, more able pupils speak very positively about their teachers and experiences.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is excellent overall. Pupils nearly always participate in lessons very willingly and are friendly and polite at mealtimes and during play.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils are excellent. Pupils have great respect for adults and care for each other.
Attendance	Rates of attendance are broadly average for a school of this type and absence is mostly for medical reasons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Although a small number of lessons was observed this is a reliable judgement because the teaching in all these lessons was good or better and it was very good or excellent in nearly three-quarters of them. Examination of teachers' planning and records and pupils' work provided very positive additional evidence. The teaching of English, including the key skills of communication and literacy, of mathematics, including numeracy, ICT and PSHE is very good. A real strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers plan for pupils of different abilities and with different SEN. This results in effective inclusion and has a positive impact on individuals' learning. All pupils are highly motivated to learn and show considerable perseverance, determination and concentration. This tangible individual effort was exemplified by a child in the Foundation Stage explaining where she had put a stone in a small garden.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides excellent learning opportunities for the pupils. The Conductive Education approach enables pupils to access the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities and opportunities for educational and social inclusion are excellent. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is excellent in all respects. The school makes wide-ranging and effective provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development. Nevertheless, the school has identified the promotion of multicultural awareness as a priority.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for child protection, health and safety and ensuring the pupils' welfare. Day-to-day pastoral care is exemplary. Academic assessment is to an extremely high standard and teachers use the resulting information very well in their planning.

The school has an extremely positive partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. There is a very clear sense of purpose to the work of the school and shared commitment among all staff. Key staff work with great professionalism and employ effective strategies to achieve identified targets for their areas of responsibility.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors are very effective. They have a very good understanding of the school's many strengths and are extremely involved in financial planning and management in particular. Their initiative 'Governor of the Month' is proving very successful in maximising their involvement in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent arrangements to monitor and evaluate its work. For example, the evaluation of pupils' experiences in mainstream settings whilst at Horton Lodge and the tracking of pupils after they leave is extremely rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	This school has a very low income per pupil in comparison with similar schools nationally. However, the school receives additional funding arising from its involvement in local and national initiatives and in recognition of its achievements. In addition, staff, governors and parents raise considerable additional funding. These funds are used extremely well. For these reasons financial factors do not have a negative impact on the pupils.

The application of the principles of best value is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Parents were extremely positive about all aspects of the school's work included in the questionnaire and discussed with the registered inspector. They were unanimous in their feelings that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children make good progress at school; • the teaching is good; • the school has high expectations of work and behaviour; • the school is well led and managed. 	<p>Concerns were not expressed about any aspect of the school's work by a significant number of parents.</p>

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views. This can be exemplified by one parent who wrote, 'I hope when you have completed your inspection you realise what an extraordinarily good school Horton Lodge is. The expectations of the school for the children are huge and they all work together to achieve them with gusto'.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

All pupils make very good progress overall. There is substantial evidence of this progress in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education (PSHE), information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education.

1. Pupils' achievements and progress are very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress was judged to be good overall and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT). This progress is carefully measured and monitored by the staff through the use of very high quality individual education plans (IEPs). These have precise targets in English, mathematics, science, ICT and personal, social and health education (PSHE). A significant factor in the progress pupils make is the considerable amount of work they complete. Within the limited time available during a short inspection, the provided work sample included good or very good amounts of work in all subjects of the curriculum.
2. Pupils make very good progress in the key skills of communication, reading and writing. Examination of pupils' work, teachers' records and lesson observations provide particularly strong evidence of pupils' considerable achievements in speaking and listening. More able Year 6 pupils were seen preparing for their National Curriculum tests and showed a good understanding of adverbs and adjectives and were working well on completing a story, having been given the start. Year 6 pupils have made considerable progress in writing sustained over six or seven years. More able pupils have good strategies when spelling new words, write poems showing sensitivity and compare extracts of the Harry Potter books with the films. Less able pupils make good use of the Picture Exchange Communication System to convey meaning and follow simple instructions. In a mixed Years 1 and 2 literacy lesson pupils showed a very good understanding of the key features of traditional stories and used words such as 'brave' and 'selfish' to describe characters. Because the pupils have significant physical disabilities they have particular difficulties with writing. However, there is strong evidence of them making good and very good progress in this important key skill. Less able pupils benefit from good sensory work.
3. All pupils make very good progress in mathematics, notably the key skills of numeracy. More able Year 6 pupils are currently working within the National Curriculum Levels 3 and 4 in various aspects of number and data handling. ICT has been used very well to enable the pupils to record, analyse and present the findings of mathematical investigations and surveys. One of these pupils was broadly at National Curriculum Level 1 with some achievement at Level 2 four years ago. Examination of a less able pupil's file illustrates the individualised nature of the school's learning opportunities. This pupil is learning about cause and effect and making choices when using switches to operate different devices and equipment in the classroom and sensory room.
4. Progress is also very good in science, ICT, PSHE, and physical education. In science a very high priority is given to experimentation and investigation and making clear links with numeracy and ICT. As a result, all pupils make very significant gains in understanding the key principles and concepts of scientific methodology. For example, more able Year 6 pupils have planned their own investigations into 'stopping sound'. In ICT pupils use computers in a wide range of activities including writing, data handling, programming a Roamer device to move around the floor, using a digital camera to photograph shadows in science and CD-Roms and the Internet for research. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 use the conjunction 'and' to refine their Internet searches and good quality programs to

compose short pieces of music and create pictures based on the work of famous artists, such as Kandinsky. Pupils use wordprocessing very well in accordance with their individual abilities. The most able pupils know how to change the appearance of text using different fonts, colours and positions and how to use columns, pictures and borders when designing their first newspaper.

5. In PSHE, independence in daily routines is promoted throughout the school. For example, children in the nursery and reception are encouraged to remove their shoes and socks and get in position for the Conductive Education 'Task Series'. All pupils make very good progress in the basic skills of eating and drinking, dressing and personal hygiene. A great deal of emphasis is given to developing personal qualities and skills and throughout the school pupils show mature and responsible attitudes. In physical education, pupils learn how to repeat sequences in dance and achieve considerable success in swimming and, in relation to leisure activities, learn how to ride a bike and use the playground equipment. Photographic records show pupils in Years 1 and 2 making very good progress in their balance and posture when sitting without support and walking (with an aid) alongside mainstream peers during an art workshop.
6. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress overall. They do particularly well in the three areas of learning: 'communication, language and literacy', 'personal and social development' and 'physical development' (in the nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum). They learn symbols using communication devices (Go Talker and Tec Talker) very quickly. A more able reception child identified seven different shapes correctly by choosing from given groups of three. A less able child has made very good progress in speaking, for example indicating personal preferences by saying 'back' when looking at a book and 'over there' when moving around the room. The children make good progress in eating and drinking independently and using a range of tools such as pencils, paintbrushes, spoons and a whisk. Photographs are collected and annotated to record the children's progress and, for example, clearly show one child pushing up and maintaining a standing position and using a spade and sieve in the sand tray.

The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent. This is because the school makes extremely effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development and the exemplary standards of care.

7. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are excellent. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils are excellent. These were all found to be very good at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy lessons and other activities and want to succeed. They participate with great enthusiasm and good humour. Pupils know and understand school routines and the teachers' expectations and, for example, one junior aged pupil predicted what a literacy lesson was going to be about. Pupils are friendly and polite to all adults and to each other. This includes welcoming and showing a genuine interest in visitors to the school. Indeed, many of the pupils could only be described as charming in their conversations with the inspectors. Pupils respect adults and, for example, more able pupils in Year 6 talk about the school and their teachers with great admiration and affection. Some pupils express feelings of uncertainty about what life will be like when they leave Horton Lodge. Despite their own difficulties, pupils show genuine concern and care for others.
8. There are very good arrangements at mealtimes and break-times to maximise the pupils' independence in play activities, eating and drinking and matters of personal hygiene. These times are well organised and supervised and are characterised, as are lessons, by a calm but very busy atmosphere. They are good opportunities for pupils to make choices. Pupils are confident and considerate (as stated above) and often show great

effort and determination and a keen sense of humour – but some of them are equally capable of showing the personal qualities of wilfulness and stubbornness at times.

9. The school's provision for the pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development is excellent in all respects. This is a considerably more positive picture than previously when moral and social were very good, spiritual was good and cultural was satisfactory. No assemblies were seen but prayers were said before meals. There are very clear, positive expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In the Foundation Stage, children are encouraged to take on responsibilities at a very young age. During a start of day session, children were seen sorting out name cards, watering plants and putting pegs on the number line. In the infant department displays include star pupils and work done on friendship in religious education. Mostly junior age pupils are members of an 'Eco committee' and they have done work on recycling and saving paper and electricity. Horton Lodge has worked with a high school to produce materials looking at disability issues as part of their Citizenship schemes of work. Educational visits and visitors to the school have made a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and awareness of the outside world. These include members of the British Legion and a Salvation Army band. A theatre group worked on an anti-bullying project with Horton Lodge pupils and pupils from a nearby primary school. Other examples are given in the last section of this report. At the time of the inspection, classroom displays in the junior department included work on China and Africa. In an infant literacy lesson pupils showed considerable insight when comparing a traditional Japanese story with familiar folk tales.
10. Although this inspection makes these very positive judgements about the provision, the school intends to pursue its intention to improve its arrangements to promote the pupils' multicultural awareness. This is a priority in the current planning and a special focus week has been planned for the summer term.
11. Closely linked to the extremely positive pupil outcomes in terms of personal development are the school's very good procedures for child protection, health and safety and ensuring the pupils' welfare, and the exemplary day-to-day care both in the classroom and residential provision. Staff know the pupils extremely well and respond to their individual needs and concerns with great sensitivity.

Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The school's use of Conductive Education methods maximises the pupils' access to, and participation in, learning. Assessment procedures are very rigorous and effective and inform teaching.

12. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Of the small number of lessons seen, all were good or better, nearly three quarters were very good or excellent and nearly a fifth were excellent. This judgement is supported by examination of teachers' planning and records and pupils' work, including IEPs, annual reports and records of achievement files, which are organised and maintained extremely well. Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection in that the proportion of very good or excellent lessons has increased. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in this or the previous inspection.
13. The school is one of a very small number in the country which bases its work on the philosophy and methods of Conductive Education. There are specific sessions, notably at the start of each school day, in which the particular technique known as 'Task Series' is to the fore. However, the school does not view Conductive Education as a 'stand alone' element of its provision. One of the parents expressed the view that, 'the children in

Kiplings (the residential provision) get Conductive Education from the moment they get up in the morning until they go to bed'. This is very much what the inspectors found. In the 'Task Series' pupils concentrate on basic physical functioning and are encouraged to say what they are doing, for example, 'I put my feet flat' and 'I lift my head up'. In this way the pupils come to know and understand what they are doing (as opposed to being in receipt of therapy). Much more than this, the pupils are involved in Conductive Education throughout the day because the staff have excellent knowledge of the pupils' needs and this method, which they see as a way of enabling the pupils' maximum access to learning opportunities and participation in lessons. A major factor in the consistency and uniformity of the provision is that the number of teachers who are fully qualified conductors has increased considerably since the previous inspection.

14. All lessons are planned very well using a common format which includes links with other subjects, notably ICT and PSHE. Most significantly, teachers plan very diligently and successfully for pupils of different abilities and with different SEN. Excellent examples of this were seen in numeracy lessons in both the infant and junior departments. Another strong characteristic of the teaching is the emphasis given to problem solving, experimentation and investigation in all learning opportunities, but particularly in mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff throughout the school. Pupils respond impeccably to the very high expectations of hard work and good behaviour at all times. There are good arrangements for homework with very good communication between the day staff and residential staff and parents.
15. The teaching of English, including the key skills of communication and literacy, of mathematics, including numeracy, ICT and PSHE is very good throughout the school. In two mixed junior age literacy lessons, pupils made very significant gains in relation to their individual learning objectives in both literacy and Conductive Education. The teachers used voice and signing very effectively to explain tasks and involve pupils. Individual pupils were helped by support staff and some had communication aids. In one lesson, pupils added to their existing knowledge by considering what might be included in their reply to a letter they had received from Harry Potter.
16. In a mixed nursery and reception group, the teacher very effectively promoted the children's language acquisition and development by repeating a simple story several times. Lots of visual and tactile prompts were used to stimulate the children's interest and aid their understanding. The children made significant gains in recalling the story, sequencing events, predicting what would happen next and early reading and writing skills. In another very good lesson in the Foundation Stage the children were very actively involved in placing items such as stones, flowers and ducks in a small garden, and their interactions with the adults very effectively developed their ability to follow instructions and their understanding of prepositions. One child showed incredible concentration and effort when explaining that she had, 'put the stone behind the flower'. In another lesson in the Foundation Stage the children learnt very well about flowers and plants against individual objectives. Again they were totally occupied and interested in a very good variety of activities providing them with lots of choices and the computer was used very well. In all lessons observed in The Foundation Stage signing was used very well.
17. Teaching and learning in ICT is much improved since the previous inspection. Observed discrete ICT lessons were very good and very effective use of modern technology was seen in literacy, mathematics, art and design and music lessons. Teachers are confident and competent in using the electronic whiteboard, classroom computers, other devices and communication aids. An excellent lesson was seen in which pupils in Years 4 and 6

used their existing good knowledge and exemplary teacher presentation of new work to write e-mail messages.

18. All pupils are highly motivated to learn and show considerable perseverance, determination and concentration. For example, children in the nursery and reception showed great effort when attempting to undo shoelaces and when crawling from one activity area to another. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sustained their interest and effort for a long time when exploring the 'stamp' facility of a computer paint program to produce designs in the style of Mondrian. One pupil showed particularly intense concentration trying to use the input device to place shapes accurately in the design. Pupils showed a very high level of independent learning and that 'learning is fun' in numeracy lessons, for example a mixed Years 1 and 2 class working on number order and a mixed Years 3 to 6 class working on addition and subtraction.
19. The school has extremely rigorous and effective procedures to assess what the pupils know, understand and can do. All pupils have IEPs with precise targets, in relation to the nationally recognised P-levels (for pupils with special educational needs) and the National Curriculum levels, in English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE. These have improved since the last inspection and are used to set whole-school targets for achievement and inclusion. The teachers collect pupils' work and record their achievements in an extremely efficient and organised way. The quantity and quality of evidence is substantial and pupils' work is frequently annotated very well to explain what they had learnt and what they had found easy or difficult. All pupils have records of achievement which contain many examples of their work and certificates recognising their successes. The school has recently introduced 'Gold Files' in which teachers collect the very best examples of pupils' work. Teachers use the information arising from the assessment of pupils' academic progress and personal development very well in planning what they will teach next.

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is characterised by a relentless engagement in local and national initiatives and pursuit of additional funding to support pupils' learning.

20. The school has received many awards in recognition of its work and participates in a wide range of national and local initiatives. The school is a Beacon School for leadership and inclusion (2001) and is a National Primary Centre with the National Primary Trust. It has Investor in People (2000) and Health Promoting School (2002) status. It has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark for literacy and numeracy (2001) and a National Curriculum Award for community links (2000). This year the school is participating in the government initiative 'Transforming the School Workforce Pathfinder'. This has included the provision of laptop computers and relevant software for all teachers and the appointment of a resource manager. A lot of work has been carried out on developing the skills of support staff, particularly with regard to ICT, communication and sensory impairment. The headteacher is a member of a government task force 'The Future Role of Special Schools'.
21. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has great vision for this and other special schools as a very important element of the educational provision in this country. At the same time she is the driving force behind the school's exemplary work on social and educational inclusion. There are excellent arrangements for staff development, including performance management, training in child protection and health and safety matters and the induction of newly qualified teacher conductors. As a nationally recognised centre for Conductive Education the school has strengthened its provision in

that there are now six fully qualified teacher conductors and there were only two at the time of the last inspection.

22. There is a very clear sense of common purpose to the work of the school and a very strong shared commitment among all staff to promoting the pupils' all round development and to school improvement. The school's central aim 'to ensure that children understand and achieve their potential and become full participants in society' is evident in day-to-day practice. The school was temporarily without a deputy headteacher at the time of this inspection. The acting deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators work with great professionalism and employ effective strategies to achieve identified targets for their areas of responsibility. For example, there are separate action plans for all subjects and co-ordinators have carried out moderated self-reviews in many areas of the school's work, using LEA personnel and other headteachers and subject specialists to evaluate the school's self-assessment. For example, with regard to mathematics, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited the school in May 2001 and reported very positively on the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, staff training and inclusion of Horton Lodge pupils into mainstream schools. In English, the current co-ordinator has done a great deal in a short period of time, including reviewing the effectiveness of the literacy strategy, developing the skills of support staff, refining assessment procedures and developing the provision for pupils with complex needs.
23. The school benefits from the support and involvement of a very effective governing body. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's many strengths and state the low level of funding to be its major difficulty. They also state that further improvements could be made in ICT, the use of signing, symbols and devices to aid pupils' communication and developing provision for the pupils with more complex needs. Governors are looking forward to the completion of the planned covered play area. They are extremely involved in financial planning and management, including fundraising. They have recently introduced their own initiative 'Governor of the Month'. Each month individual governors put themselves 'in the spotlight' and commit more time to the school. This is proving very successful in considerably increasing their involvement in the life of the school and examples have included working in the school kitchen, visiting the School for Parents and looking at ICT provision.
24. The school has excellent arrangements to monitor and evaluate its work. Following the previous inspection, extremely effective action was taken to improve the identified issues related to ICT, music and physical education. These were primarily concerned with learning opportunities, but the school has successfully improved teaching in these subjects through developing the curriculum and learning resources and improving staff knowledge and skills. The school's business plan is highly detailed and informative and arises from a detailed review of the previous plan and extensive discussions between the headteacher, classroom staff and governors. There are very good systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and subject provision by the co-ordinators. There are extremely rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate the pupils' experiences in mainstream settings whilst at Horton Lodge and to track their progress after they leave.
25. This school's basic income per pupil from the LEA is very low in comparison with similar schools nationally. This is acknowledged by the LEA and is because it is one of the lowest funded authorities in the country, which nevertheless devolves a very high percentage of its income directly to its schools. However, financial factors do not have a negative impact on the pupils. This is because the school receives additional funding as a result of its involvement in local and national initiatives and in recognition of its achievements referred to above. The school successfully bid for funding from the LEA to

raise standards in gymnastics as part of the physical education action plan following the previous inspection. In addition, staff, governors and parents raise considerable additional funding every year. For example, they raised a very large sum of money over three years to provide an outside soft-surface play area for the pupils.

26. Available finance is used extremely well to maximise the quality of the learning resources, accommodation and quality of the learning environment for both pupils and staff. For example, there are very good outdoor facilities and a good swimming pool. A small room has been equipped with good quality sensory equipment to help meet the needs of those pupils who have the most complex learning difficulties. This was funded by The Wooden Spoon Society, a national charity supported by rugby union players. At the time of this inspection a splendid new gymnasium for use by both older pupils and staff was nearing completion. National funding (National Grid for Learning and New Opportunities Funds) has been used to great effect to improve provision and raise standards in ICT.
27. Staff other than teachers make a very considerable contribution to the life of the school and the pupils' progress. This includes classroom support staff, residential staff, the recently appointed ICT technician, office staff, premises staff and kitchen and lunchtime staff.

The school's curriculum is excellent. In particular, there is a total commitment to social and educational inclusion for pupils and excellent partnership with parents, other schools and the community at large.

28. The school provides excellent learning opportunities for the pupils. Conductive Education is at the centre of everything the school does and the school's very effective approach to this method is explained earlier in this report. Statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met. The nationally recommended Foundation Stage curriculum is fully implemented. The quality of documentation, notably subject policies and long- and medium-term planning (schemes of work) is of very high quality and provides teachers with very clear guidance to plan lessons. The school has followed the recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy from the very beginning. Staff have participated in LEA training and the strategies have been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils.
29. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum had many very strong features and some weaknesses. There has been very good improvement because the strong features have been maintained or developed further and all issues have been fully addressed. ICT now has a very high status in the school, is planned well as a discrete subject and in other lessons and features strongly in displays. Effective action has been taken to develop the physical education curriculum in relation to the main themes of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, particularly dance. Provision in music is much improved including the very good use of modern technology. Discussions with subject co-ordinators and (albeit brief) examination of pupils' work provides positive evidence of provision and outcomes in geography, history, art and design and design and technology.
30. Extra-curricular activities are excellent. There are very good organised activities every day for boarders, including an excellent art club run by artists with disabilities observed during this inspection, and good opportunities for day pupils. The commonly used term '24-hour curriculum' captures the school's provision for its boarders. Pupils also participate in excellent residential experiences away from school, including adventurous activities, which contribute significantly to their social development and their progress in physical education. Educational visits and visitors are frequent and wide-ranging and contribute significantly to the pupils' learning and their personal development. For example, related

to their work in science, pupils visited Jodrell Bank in the autumn term of 2000 and attended a science day in Buxton in the autumn term of 2002. Stoke City footballers, Harlem Globetrotters basketball players and a national dance group, including a member with disabilities, have contributed to the school's physical education provision.

31. The school has a very strong commitment to social and educational inclusion and practice is exemplary. There are extensive links with several schools across the LEA. There are very close two-way links with a nearby primary school involving many pupils from both schools in a range of activities. Extensive and rigorous procedures are in place to identify pupils who would benefit from a regular, structured mainstream experience and they attend a primary school as close to their homes as possible. Horton Lodge staff visit the mainstream schools in advance of the placements and parents are actively involved. The school provides training opportunities for mainstream staff and continuing support if pupils transfer to mainstream full time. Twenty-eight pupils have successfully gone into mainstream over the last six years and, at the time of this inspection, four pupils were involved in individual inclusion programmes.
32. A particular feature of the school's provision is the excellent 'School for Parents'. This is led by the early years co-ordinator with two support staff and is held every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday in a very well presented room. It involves very young pre-school children and their parents and they are introduced to the philosophy and methods of Conductive Education. This is just one element of the school's very positive partnership with the parents who speak very highly of the school and support it by raising funds and organising major social events.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are no significant shortcomings in the school's outcomes or provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no issues for development at this time.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	6	0	0	0	0
Percentage	19	52	29	0	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	59
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	48	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	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	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions (of pupils of compulsory school age), which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.0
Average class size	9.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	726

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	880,405
Total expenditure	903,873
Expenditure per pupil	14,818
Balance brought forward from previous year	99,020
Balance carried forward to next year	-23,468

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 53%

Number of questionnaires sent out	59
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.	84	13	0	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	32	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	45	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	84	16	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	26	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	10	3	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	29	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	94	6	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	32	0	0	3