

INSPECTION REPORT

FORDWATER SCHOOL

Chichester

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126163

Headteacher: Mr R J Rendall

Reporting inspector: Alan Lemon
20165

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th December 2002

Inspection number: 249420

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
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Summersdale Road Chichester West Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Riddell
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd – 7 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Registered inspector	Art English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
13101	Michael Kell	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Post - 16	
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	Music Religious education Foundation Stage	
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Humanities Citizenship	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fordwater School is a day special school for pupils mainly with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties, including five who are deaf/blind. Apart from their severe learning difficulties, a significant minority are pupils with autism. There is separate provision made for the deaf/blind pupils, as well as the group of pupils with autism in their nursery years to Year 3. There are 107 pupils on roll in the age range of 2 to 19. Twelve of these are children in the Nursery and Reception year, most of who attend part-time. There are 11 students in the further education department. Nearly all pupils are white – British. Not all pupils are able to talk, but those who do speak English. Twenty-six pupils are eligible for free school meals. The severity of the learning difficulties of the great majority means their attainment when they are admitted to the school is very low for their age and well below the first level of attainment of the National Curriculum. A few transferring to the further education department from other special schools have higher attainment when they arrive, which is above Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Fordwater provides a sound education for its pupils. Pupils are supported well and have their needs met effectively. They achieve very well in their personal development and satisfactorily in the wider aspects of their learning. Teaching is good overall, although the curriculum still has shortcomings and this has an adverse effect on the progress pupils make, overall. The school is led and managed satisfactorily and provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school makes very good provision for its deaf and blind pupils and the group of pupils with autism.
- Pupil' personal development is promoted very effectively.
- While teaching and learning is good overall, it is very good in several parts of the school.
- The partnership with parents is very good.
- The school plans the use of its finances and raises funds very effectively to expand and improve its resources.

What could be improved

- Pupils' progress in information and communication technology and the provision for the subject in order to meet statutory requirements.
- The progress of higher attaining students and students with additional needs in the further education department.
- The strategies contributing to pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school.

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 last inspection was in 1997. Since then, improvement has been satisfactory, overall. The school has maintained its strengths and there has been a significant increase in the proportion of teaching that is very good. There are good improvements in art, music and physical education. However, in the further education department and information and communication technology, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. There

has been satisfactory progress in tackling the key issues identified in that inspection report. In relation to shortcomings that were found in the school's curriculum, all pupils have been formally disapplied from studying a modern foreign language and the provision for religious education is now satisfactory. While the school has set out the intentions for its curriculum through policies for each subject and plans for what should be taught, overall, these are not yet well-established. There remains some imbalance in the time given to the different areas of learning, in particular mathematics. There is inconsistency in how literacy and numeracy is provided across the curriculum and unsatisfactory provision for information and communication technology. A system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum is in place and involves senior staff and subject co-ordinators. However, the work done by subject co-ordinators is not drawn together sufficiently at senior management level for them to gain a clear picture of the school's effectiveness and the extent of observations of teaching is insufficient. The structure of the school improvement plan is much clearer in linking the priorities for development to their costs, timescales and the staff responsible for actions.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	C	very good A
reading	B	C	C	C	C	good B
writing	B	C	C	C	C	satisfactory C
mathematics	C	C	C	C	C	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	B	

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

Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. The separate groups for deaf/blind pupils and pupils with autism are both taught very effectively and these pupils make very good progress. Students in the further education department make satisfactory progress overall although the few students who have additional needs or higher attainment are not catered for effectively and their progress is unsatisfactory. Children in the Nursery and Reception year are making good progress towards their individual targets. They adapt well to routines and form very good relationships. Children listen well to what is said and respond effectively by, for example, exchanging a symbol for a drink of their choice. They develop balance, move well and manipulate objects with increasing skill.

Pupils' achieve satisfactorily, overall, in English. They make good progress in communicating, if not by speech then effectively with sign language or symbols. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. While these are frequently taught well, the literacy strategy throughout the school is applied inconsistently. Pupils are interested in the written word and books. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils read children's novels. They decipher unfamiliar words, especially by linking together the sounds of each letter.

From controlling the marks they make on paper, pupils copy letters and words and eventually some do this without aid. Higher attaining pupils write short simple sentences by hand or by typing using a computer. Students in the further education department use their literacy skills to manage real-life situations satisfactorily. In mathematics, pupils' progress is satisfactory, overall, despite often being taught well because insufficient time is given to the subject and the school's numeracy strategy is ineffective.

Progress is good in art, music, physical education and personal, social and health education, which includes citizenship. In art, teachers have high expectations and the work pupils do is matched well to their different levels of attainment and special educational needs. In particular, higher attaining pupils know about art and artists and use this to develop imaginative work. In music, these pupils understand and follow simple musical notation when composing and performing. In physical education, pupils have a broad range of learning opportunities which are taught effectively. Deaf/blind pupils and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit from specialised approaches which meet their needs well. Through personal, social and health education, pupils achieve well and gain greater independence and self-confidence.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science, design and technology, humanities and religious education. Their progress in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. This is not planned for adequately across the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils respond very well to school by taking an active part in its life and enjoying their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well. The few who have very challenging behaviour are mostly supported effectively and generally conduct themselves very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop in self-confidence and independence. They form very good relationships and those who find this particularly difficult grow to tolerate and like others.
Attendance	Good. It is above the average of similar schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good	Satisfactory

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.

Overall, teaching and learning are good and the proportion of teaching that is very good or better has increased considerably. The teaching of deaf/blind pupils and those with autism in the specialist group is very good. Teaching and learning in English and personal, social and health education is good. It is satisfactory in mathematics and science.

In most lessons, teachers and their classroom assistants work effectively as a team. They know and support their pupils well, which in nearly all cases ensures pupils needs are being met effectively. The positive and encouraging support from teachers and classroom assistants increases pupils' confidence and helps them get enjoyment from their work. Pupils' personal development and communication skills are strongly emphasised and, as a consequence, pupils learn independence, the skills to work with others, to communicate and make choices. Teachers plan lessons well so that activities closely match what each pupil can do and what they need to learn. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged appropriately by the work they are given. In all of these respects the needs of deaf/blind pupils are being met very well. The planning of lessons is very detailed and closely aligned to in-depth information on each deaf/blind pupil. The choice of activities and the resources to support them is very carefully considered. Teachers and classroom assistants manage pupils well and usually adapt their approaches effectively in response to pupils' autism and challenging behaviour. However, one pupil with autism did not take part in activities because the strategies for involving him were ineffective. In the same way, this affected students with additional needs in the further education department. The teaching of literacy in English lessons is good, although it is promoted insufficiently in other subjects. Overall, the teaching of numeracy is unsatisfactory. While pupils often learn well in mathematics lessons, these are too few and numeracy across the curriculum is not planned effectively. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from some badly planned break time activities, which the school counts as teaching time for personal development, literacy and numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The breadth, balance and relevance of what is being taught are satisfactory. The special educational needs of pupils are met well except in the further education department where it is unsatisfactory. The statutory requirements for information and communication technology are not being met. Not enough time is given to English and mathematics and the strategies for literacy and numeracy are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school has a strong, positive climate encouraging pupils' spiritual development. A considerable number of opportunities are found through all activities to promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development and these are pursued very effectively by staff.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff know pupils well, look after their safety and provide them with effective support. There is good collaboration with external agencies.

The partnership with parents is well-established and very good. The school actively encourages parents' involvement; they support the school very well and are pleased with results for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. There is strong commitment and a common sense of purpose towards meeting the needs of pupils. The school has clear aims most of which are pursued effectively but some educational aims are not pursued with as high a commitment.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors keep themselves informed generally about the work of the school. However, limited knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses reduces their effectiveness in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation takes place but it is not always rigorous enough especially on the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is very good. The school is good at deriving best value from purchasing and raising additional funds to support developments.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school is in the throes of re-organising the senior management team and also has difficulty recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff. The poor accommodation for the further education department is scheduled to be replaced soon.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school and are happy to attend. • Contact with the school is straightforward and they receive good information on their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like their children to be given work to do at home.

The informal approach to encouraging parents to help with reading, signing and aspects of personal development at home is effective but inspectors agree that a more formal homework arrangement for the higher attaining pupils would help to improve overall standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily despite much of the teaching and learning being good. There has not been a significant shift in this picture since the last inspection although the amount of very good teaching has increased considerably. Generally, pupils' progress over time lags behind their achievement in many lessons because the curriculum, although it has been revised and developed since the last inspection, is not yet embedded sufficiently. It results in the opportunities pupils have for learning sometimes not coming together coherently and producing better progress. Too little time, overall, for English and mathematics and the unsatisfactory provision for information and communication and technology holds back pupils' achievement. Similarly because pupils' competence in the use of literacy and numeracy and their acquisition of information and communication technology skills is being promoted inconsistently through all of their learning activities, better progress is being hindered. Furthermore, in the further education department, the clarity and detail in the planning of students' learning opportunities is very often too superficial and over-reliant on a commercial curriculum scheme. Therefore, while students make satisfactory progress overall, the few who have additional special educational needs are not catered for effectively. These students make unsatisfactory progress because they seldom take part in lessons. The progress of higher attaining students is unsatisfactory because they are not challenged sufficiently by their work. The amount of planning done to provide them with suitable activities is inadequate.

2. The school uses teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments to make predictions on the progress pupils are expected to make, by the end of Years 6, 9 and 11. The actual progress made by these pupils is monitored and the school records the percentages of pupils who have performed as predicted or who are above and below the level predicted. This work is at an early stage of development and as yet does not contribute to targets for raising standards or strategies for reaching those targets.

3. Children at the Foundation Stage make good progress towards their individual targets. In terms of personal, social and emotion development, children settle well and participate in activities with each other. Children with autism stay seated for singing, although this is something they often find difficult to do. They concentrate and work for good lengths of time. There are good opportunities for children to communicate and they respond in various ways to adults' attention. Some are interested in books and hearing stories and they recognise the letters of their names. Children count and some go up as far as 10. They make progress by using counting rhymes and songs and they know different parts of the body through singing 'body' songs. In play, children improve their balance and movement, using outdoor equipment to crawl, slide and jump. They are confident in water and float with buoyancy aids.

4. All pupils have difficulties to different extents in communicating but they make good progress, overall, because of the effective ways teachers and their assistants often get them to use symbols, sign language or speech. Communication ranges from basic signalling through movement or eye contact. By the end of Year 2, some pupils use one or two word responses. By the end of Year 9, a higher attaining pupil discussed the story he had just read. While pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading and writing, their literacy is promoted inconsistently in other subjects than English and this slows their progress. The lowest attaining pupils know signs and symbols and use these to show they recognise familiar words as well as to read the classroom timetable. Higher attaining pupils, by the end of Year

6, use picture clues and meaning within sentences to decipher difficult words. Some go on to read children's novels and, by Year 11, pupils understand some of the structure of language, for example, knowing what adjectives are. Pupils use effective strategies to begin writing such as making controlled marks with their fingers or a pen. They also write over the tops of letters and words and, by the end of Year 9, many pupils, use freehand to copy letters and words. The use of computers for writing is too limited but when programs are used, pupils employ a symbol alphabet to write poetry and to re-draft their work with a word-processing program.

5. There is insufficient time given to mathematics and the numeracy strategy is unsatisfactory. Consequently, the impact of good teaching is limited and, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2, many pupils distinguish between big and small. Higher attaining pupils count to 20 and total smaller sums. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils double numbers and read the time. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils apply their knowledge of number to solve simple problems. They estimate, measure, and draw graphs from data they have collected. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils investigate number patterns arising from throwing dice and represent their findings with bar charts. They name two-dimensional shapes. Students in the further education department recognise different coins and notes and use their number skills to plan and carry out shopping exercises.

6. Science lessons contribute to the youngest pupils and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieving awareness of what is around them, for example, knowing to respond to sounds and recognising different sounds. From listening to and taking part in songs and actions, these pupils know parts of their bodies such as their head, arms and legs. They see and experience plants growing from bulbs and seeds. Higher attaining pupils understand more of scientific methods and by the end of Year 9, the record their observations of electrical power operating equipment and later go on to make simple electrical circuits. They experiment carefully with different solutions, testing their acidity or alkalinity.

7. Pupils achieve well in art because lessons match effectively the pupils' wide range of learning difficulties. Activities are skilfully adapted to meet the needs of deaf/blind pupils, those with autism and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Equally, higher attaining pupils are appropriately stretched by lessons that build their knowledge of art and artists, particularly the art forms of the world's diverse cultures. The picture is similar in music. The younger, least able pupils respond well when listening to songs and accompany these, banging or shaking musical instruments. Deaf/blind pupils know which music will follow a certain sensory stimulation. Other pupils extend musical skills, knowing about tempo and timing their contributions to group performances. Higher attaining pupils recognise simple musical notation and one knew from the notation that the music was '*Jingle Bells*'. In physical education, rebound therapy has improved the provision for deaf/blind pupils and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. By the end of Year 6, lower attaining pupils actively pull themselves towards objects. Higher attaining pupils, by the end of Year 11, perform simple balancing activities and a sequence of movements involving running, balancing and rolling.

8. Pupils' progress in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because the provision for the subject is inadequately organised. Information and communication technology is not taught as a separate subject and its promotion through all subjects is very uneven in quality.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their routines are very good. Parents are unanimous in saying that their children like school and discussions with pupils confirm they are happy to be there. In many lessons, pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning, an eagerness to contribute and often become engrossed in their activities. They take pride in their achievements. In a Year 6 music lesson, for example, pupils were excited to be playing instruments, tried really hard to play loudly and softly at the right times and were justifiably proud of their achievements at the end. When, occasionally, pupils become pre-occupied and frustrated, teaching and support staff deal with this effectively, ensuring minimal disruption for other pupils.

10. Behaviour in the school is very good and contributes to a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to learning and development. In lessons, the majority of pupils behave sensibly and persevere with tasks. Pupils understand and adhere to the behaviour code. Lunchtimes are orderly and pupils know the routines well. They respond to peers in a caring and understanding way and enjoy the experience of communal eating.

11. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and a strength of the school. The mutual respect between pupils and staff and the trust that pupils have in staff make a significant contribution to learning and development. The strong relationships with adults are often exemplified by the positive use of humour. Relationships between pupils are generally good and there are numerous examples of them working harmoniously together, sharing equipment, taking turns and being supportive of each other. At snack time in one classroom, for example, a girl took great care to ensure that her severely disabled friend got a drink and something to eat.

12. Pupils' personal development is very good. Even the most severely impaired pupils demonstrate good social awareness in response to a range of sensory experiences. From an early age, pupils show a willingness to share, to make choices and to take turns. Some of the higher attaining pupils are responding very enthusiastically to the opportunity to represent others on the School Council.

13. Attendance is good and compares well with other similar schools.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. There is a good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, overall. Teaching that is very good or better has risen from eight per cent at the time of the last inspection to 32 per cent currently and this is a very good improvement. In addition, there is a reduction in amount of unsatisfactory teaching, although it was not large at the time of the last inspection.

15. Teachers and their classroom assistants, in general, know their groups well and many teachers employ at least good expertise in providing relevant learning opportunities for their pupils. They support them well. This ensures pupils approach their work with confidence and gain enjoyment from doing so. It also leads to pupils becoming independent learners and participating as part of a group. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good. In particular, it is promoted successfully through different subjects because teachers and classroom assistants have a clear sense of the objectives for pupils' personal development and promote these effectively. From the earliest stage, pupils learn social skills, making choices, caring for themselves and taking responsibility. A good feature of lesson planning is the way it addresses the most important things pupils need to learn. This works equally well in respect of higher attaining pupils, planning appropriately challenging work that

ensures these pupils learn the knowledge, understanding and skills particular to each subject. In a good mathematics lessons for Years 10 and 11, for example, the teacher stood back and allowed the higher attaining pupils to get on with working co-operatively on sorting the numerical data they had collected. In large part they solved their own problems and learned about using grids to set out information clearly. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from indifferent planning and approaches to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, which are meant to be promoted through most activities. Morning break, for example, is teaching time, although in some groups, at this time, learning opportunities are not obviously planned or sufficiently challenging. A break time for a group of Year 8 and 9 pupils, for example, while a pleasant and social experience contained no number or literacy work as intended.

16. The special educational needs of pupils are met well, overall. They are very well met in relation to children and pupils receiving specialist teaching in the deaf/blind group and the groups for those with autism. The teachers for these groups are very knowledgeable about their pupils and their needs. Their planning is precise and they approach lessons with carefully considered activities and learning resources. The large majority of pupils with autism distributed across other groups are catered for well. In a Year 5 group, made up of pupils with autism, the teacher drew up very good lesson plans focusing on key areas of learning that addressed these pupils needs very effectively. In an art lesson, for example, their activities emphasised working together, sharing their learning experiences and co-operating with each other. More widely, in relation to pupils with autism, a few have very challenging behaviour and this is usually managed effectively but pupils, in a very few instances, are left out of lesson activities because the teacher did not have effective strategies for involving them in learning. In the further education department, students' needs are met satisfactory, overall. Teaching is based on appropriate aims for students to acquire independence and vocational skills. However, learning objectives are not always clear enough and lesson planning is not sufficiently detailed, which at times leads to a lack of challenge, particularly for higher attaining students. In addition, the needs of those students who present challenging behaviour are not planned for effectively and, consequently, they spend too much time uninvolved in learning.

17. The provision for promoting pupils' literacy skills is unsatisfactory overall. The use of the literacy strategy in the few English lessons timetabled is good. The teaching of communication is effective in much of the school's work, but the promotion of pupils' literacy overall in the wider curriculum is not planned consistently well. The school's strategy for promoting pupils' competence in numeracy is unsatisfactory. Too little time is given to mathematics teaching as a whole and the use of number in other lessons is not promoted sufficiently by teachers. In mathematics lessons, pupils learn about number satisfactorily overall, although between Years 7 and 11, because teaching is good, pupils learn more.

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

18. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall. However, they are unsatisfactory in the further education department because curriculum aims and the planning of what students should learn are not clear and detailed. The two lessons timetabled for English and mathematics each week is inadequate and undermines the overall good teaching and learning in these few lessons and the extent of pupils' progress. The school's intention has been to give extra time and regular learning opportunities through planned teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in the timetabled breaks each day between lessons. The quality of these arrangements varies between well focused attention to promoting pupils' basic skills and staff not addressing pupils' literacy and numeracy through the social activities of break times.

19. Overall, the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are satisfactory, although unsatisfactory in the further education department. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its planning of the curriculum satisfactorily. Subjects have policies in place and reasonably developed schemes of work. Learning experiences are organised through a cycle of topics, each containing an emphasis on one of the subjects of the curriculum. For example at present, topics relate to historical themes. The curriculum for physical education, personal, social and health education and citizenship is good. The provision for *rebound therapy* provides an added dimension to the physical education curriculum for pupils with additional special needs and is highly effective. The curriculum for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory because it is not planned effectively to teach pupils the knowledge and skills they need. All pupils have been disapplied from modern foreign languages. Religious education is being developed from the locally agreed syllabus and the detailed plans for what should be taught, which at the moment are satisfactory, are to be adapted from this. In the Nursery and Reception year a commercial curriculum designed for children with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, together with the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is used. However, this information is not drawn together into a coherent and detailed plan of what children should be taught.

20. The tight arrangements for transporting pupils' home after school limit activities outside of lessons. However, older pupils gain good benefits from a residential adventure holiday every year at an outdoor education centre in Wales. During this holiday, pupils experience an interesting range of activities including caving, hill-walking, abseiling, canoeing and go-carting. Visitors to the school, for instance, the Chichester and Rainbow theatre groups, extend the curriculum and pupils derive great enjoyment from these occasions.

21. There are good links with the community, which contribute to pupils' learning and personal development. For instance, a number of adults work on a voluntary basis as support assistants within classrooms. The school has strong links with businesses and service organisations such as the Rotary Club, Lions and Round Table. The links that the school has with other institutions make a good impact on pupils learning. For instance, Year 5 pupils from a local primary school work alongside pupils in the lower school for a day a week. There have been joint activities involving the lower school and Chichester Nursery and a number of secondary schools have sent students to the school as part of their work experience programmes. As part of a project, *Outset Youth Action*, a sixth form group from a local secondary school has worked in the school as support assistants.

22. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good overall. The school meets the needs of deaf/blind pupils very well. The teacher has a very good knowledge of these pupils and she and the support assistants work together very well to provide for them. There are very good links with pupils' parents, which help pupils to make progress. Specialist approaches are used effectively with the deaf/blind pupils as well as for a group of pupils with autism. Outside of this group, other pupils with autism are usually provided well. Occasionally, there are ineffective strategies used in catering for the most demanding of pupils with autism and they fail to get involved in lesson activities. A support assistant, trained to work with pupils with autism provides good support to these pupils when their particular needs demand it. The provision to meet the additional needs of students in the further education department is inadequate.

23. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, there is no policy for promoting these skills, and teachers have not built them into their subject planning. Teachers are very good role models and use every opportunity to encourage acceptable standards of behaviour. The school has a clear moral code and is successful in creating a caring and supportive learning environment.

24. The values and principles set by the school give good support to the pupils' spiritual development. It is particularly strong in raising the pupils' self-esteem and confidence and encourages them to respect themselves and others. This was seen in the end of term Christmas productions, where older or more mobile pupils helped transport the less mobile, adjusting their costumes and attending their minor personal needs. A number of pupils form caring relationships with their less able peers and staff and pupils alike ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are fully included in all aspects of the school day. Aspects of spirituality are reflected well in music, art, and in religious education and assemblies. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on differing faiths and beliefs and to consider the thoughts and emotions of others. In all year groups, pupils show respect and reverence for different cultures and beliefs.

25. Most pupils have an understanding of what is right or wrong and they make very good progress in managing their behaviour. They have a clear concept of the need for trust and loyalty, which is reflected in their very good relationships with each other and adults. Pupils know how to behave and take responsibility for their actions, such as waiting patiently. To a good extent, they understand the consequences of their actions, and will spontaneously volunteer an apology if this is necessary, such as when they bump into someone or accidentally let a door close.

26. The pupils' social development is very good as a result of the many opportunities during the school day for sharing, taking turns or collaborating, such as in preparing the agenda for the School Council meeting or planning a Christmas carol service. Visits to place outside of school, such as museums or working farms, support the pupils' social development, as do links with local schools and colleges. They also participate in inter-school sporting fixtures against similar schools and are proud to be the current basketball champions. Assemblies provide occasions for celebrating individual achievement through the presentation of certificates for academic and personal success. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative, such as tidying up or washing and drying dishes and putting these away after their break-time snacks.

27. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good, particularly in art, religious education and personal and social education. For example, pupils create clay gargoyles and stained glass windows copied from their visits to local churches and there are striking examples of their work on African masks. Higher attaining pupils study the work of artists and derive ideas for their own work from these. Special weeks devoted to learning about Europe and the Commonwealth further support the pupils' cultural awareness of the wider world as did the schools' celebration of the Millennium and the Queen's golden jubilee. The nearby army barracks and the local council provide pupils with an insight into British culture, for instance through visits to the assault courses and the Mayor's Parlour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. As was the case in the last inspection, the procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are effective, consistently applied and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. All staff know pupils very well and work tirelessly to establish trusting relationships with them. They have pupils' well being in their minds at all times and effectively and sensitively deal with some very difficult problems at individual pupil level. There is effective collaboration with most external agencies that helps to secure pupils' social and behavioural development.

29. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are good and meet requirements. The organisation is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. Health and safety

procedures are good and all staff conscientiously ensures that pupils know and adhere to safe practice. Effective systems ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly eliminated. There are regular evacuation practices and records show that electrical and fire prevention equipment is frequently inspected. Staff qualified in First Aid hold up to date accreditation and there is a clear protocol for administering medicines. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained and there are good procedures to ensure parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury.

30. The inclusion of most pupils with additional needs into the life of the school is good. This is promoted by the effective development of communication. All permanent staff have had training in the Picture Exchange Communication System. Procedures for Annual Review and the monitoring of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers write high quality reports. Clear educational and personal development targets are set that are then well linked into individual plans for pupils. Parents and pupils are appropriately involved and the school draws well on a range of other professionals to ensure those pupils' strengths and additional needs are well considered.

31. Other professionals, such as the speech and language therapist, physiotherapist, nurse and occupational therapist provide high quality support for the schools' work. Pupils are variously withdrawn from classes for therapies and for one-to-one support and these arrangements have a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Use of the swimming pool and sensory rooms are good. All pupils have good targets for their personal and social skill development stated in their individual education plans. Whenever pupils are experiencing difficulties staff are usually quick to respond and to implement good short-term improvement programmes. The underlying approach by staff is to value all pupils regardless of the extent of their disability and to build self esteem.

32. Attendance is closely monitored on an individual pupil basis but there is no whole school monitoring and, therefore, no ready access to data showing patterns of attendance by different groups of pupils.

33. There are clear behaviour expectations that are known to and understood by pupils and parents. Behaviour and social development are observed and noted keenly and consistently by all staff on an individual pupil basis. This data is well used to monitor progress and improvement or to trigger intervention where necessary. Staff are good and consistent role models and encourage pupils effectively to follow the code. Praise is used consistently and there are awards and commendations to celebrate effort and achievement.

34. Teachers make good use of opportunities that present themselves during lessons to assess what pupils know and understand and can do. These achievements are recorded accurately in individual curriculum logs. Teachers and learning support assistants generally maintain these ongoing, day-to-day records in a consistent way across the school. As a result, teachers are in a position to use this assessment information effectively to plan future work to meet individual pupils' needs.

35. Pupils' work is marked and annotated and it is evaluated against attainment levels of the National Curriculum or against 'P' levels for those pupils who are still working towards National Curriculum attainment targets. However, although pupils' work is marked they do not always have good knowledge of their own learning because they are not always given information, in a form that they understand, about what they need to do in order to get better.

36. The school's arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Teachers use common assessment procedures that are at least satisfactory across all subjects, but the importance of monitoring assessment practice is not

yet fully integrated into the school's self-evaluation of the teaching and learning process. This is evident in the lack of a whole school policy that identifies and confirms procedures for monitoring, evaluating and supporting pupils' academic progress. Consequently, whole school monitoring of pupil performance by senior management is not yet carried out systematically, rigorously or regularly as it only involves samples of assessment records and then only on an annual basis. In addition, although individual teachers assess pupils' work using 'P' level or National Curriculum criteria the school does not yet have in place routine and established procedures that involve staff meeting together to ensure that they are all applying these criteria in the same way when standardising pupils' work. The absence of such routine internal moderation and levelling practice has an adverse effect on ensuring consistency of assessment.

37. The school is at the early stage of analysing and using whole school assessment data to set performance targets in relation to pupils' progress. Annual assessment information is used soundly to make predictions of pupils' attainments in future years. The school is aware of the need to use assessment data more effectively to raise standards and the quality of its provision. It uses a commercial software package to collate assessment information and has this information independently analysed to compare its performance with similar schools. There have been good steps taken towards examining the performance of different groups of pupils and evaluating the school's effectiveness in meeting their diverse needs. Comparisons of pupil progress in different subjects or in different classes are not yet carried out.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The strong partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection. The school enjoys very strong support from parents and carers which reflects the hard work that the school puts into developing this partnership. A high response to the questionnaire and the meeting with parents before the inspection reveals they have very positive views of the school and are pleased with their children's progress. Parents are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the approachability of all staff, the fact that expectations are high and that the school is well led and managed.

39. General information about the school, new initiatives and forthcoming events are communicated effectively to parents through newsletters and at the Governor's annual meeting. An active Parent Teacher and Friends Association raise significant funds and ensures that parents' views on new initiatives are taken into account. Teachers maintain regular telephone contact with parents and make a point of ringing with good news, which is much appreciated by parents. Regular home visits particularly for children in the Nursery and Reception year, deaf/blind pupils and those with autism effectively support the development of these children. The very good links with parents and carers are exemplified by the number of parents who are happy to use the school for general advice and guidance.

40. Attendance at school functions and at formal annual reviews is very high. Very good information is provided for parents in relation to personal development and progress formally through the Annual Report and Annual Review and informally through the high level of day-to-day contact. The home school diary is very well used and ensures that all aspects of development are communicated and recorded. The school responds quickly to any worries that parents may have. It is equally quick to inform parents of any concerns and to involve them in improvement programmes. The school is effective in ensuring individual parents get access to relevant specialist agencies and support groups for help and advice and is looking into the idea of re-establishing a formal parent support group at the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Where the school has set its priorities it has made clearly articulated aims to reflect these. The school's aims centre on helping pupils overcome, as much as they can, their learning difficulties and them achieving as much personal autonomy as possible. The school is concerned to, and in the main achieves, a very conducive climate in which pupils thrive and this is strongly reflected in much of its work. As a consequence, by and large, pupils' needs are being met effectively and their response to school is very good. In these respects leadership and management are good. There is good morale among the staff and a common sense of purpose towards meeting the needs of pupils effectively. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher present good role models of high commitment to meeting pupils' needs and, in doing so, invest strongly in a positive partnership with parents.

42. However, there are educational priorities that are not entirely being given due weight. This is reflected in there being insufficient action on ensuring that, in the school overall, the curriculum is well balanced and coherent. While there has been much work in recent years to map out the learning opportunities for pupils and how these are to be provided, the results are uneven. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's curriculum as a whole has not been detailed and rigorous enough to judge where it is succeeding or failing to provide adequate opportunities for learning for all pupils. This undermines the high commitment towards pupils. Clearly, there are big successes in parts of what the school provides, for example, for deaf/blind pupils and, in most cases, pupils with autism. However, provision for literacy and numeracy is not effective and the provision for information and communication technology is inadequate. This affects how well the pupils achieve. Similarly, shortcomings in the further education department in relation to teaching and learning and meeting some students additional needs have not been understood and dealt with.

43. There is a sound day-to-day management structure. This has helped deal smoothly with the changes necessitated by the recent departure of a deputy headteacher and the difficulties in recruiting experienced teachers to replace those who have also left recently. Temporary and new teachers are supported well and, in the case of newly appointed teachers without previous experience in this field of special educational needs, they have become effective practitioners. The structure of the school's management is mostly clearly defined. The flow of communications between the senior management team and staff is satisfactory. However, the acting deputy headteacher's role is complicated at present by the necessity of carrying on being the teacher for a group of pupils with autism, the head of lower school and assistant headteacher. It is a measure of the acting deputy headteacher's strength in management that she works extremely hard and all of these demands are not having an adverse affect on the day-to-day running of the school.

44. Subject co-ordinators are performing a satisfactory role in managing their subjects. Their responsibilities have been re-defined recently in response to the need to improve monitoring of the breadth and quality of the curriculum as a whole. These responsibilities are clearly set out and there is regular time scheduled to fulfil them. Co-ordinators are expected to monitor and support colleagues teaching their subject, working alongside at least three teachers each term. Most, but not all, co-ordinators carry this out although their combined contributions towards the evaluation of the quality of the curriculum overall is insufficient. At the moment, there is not an effective senior management role to ensure subject co-ordinators are well-focused in their monitoring and evaluation; equally, that the outcomes of the co-ordinators' scrutiny is brought together systematically at senior management level to provide the necessary overview of the success of the curriculum. In addition, there is not enough rigorous and regular observation of teaching carried out by the senior management team as a further check on the quality of teaching throughout the school.

45. The governors have limited time to fulfil their roles but are much committed to, and supportive of, the school. They are kept informed about the school's work through meetings and by governors visiting school on a regular basis. There are also staff representatives on governor's committees. The governors receive written reports from the headteacher and invite teachers to talk about their particular areas of work. This is complemented by some activities which have resulted in them taking a closer look at aspects of the school's work. For example, the chair of the curriculum committee has examined pupils' work and evaluated their progress against the targets on their individual education plans. However, what is gathered by governors in these various ways is restricted by the lack of information due to the school's limited monitoring and evaluation.

46. The development of the school's resources, in particular, by careful planning of its income, is very good. Its income is slightly higher than average for similar schools and the amount of unspent money at the end of financial years is well within acceptable margins. The school is good at ensuring it gets best value from its purchases. As far as possible, it applies the principles of best value, looking for competitive prices and the best contractual deals. There is very little data available to make useful comparisons in spending with similar schools. The budget is planned in detail each year and decisions making is shared between senior staff and the governor's finance committee. The number of pupils in many of the class groups is higher than the average for this type of school because the number of teachers is low, although any increase is currently hindered by a lack of space to accommodate extra class groups. There is continual pressure for more places and numbers have grown from 78 at the time of the last inspection to the current 107. While more rooms were built in the past, continued increases in pupil numbers and the range of their needs ensure space remains tight. However, teaching is effective and pupils are very well supported by classroom assistants. The support given mostly offsets the adverse effects of limited space and numbers of staff. A further building programme is scheduled to begin almost immediately. This will replace the further education department's poor accommodation, improve the swimming pool, storage space and expand classroom space. The school, supported by parents, friends, organisations and businesses in the local community, has been very successful in raising substantial sums of money as capital towards this building programme. Money has also been raised to pay for specialist sensory resources such as a light room.

47. The numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers, and support staff match the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum satisfactorily. There have been improvements since the last inspection. There is a strong commitment to continuing professional development and performance management. There have been some difficulties in attracting suitably qualified and experienced staff. The school has recognised this and has established induction procedures for all new staff. These procedures are efficient and go some way to relieve the earlier difficulties. Staff development is a strong feature. All members of support staff teams are well aware of the roles and responsibilities. These staff teams are critical to the development of all pupils.

48. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory for meeting the needs of the curriculum and the number of pupils. The hall is used well for a number of functions, including eating, music, physical education and the school productions. A number of specialist rooms support the curriculum, but there is no accommodation for science and this limits, in particular, the range of work higher attaining pupils do. The school premises are well cared for. The gardens and play areas are clean and well suited to the children's needs. Playground equipment is clean, colourful and safe. A very good range of sensory rooms is used extremely effectively. The swimming pool continues to be well used. Examples of pupils' work are displayed throughout the school; they illustrate high standards and pupils' pride in work. The accommodation for the further education department is poor and the school is aware of this. It is too small for the number of students and to match the demands of their

curriculum. The further education department is based in 'The Cottage', which is a bungalow within the school site. This accommodation reflects much of what is typical of a home environment and this is used to underpin the approach to preparing students for leaving school. However, the domestic nature of 'The Cottage' gets in the way of some activities. There is a lack of demarcated and suitable working areas in which lessons can take place.

49. Overall, the school has a satisfactory supply of resources for learning. Co-ordinators have organised these carefully into 'subject boxes' containing sufficient materials and equipment to meet teachers' general needs. The 'subject boxes' are well planned and manageable. All resources are well maintained, used imaginatively to encourage learning. There is a wide range of materials to aid the development of pupils' communication such as objects of reference to encourage basic responses, Picture Exchange Communication symbols and books. There is a good library and books are given to pupils to explore and read. This succeeds in developing their interest in words and writing. There is, in addition, a range of electronic switches for pupils to operate recorded responses or indicate their preferences.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to build upon, consolidate and accelerate the improvements made since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and the rest of the senior management team should:

- (1) Improve pupils' progress in information and communication technology and meet statutory requirements by:
 - i. The regular teaching of information and communication technology.
 - ii. Increasing the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching the subject across the curriculum.
 - iii. Ensuring there is a broad and balanced curriculum in place that meets the needs of all pupils.

See paragraphs: 1, 8, 62, 67, 76, 92, 95 and 96.

- (2) Improving the progress made by higher attaining students and those with additional needs and the quality of learning opportunities overall in the further education department by:
 - i. Ensuring the needs of all students are met effectively and that they all participate fully in the learning opportunities offered.
 - ii. Raising the expectations, challenge and pace in teaching.
 - iii. Planning the curriculum and lessons so that what the students will learn is clear and precise and it builds coherently upon what they have already achieved, particularly in the development of their basic skills.
 - iv. Ensuring the poor accommodation is replaced with provision suitable to match the demands of the curriculum.

See paragraphs: 1, 16, 18, 19, 22, 48, 63, 118, 119 and 120.

- (3) Making the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy across the curriculum consistent and effective.
- See paragraphs: 4, 5, 15, 17, 18, 42, 58 and 65.

- (4) Intensify the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by:
 - i. Undertaking a higher level and more regular observations of teaching.
 - ii. Developing further the scrutiny carried out by each subject co-ordinator so that their work is sufficiently rigorous, then bringing the outcomes of this together effectively at senior management and governor level in order to determine accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses.

See paragraphs: 42, 44 and 64.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	19	31	16	2	0	0
Percentage	5.6	26.4	43.0	22.2	2.8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.43

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.05

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	89	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: N – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.8
Average class size	9.5

Education support staff: N – Y14

Total number of education support staff	32
Total aggregate hours worked per week	901.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1194768
Total expenditure	1136700
Expenditure per pupil	10825
Balance brought forward from previous year	1086
Balance carried forward to next year	59154

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	13	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	65	30	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	37	0	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	30	15	12	24
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	26	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	87	13	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	65	30	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	74	26	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	21	7	7	24

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

51. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the provision for children at the Foundation Stage. Children in the Nursery and Reception year are placed in one of three mixed age class groups. One specialises in children with autism and another in pupils who are deaf/blind. Because of their severe learning difficulties, none of the children will reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. However, they make good progress towards their individual targets.

52. Teaching and learning is good, overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of children and a very good knowledge of the specific needs of deaf/blind children and those with autism. Teachers work closely with the learning support assistants to provide a good range of opportunities for learning and to provide a relaxed atmosphere in which children feel confident to try activities and to respond to challenges. They plan very carefully to ensure that children have opportunities to work towards their individual targets. Effective assessment procedures are in place, starting with a good history of how children have developed, together with a baseline assessment. Teachers monitor closely children's development and progress against their individual targets is regularly recorded.

53. Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to develop good relationships with parents and carers, beginning with initial visits before their children's admission. Regular communication with parents takes the form of home school diaries, regular telephone calls and home visits, in addition to review meetings. This partnership further enhances learning opportunities for children. A commercial curriculum scheme especially designed for children with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, together with the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage are used to plan learning opportunities. This is satisfactory overall, but they are not yet in the form of a coherent plan of what children should be taught. This takes away from the breadth of learning opportunities and, in some areas of learning, reduces the good progress children often make elsewhere.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Children make good progress and teaching is good. The ethos of the classes provides pupils with a sense of security and they develop confidence in adults. They are learning there is a structure to the school day and that there are routines and this is reinforced by activities being named and symbols for the day's activities put on a board. These are then used throughout the day to reinforce changes in activity. For children with the most significant needs, objects of reference are used to signal different activities, which help them to understand changes. Relationships with adults are very good and the children respond well to their encouragement. The teaching of personal and social development is good. Adults provide a variety of opportunities for personal development that are appropriate to the needs of the children. Staff praise and encourage children and positive attitudes are consistently reinforced. Teachers and learning support assistants explain clearly the difference between right and wrong and, as a result, behaviour is usually very good. For children who have difficulty managing their behaviour, as in the case of those with autism, teachers have good strategies for helping them settle by providing secluded working areas and appropriate individual activities.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Children make good progress in developing language and communication skills. Teaching is good and they have many good learning opportunities during the day to develop language and communication. Children are beginning to listen well to adults and to respond by word, gesture, touch, smile or eye pointing. At snack time, they are encouraged to indicate whether they would like a drink or a biscuit and many respond either verbally or by using the Picture Exchange Communication System. Adults support the development of language as they involve children in activities, extending vocabulary and encouraging pupils to communicate in an appropriate way. Some children show an interest in looking at books and in listening to stories. Children with more significant needs respond well, as their understanding of stories is helped by a variety of sensory stimuli, for example, the story of the Nativity was illustrated by the use of items such as a doll, hay, and a fleece. Some children match the letters in their names and begin to make marks on paper as a pre-writing skill; they draw lines and patterns from left to right across the page.

Mathematical development

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress in acquiring mathematical skills. Individual sessions include different activities to reinforce ideas such as number, shape, and capacity, for example, pupils match numbers and then learn to count to 3, 5 or 10. They match colours and shapes. There are mathematics activities throughout the day, for example, sequencing the day's activities. Learning in mathematics is well supported by the use of counting rhymes and songs, which help children to remember the numbers and make the learning an enjoyable experience

Knowledge and understanding of the world

57. Teaching is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress in this area. Knowledge and understanding of the world develop through a variety of practical experiences, which are often linked to creative activities, for example, producing prints of fruit and vegetables. Children sing songs, which focus, for example, on parts of the body and developing knowledge of these. They are beginning to use the computer, mainly for programs where children make things happen by pressing a switch such as to develop knowledge of colours, or to reinforce the use of signs. Some operate remote control cars. Use is made of electronic switches to enable communication, for example, some children have learned to operate these switches and respond a "*good morning*" greeting.

Physical development

58. Teaching is good and children make good progress in their physical development. They benefit from well-equipped areas for outdoor play, the use of the hall, a soft play area and sensory rooms. They develop balance, movement and manipulation skills; for example, some track lights and objects in the sensory rooms while others reach out and press a switch. In the soft play area, children experiment with a range of movements and others roll over and tolerate lying across a wedge. Outside play and physical education sessions give opportunities for children to jump, crawl, slide and climb as appropriate to their physical abilities. Many develop confidence in the use of the swimming pool, for example, floating with the help of an adult or using armbands. Finer manipulation skills develop through activities such as threading cotton reels and playing with construction toys.

Creative development

59. Teaching is satisfactory and children make sound progress in creative development, having reasonable opportunities to work with different media. With help they make Christmas cards using hand prints, and decorations from rolling shapes in paint and glitter. They join in activities such as printing with sponge shapes and making collages from tissue paper. They roll out soft modelling compound and some try to make specific shapes. Some have contributed to making a display about the Nativity. Children participate enthusiastically in music, learning to listen and learning that sounds can be slow and fast, loud and soft. They enjoy playing bells and tambourines, and a few are beginning to understand rhythm. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond by, for example, tapping when music is played or by attempting to make sounds. Singing happens on a number of occasions throughout the day, for example, when pupils are getting ready for lunch. Interactive music in the class of deaf/blind pupils is of a very high quality and the children in that class are beginning to anticipate the sensory experiences, which link to particular pieces of music.

ENGLISH

60. Pupils throughout the school achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in the specialist groups for the deaf/blind and those with autism are achieving very well because teaching and learning are consistently very good. Overall, the approach to literacy in the few English lessons timetabled has had a positive effect on teaching and learning and here pupils begin to make good progress towards the literacy targets. However, the amount of English teaching is too limited and the promotion of literacy through other lessons and activities is less effective and unsatisfactory overall. The progress of students in the further education department is also unsatisfactory. They do not get enough specific teaching of literacy.

61. Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills through the use of language, sign language, symbols and objects. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils use one and two word answers to questions on what they are reading. Lower attaining pupils make basic communications by using eye contact. Nearly all pupils respond well to hearing their own name. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils use vocabulary well and are encouraged to discuss their own needs and express opinions when necessary. For instance, when discussing *The Snowman*, one boy commented that: *"The best place to go for snow is Antarctica"*. Another pupil used the word 'melt' to describe what happened to snow when the temperature goes up. Pupils throughout the school continue to develop their language skills through a range of experiences. They respond in different ways; some use pictures or symbols, while others sign or use spoken language. They understand the routines of the classroom and express choices and preferences.

62. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading. Throughout the school, those pupils who have very limited communication skills learn through a variety of approaches, such as sign language and symbols, which helps them find and match words and read their class timetable. Higher attaining pupils use picture as a clue and the meaning in sentences to decipher unfamiliar words correctly. They recognise words with the initial 's' sound from a Christmas text such as 'sleigh', 'snore', and 'Santa'. Pupils enjoy stories. They have an interest in books, learn to talk about the pictures and put pictures in the right order to retell a familiar story. For instance, the story of *The Enormous Turnip* was brought to life by the teacher using a variety of sensory artefacts for two Year 8 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Because of this variety of approaches, higher attaining pupils recognise their name. They read texts with varying degrees of difficulty, for instance, *Fantastic Mr Fox* and others read simpler texts. Because there is a structured approach to the teaching of reading, including using the sounds of letters to put together a word, many pupils, by the end of Year 9, read simple texts accurately and with understanding. By the end of Year 11, pupils

consider the content of 'A Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens and recognise the adjectives describing Scrooge as "unfriendly" and "rich" and Bob Cratchit as "poor" and "cold".

63. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing. They use a variety of appropriate strategies including overwriting and copying. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 underwrite successfully, and some, with help, use simple punctuation. A computer program, which uses symbols, helps pupils to write poetry such as 'There are rockets whooshing/they go round and bang like stars'. Tasks effectively reinforce spelling and vocabulary work. Alphabet games help pupils learn letter sounds. Higher attaining pupils blend single sounds to write simple words. Less able pupils, when reading familiar books with support staff, point to relevant pictures and sentences. The soft play and light rooms stimulate responses and pupils show enjoyment and indicate preferences well during these sessions. In the best lessons, well-structured activities mean that pupils are engaged in their tasks and are challenged to write simple sentences independently, re-telling stories or writing information such as their news. Other activities include, sequencing stories, such as 'The Snowman' and identifying rhyming words. Higher attaining pupils spell regular three-letter words accurately and some are using capital letters and full stops. Relationships are very good in all classes and this contributes to the good management of the pupils.

64. From the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils use the computer to copy their own work for display; they add missing punctuation to short pieces of text and can spell simple two syllable words correctly. Some Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of sequencing. They use a dictionary and express likes and dislikes, for example, "He likes Big Macs and really cold cokes". They write simple sentences independently, either with a pencil or on the keyboard. Their writing is generally neat and easy to read. Good strategies help pupils find success as, for example, when work is broken down into small steps, and adults support pupils by drawing lines, putting dots where they should begin, and by forming the beginning of words for them. Although information communication technology is underused, when it is, pupils write in symbols and text. Currently, there are no opportunities for pupils in Year 10 and 11 to gain accreditation in English.

65. Teaching and learning in the few English lessons taking place is good. Teachers plan well and are clear on what they want pupils to learn. Teachers in these lessons are skilled in the use of different strategies to support literacy. They plan work to suit individual needs and they use resources in an imaginative way. This helps to motivate pupils and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment. Pupils respond well in lessons and they often share and take turns. Both teachers and their classroom assistants work well to draw responses from pupils by using appropriate language and signing. Teachers, helped by the learning support assistants, provide interesting and stimulating activities that motivate. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher exploited the pupils own experience well by using the portrait photographs of other pupils to focus on their names. Teachers use questions very well to improve speaking and listening skills and to encourage participation. Teachers and classroom assistants know and manage their pupils well. They use effective strategies in dealing with those pupils whose behaviour is sometimes challenging and are, therefore, able to maintain the flow of the lesson. Relationships are strong and play a positive part in the quality of learning in English. Although there is good progress in most lessons, in the further education department work is not challenging enough and not all opportunities are taken to extend students' literacy skills. Overall, there is insufficient use of computers to support learning.

66. The co-ordinator is relatively new and manages the subject satisfactorily. The development of English so far reflects a clear vision and an effective subject development plan. This has led to satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. However, although the co-ordinator has carried out monitoring of literacy across the

curriculum, this has not been thorough enough to detect the inadequacy in the overall provision for English and the inconsistency in the promotion of pupils' literacy in other subjects and activities. The use of assessment procedures is developing well and is improving the tracking of pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory and there is a well-presented library, which has a positive impact on learning.

MATHEMATICS

67. Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils have only two discrete mathematics lessons each week and, while they often achieve well in these lessons, they are not engaging in enough mathematical activities through the week to make anything better than satisfactory progress. While other subjects are expected to make a significant contribution to the teaching of numeracy this is often not effective in practice because teachers are not always planning in enough detail how and what they will teach of numeracy through their classroom activities. In effect, the overall planning for promoting pupils' competence in number is not co-ordinated successfully. There is an inadequate overview of how well pupils learn numeracy and other mathematical skills to show if the school's arrangements for providing mathematics is effective.

68. By the end of Year 2, in the few lessons taking place, pupils acquire early mathematical vocabulary, such as *'big'* and *'small'*, and knowledge of number and shape. Higher attaining pupils, for example, count to 20 and do simple addition sums involving two single digit numbers. They match different shapes and colours and some match numbers in the written form to the relevant digit. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils improve their addition skills so that, by the end of Year 6, they add together two digits mentally and higher attaining pupils know the term 'double' and double a single digit number mentally. These pupils read an analogue clock accurately for the hour and half past the hour, identify different coins and choose the correct coins to make a specified amount.

69. Between Years 7 and 11, pupils have opportunities to apply their knowledge through simple problem solving activities associated with everyday events. Higher attaining pupils, by the end of Year 9, solve problems of the nature *'if a drink costs 3p and you have 5p, how much change will you get?'* They estimate and measure, recording their measurements using the correct units. Pupils handle data in different ways, such as drawing bar charts based on the number of letters in classmates' names. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 display information as bar charts but they also carry out simple mathematical investigations. For example, they throw dice, add the numbers and tally the totals, then representing this information graphically. While this is one area in which pupils could use information and communication technology, this is not promoted adequately. They name different two-dimensional shapes and in some cases three-dimensional ones, counting and recording the number of sides and corners. Students in the further education department concentrate on the use of mathematics in daily life satisfactorily so that those who are higher attaining use money to make purchases in the supermarket, weigh and measure these items when cooking.

70. The quality of teaching in the few lessons of mathematics timetabled is satisfactory overall, although it is good in Years 7 to 11. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils and their needs and relationships are very good. They also work well as teams so that all adults have a clear understanding of their roles. Consequently, classrooms are generally well organised and pupils are well managed. Pupils respond very positively in these situations, displaying a good attitude to their work and behaving very well. When teaching is good, pupils take part in activities that match their needs very well, presenting a level of challenge that requires them to apply their knowledge and understanding from what they have already learnt. This feature of learning was evident in a class of Year 10 and 11 pupils who

did work associated with the theme of 'A Christmas Carol', although all the number and data handling tasks were applications of earlier work. Teachers arrange their pupils into suitable smaller groups and provide each group with carefully chosen activities that offer a suitable level of challenge. As a result, pupils have good knowledge of their own learning and work co-operatively. Simple, but effective resources support this learning so that the teacher is able to use the tasks as an opportunity to assess pupils' understanding through skilful questioning.

71. The school has made a satisfactory response to the findings of the previous inspection. The quality and range of resources have improved and the subject co-ordinator now monitors the quality of teaching in the subject. However, the issues associated with amount of time given to teaching mathematics have not been addressed and the contribution of other subjects to pupils' competence in the use of number is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

72. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils identify sounds from unseen sources and describe the sounds as loud or quiet. They develop their awareness of parts of the body when singing, 'I have a body' and blink their eyes or clap hands at the correct time. Pupils with autism explore likes and dislikes among textures and sounds. They actively make choices between a wide range of sensory experiences, which helps them become aware of their bodies and of differences in materials. All pupils take part in planting bulbs, seeds, and experience the growth of plants from these. The most able pupils record their findings in simple drawings.

73. By the end of Year 6, pupils use their knowledge of growth in plants to develop their understanding of food. The most able consider healthy diets and draw 'something for tea'. Deaf/blind pupils and those with multiple and profound learning difficulties, who are taught using a sensory curriculum, increase their awareness of sound by using vibrating resonance boards. These pupils also experience the effects caused by operating simple switches. Pupils' responses to the effects mark their increasing development. In the sensory rooms, deaf/blind pupils experience light and dark. They also develop the awareness and skill to make their own preferences between two items. Higher attaining pupils work with light and they understand that light does not always pass through materials. When this happens, they know that shadows form.

74. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils observe and record their findings when working on the effects of electricity. They know how electric power is stored and how to switch on the electricity. From what they have observed, pupils go on to discuss the uses of electricity in the classroom. Pupils make static electricity by causing friction between two materials. They use writing skills to label diagrams. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience a range of tastes, scents and textures when involved in grating and slicing fruit. They also have the opportunity to make dough and help to bake it. They choose their favoured fruits and they report their preferences to the group at the end of the lesson. Pupils with autism, who are higher attaining, carry out safe experiments on acids and alkalis. They use scientific vocabulary well and describe what happens when acids, alkalis and indicators are mixed. These pupils understand some everyday examples of the use of indicators in the school swimming pool. They know that the chlorine could sting their eyes if not treated.

75. By the end of Year 11, pupils use many skills to focus on plants and growth, for example, they prepare the soil, plant the hyacinth bulbs and observe how they develop into plants and flowers. They understand the plant's need for light. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use sensory rooms to experience a wider range of sounds and

lighting. They use mirrors and vocalise responses to light reflected. Pupils with autism follow simple investigations on electricity. They know it can be stored in batteries and they complete a circuit containing buzzers and switches. They understand the use of electricity in shops and home appliances and use this understanding in cooking. In lessons shared with food technology, pupils weigh ingredients using balances. They understand that materials change when heated, as in cooking a plum pudding.

76. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The most successful teaching occurs when teachers understand their pupils' abilities and they set targets that will challenge them. Teachers and classroom assistants encourage pupils to try hard and praise them when they do. In all science lessons, teachers are aware of the need for safety and include warnings and advice in their plans. By making simple observations, teachers reinforce pupils' understanding of basic health and safety. Pupils wait safely during experiments and look after the equipment most carefully. In one experiment, pupils handled beakers and test tubes with great delicacy. In most lessons, teachers bring new aspects to pupils' lives such as, when exploring electricity, pupils learned how they could move items with a balloon that they rubbed on the carpet or on their clothes to make static electricity. They were further intrigued in another lesson by the colour extracted from a red cabbage.

77. The choice of interesting activities and resources enriches pupils' learning. They gather new facts and use scientific vocabulary to record and discuss their findings. Relationships are good and pupils and staff work well together. Pupils help each other and are delighted when their friends do well. The work classroom assistants do to support pupils is crucial to their progress. They involve and engage pupils through an effective team-working approach, which enables them to consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills. However, time is lost in some lessons when pupils cause disruption and the teacher or another adult does not deal with this promptly. In the most successful lessons, expectations are high, for example, in a sensory activity, deaf/blind pupils experience stimuli from sounds and touches and they try their utmost to reach the sources. Lessons are well prepared and include new material to extend learning. They also contain familiar activities such as looking after bulbs when pupils learn that plants need food.

78. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Improvement in science since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has addressed the key issues adequately, for example, the science curriculum documentation now targets better the needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with severe learning difficulties. The co-ordinators' expectations are high and she appreciates the need for pupils to be challenged at every stage. She has begun to observe other colleagues teach science and is evaluating the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the science curriculum. Resources are satisfactory and used imaginatively. There is no room dedicated for teaching science and suitable as a laboratory for experimentation and as the subject is taught in each classroom this leads to problems in storing science resources. Pupils, particularly higher attaining ones, carry out a limited range of scientific investigation and experiment but more challenging work is difficult without a science laboratory. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped; there were very few examples of technology in lessons outside of the sensory rooms.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Overall, pupils achieve well in art because the work they are given is usually matched well by teachers to their different levels of attainment and special educational needs. Teachers are adapting their art lessons effectively to provide relevant learning opportunities for pupils with the most complex needs and whose attainment is very low as a result. The group of deaf/blind pupils, for example, who range from Reception to Year 9 achieve very well

towards their individual targets. Others are doing equally well at ensuring that higher attaining pupils engage in knowing and understanding artists and their work including diverse art forms from around the world. There is a sound teaching plan in development for art, covering the whole school, which most teachers build upon and use effectively. For example, the painting activity planned for a Year 5 group containing pupils with autism is further refined to address their tactile awareness, manipulation skills and knowledge of colours, size and shape.

80. By the end of Year 2, pupils actively explore materials by holding, looking, feeling and manipulating them with fingers and hands. They are fascinated, for example, by shaving foam spraying from its aerosol can into a firm white blob and are attracted by its fragrance. This leads them to spreading it excitedly in swirls across the table. They work with the foam for a long time and, in the enjoyment of this, interact and share with each other. A boy with autism, who finds it very difficult to be involved in activities, overcame this for a while and played with the foam alongside others. A few higher attaining pupils use their fingers to draw letter shapes, zig-zag lines and circles. By the end of Year 6, pupils continue through art to improve well their physical skills, social and personal development. A group of pupils with autism by-pass their difficulties of working together and share in the excitement of creating large scale finger and hand paintings. This generates a high level of talking with each other. They also work together around a large table enjoying carving into bars of soap with a teaspoon. They concentrate hard on holding and manipulating their teaspoons. Higher attaining pupils have an idea to create neat holes through their bars and they persevere in achieving this.

81. By the end of Year 9, pupils make choices of materials and creative processes, for example, whether to paint or construct a collage. Most know the primary colours and spread paint neatly with a brush. One used paints to make a recognisable image of a sunflower showing petals, seed head, stem and leaves. Higher attaining pupils cut around outlines on paper or fabric as well as stitching and sewing using a needle and thread. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils make observational drawings. One girl, for example, drew an outline of an African mask, achieving a good representation of its facial designs including the corrie shells used to decorate its edges. Pupils developed ceramic mask designs from their drawings, using African patterns and colours to decorate their work. Students in the further education department carry on similar work as in Years 10 and 11 and achieve satisfactorily in making ceramic pieces from digital photographs of their own houses.

82. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Most teachers plan art lessons well and they meet the needs of pupils effectively. Teachers are not expert in art but they know their pupils very well, clarify relevant learning objectives and apply these effectively to art activities. Therefore, that which pupils are given to do builds well on what they have already learnt, especially in developing important basic skills. This is very good in relation to deaf/blind pupils and pupils with autism in Year 5. For example, in art lessons for deaf/blind pupils their work is focused very sharply on developing residual vision and reducing any aversion to handling or exploring different substances such as wet or sticky materials. Pupils enjoy exploring the feel of materials with their fingers and one learns to stir with a spoon. There is a similar effective emphasis on tackling pupils' autism through making art a social and communicative activity. Pupils learn effectively to collaborate and talk about what they are doing. In starting out in such a clear way, teaching uses effective approaches and good choices of resources to support pupils' learning. Shaving foam and bars of soap turn out to be simple, cheap and extremely effective mediums for getting pupils physically active, participating and communicating. The good detail of teachers' planning ensures productive lesson time and supports classroom assistants understanding of the objectives for pupils and aiding their learning. Teachers and assistants usually manage pupils well, applying clearly articulated strategies to manage pupils' behaviour. However, teachers who lack experience do not have effective strategies for dealing with a few pupils' resistance to

participating in lessons. This also affected some students in the further education department.

83. The leadership and management of art are good. The co-ordinator benefits from having time to monitor and develop the subject. The shortcomings in art identified in the last inspection have been addressed successfully, for example, through broadening the curriculum so that higher attaining pupils learn about art and artists and get ideas from this source for their own work. Together with pupils making better progress and teaching being more consistently good, the improvement since the last inspection is good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design technology. By the end of Year 2, in food studies, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties watch their teachers cooking muffins, tracking the activity their eyes. Pupils experience a range of tastes and indicate whether vegetables are cooked or not. With help from support staff, they beat an egg. Other pupils, who are more able, examine the mince pies and predict what might be inside. These pupils know the name for a knife as well as being able to see differences in pastry. They explore the ingredients of the mince pies and decide which is best. By the end of Year 6, pupils use simple tools like knives and graters when preparing food and illustrate differences in smell and formation. For example, they realise oranges and pineapples produce exciting textures and aromas. By the end of Year 9, pupils continue to cook and they know what healthy foods are. In Year 11, pupils carry out measurements, weighing with a balance scale when preparing the ingredients of a plum pudding. They use taste and smell to evaluate their work and use words and symbols in preparing the recipe. Their manipulation skills are sufficient for them to pour, mix and stir ingredients. When preparing the food, pupils match ingredients with recipes and are aware of the processes involved in cooking.

85. In design technology, by the end of Year 2, pupils experience a range of textures and patterns. They complete wooden puzzles. They use glue to assemble the parts making up a furry animal toy. Pupils with autism collect material from the playground to help to make models. The most able pupils know how to name body parts for models. They sort items by colour and match patterns. By the end of Year 6, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use the sensory rooms to experience light and dark. They find toys using switches and colour tubes. Pupils that are more able play with toys and connect track together for cars and trains. In lessons about Christmas, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties hold brushes whilst the Nativity scene is painted and glued. Pupils with autism complete a model of Santa Claus or a figure for the stable, by cutting and sticking card.

86. By the end of Year 9, deaf/blind pupils try hard to grasp and to look. They take part in a survey about Christmas carried out by pupils in Year 11. In Year 9, pupils that are more able make a bird table; they use sandpaper and screwdrivers safely. Using their skills in construction, they make a home for worms- a wormery. The most able investigate how it is possible to combine materials, design and make a product. Every pupil considers the use of materials when looking at costumes from the East. By the time they are in Year 11, pupils design wooden troughs for the garden. They take part in discussion about Christmas food. The most able group of pupils took part in a challenge to design and build a structure to bear their weight from long, thin pieces of wood and they met this challenge successfully.

87. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. In food technology it is good with some very good elements. Teachers plan well and meet the needs of every pupil. Lessons are organised sufficiently and staff are deployed effectively so there is enough time for pupils to complete their work. Teachers use learning resources well to enrich their teaching. Lessons proceed at a good pace and maintain the interest of pupils. Teachers set high expectations in

the most successful lessons; they encourage pupils to do their best and, as relationships and behaviour are good, learning follows with no interference or disruption. The teaching based on the sensory curriculum is very good. It is individual and detailed. Learning objectives are clear to staff and pupils. Basic skills are reinforced through daily programmes well matched to pupils' ability and needs. Good teaching in other classes leads to pupils learning well. They respond to praise and they develop skills in maintaining food hygiene and carrying out preparations. For example, in working on preparing for Christmas, pupils discussed fruits and where they originate, as well as looking at and matching ingredients. Teaching is least effective where behaviour problems are not addressed and disruption reduces the teaching time.

88. The subject is co-ordinated satisfactorily. There have been satisfactory improvements in the curriculum and in teaching since the last inspection. The co-ordinator does not visit lessons and check on the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology. Links with other schools and the local college enhance the design and technology curriculum. For example, a group of higher attaining pupils recently took part in a design challenge, which was a good initiative. However, there are no opportunities at present for these pupils to follow an accredited course in design and technology. The co-ordinator has not developed the use of information technology and, as a result, learning opportunities are missed.

HUMANITIES

89. Overall, progress in humanities is satisfactory. Within humanities, history and geography are taught in turn every other term. There are separate history and geography lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 11 and for students in the further education department. The subjects are taught through an integrated topic approach for pupils in Years 1 to 6. No teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11 or the further education department, therefore judgements on these pupils' and students' achievements are based on the evidence from their work, their teachers' records and their annual reports.

90. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a sense of the passing of time through celebrating the birthdays of those in their group and they show awareness of ageing by examining photographs of themselves and their families over time. They further develop understanding by sequencing events such as festivals, birthdays and holidays. Pupils begin to show an appreciation of the effects of war by looking at Remembrance Day and displaying their work surrounded by poppies. They begin to look at landscapes, identifying and associating colours for land and sky, which is further supported by their artwork. Pupils begin to develop mapping skills by locating objects around the room and they use compass points accurately to identify the direction of these.

91. Pupils continue with the thematic approach up to the end of Year 6, by looking at changes in the Twentieth Century. For example, in history they look at how the Victorians celebrated Christmas and compare the foods eaten then and now. Pupils classify a range of artefacts into old and new, such as fashions and toys, using photographs and actual objects. They begin to develop a sense of geographical location through simple mapping techniques. For example, pupils identify landmarks on maps and mark the course of a prescribed journey. They look at crops and seeds, or animals and their habitats, which links to their work in science. This is further supported through field trips to working farms.

92. By the end of Year 9, pupils develop an increasing awareness of British history through its national heroes such as Henry VIII and Lord Nelson. They recognise old and new items of household equipment, classifying these with matching cards. Trips to local museums and history video-recordings further support and reinforce their learning. They locate Chichester and their own towns and villages on a large-scale Ordnance Survey map. However, they cannot find Chichester in relation to the British Isles when given a smaller

scale map of the whole country. Nevertheless, pupils do recognise that 'blue' represents rivers, lakes and sea, and they can point to main roads and motorways.

93. Higher attaining pupils, by the end of Year 11 and in the further education department have an awareness of the wider world. For example, during Commonwealth week, they dressed up in the national costumes of Iran and Pakistan. Their visit to Brighton Museum reinforced their knowledge of the Dan people of Liberia, and they followed this up by making Liberian masks. In Year 11, pupils begin to look at life in Tudor England and a number of pupils made drawings and paintings of Queen Elizabeth I complete with neck ruff and ginger hair. They examine aspects of world cultures, for example, by looking at Chinese customs and locating China on a world map. This is linked well to religious education by introducing Buddhism and to mathematics by conducting a survey on where their footwear is made. In the further education department, students create a wall display of their home locations, using maps and photographs of their houses linked to a central map. This develops their awareness of how far they travel and where they live in relation to their school and college

94. The quality of teaching is good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons are well organised and balanced to include oral and practical work. The teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and levels of challenge are appropriately pitched to individual needs. For example, practical work is set in small groups run by the teacher and classroom assistants, which ensures that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very well catered for and fully included in lessons. In the best lessons, there is good attention to basic literacy skills through focused question and answer sessions, keyword vocabulary and, with older or more able pupils, opportunities for reading aloud. However, on occasions, more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and this sometimes leads to them becoming quickly bored and sometimes disobedient. Computers are not used to support learning in humanities, and this impacts on the pupils' overall progress. Behaviour management is mostly good, but there are occasions when disruptive behaviour goes unchecked and this detracts from the concentration of other pupils. Classroom assistants provide invaluable support, particularly in ensuring that pupils with severe and multiple difficulties gain as much as they can from the lesson. For example, when looking at maps in Year 9, the classroom assistant had a laminated copy for her pupil, or in Year 2, Christmas artefacts being used for the lesson were rubbed lightly against the pupil's skin to allow him to feel the material. Both academic and personal progress is monitored on a daily basis and sometimes includes photographic records.

95. The subject is well managed by two co-ordinators, each having a subject responsibility. The policy and long-term overview and work outlines have improved since the previous inspection, but short-term schemes of work are less well developed, particularly in the schemes of work for older pupils. These are unclear and there are no opportunities for external accreditation for more able pupils. Neither the subject, nor teaching is monitored, although co-ordinators do sample pupils' work, levelling these against National Curriculum P-levels. However, this information is not used to inform the development of the humanities curriculum.

96. There has been a satisfactory improvement in humanities since the last inspection. However, the use of computer technology to support learning is inadequate.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. The school's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. The school approaches provision in ICT primarily as an aid to enhancing pupils' communication rather than as a subject to be taught. Consequently, ICT is not

planned as a discrete subject and is intended to be taught through the subjects of the curriculum. However, the planning for this is inadequate and does not identify sufficient opportunities to promote pupils' ICT skills. As a result, the school is not meeting the statutory requirements for ICT, which is particularly the case for higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11, who, while capable, do not explore control mechanisms and have very limited planned opportunities to use devices such as the Internet and electronic mail.

98. Inadequacies in the school's provision for ICT are also evident in its lack of development in the more creative use of new technology. For example, there is no voice activated software used or no specialist keyboards or adaptations for specific needs. Simple programs where pupils select text or symbols to write with on the screen are not used to a sufficient extent. A writing-with-symbols program is available, but this is underused. Consequently, there is minimal work involving ICT and it is underdeveloped across the curriculum. Physical education is an exception where it is employed in recording pupils' performance using a digital camera so that they can work on improvements.

99. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning, but there was some limited evidence available of what pupils know, understand and can do. Overall, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. In Years 1 to 6, pupils use switches to respond to greetings during registration and to operate equipment such as fibre optics and the bubble tube in the sensory room. They use a touch sensitive screen and tracker ball to activate programs and higher attaining pupils have sufficient mouse control to build objects on the screen. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils copy-type their work with prompts and support. They use a digital camera to take portraits and edit these using a computer before printing them. Students in the further education department have used a digital camera to take photographs of their homes, using them for a display that links these images with a map of where the students live.

100. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinator replacing the one who left recently. The importance of the need for the school to develop the subject has not been recognised fully, even though an up-to-date subject policy is in place, staff have received training and are becoming more confident and competent users of ICT. There is an effective policy in place regarding acceptable use of the Internet and the school has sought parents' consent for their children to use this facility.

MUSIC

101. Pupils' achievement in music is good. This is a similar picture to that seen at the last inspection. Younger pupils respond well to action songs and make some sounds with their chosen instruments by banging and shaking these. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to anticipate sensory experiences as they listen to music, for example, knowing which music will be accompanied by being touched with a feather. As they get older, pupils take part in action songs, singing and copying actions. Most try to sustain a beat as they clap hands or play a drum or tambourine. They develop an understanding of playing loudly or softly, quickly or slowly. Some anticipate their turn when playing in a group. Less able pupils begin to show an awareness of when music stops and starts. Older pupils take part in singing, recalling some of the words of familiar songs. They sing enthusiastically and several sustain the melody. They take turns in playing instruments. Pupils who are more able are beginning to understand various forms of notation, for example, when the teacher wrote some letters on the board, one pupil indicated that these were the first few notes of "Jingle Bells". Other pupils follow a picture-based score and, last year, in special project for more able pupils, they composed and recorded their own music.

102. The teaching of music is good overall. In the best lessons good use is made of a variety of instruments and the teacher ensures that all pupils have the opportunity of playing these. Wherever possible, pupils are given the choice of the instrument they would like to play. Lively presentation by the teacher catches pupils' interest and they respond enthusiastically to the different activities. Pupils receive encouragement and praise for their efforts and respond by trying hard, taking great pleasure in their success. Teachers discuss with pupils how to improve their singing or playing. Less successful teaching is seen when planning does not take account of the needs of all pupils. In some cases pupils are given the opportunity to sing, but there is no development of musical understanding.

103. Music plays an important part in the wider curriculum. Many aspects of pupils' learning are accompanied by music. This makes a considerable contribution to the good progress pupils make. For example, pupils sing good morning and goodbye songs. Action rhymes are used to help pupils develop number skills and many respond to these with enjoyment. Pupils sing at special services for occasions such as at Christmas. The curriculum is well supported by a number of visiting musicians who widen pupils' experiences of the subject. "Live Music Now" visits at least once term and groups specialising in particular instruments or types of music, such as vocal music and African drumming raise pupils' awareness of different types of music. Pupils have visited theatres to see musical productions such as *Starlight Express* and *Joseph*, which further widens their experience.

104. There is no music co-ordinator at present, although there is a temporary appointment beginning next term. The previous co-ordinator ensured there was a focus on music in each of the curriculum topics followed by teachers. Overall, planning for the curriculum is based appropriately on a commercial scheme designed for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties together with the National Curriculum for more able pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Progress in physical education is good overall. It was only possible to observe swimming in Years 1 to 6. Judgements are, therefore, based on teachers' records of pupils' achievements in Years 1 to 6 and their progress is satisfactory. Pupils benefit from working on individual targets within their education plans, which are regularly assessed. The introduction of *Rebound Therapy* to the curriculum has had a very positive impact on promoting the communication of pupils who are deaf/blind and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Overall, it enhances the provision for these pupils very well.

106. The long-term plan for this subject ensures that pupils have the opportunity to make progress in all areas of physical education. Younger pupils with movement difficulties pull across the floor to reach a box and can kneel to reach toys. During *Rebound Therapy* they listen to instructions and perform actions at a level appropriate to their needs. In Years 7 to 11, pupils' progress is good, overall. Some higher attaining pupils make good progress in gymnastics and dance. For instance, in one lesson, all pupils were confident to attempt simple balancing activities with support and some higher attaining pupils put together a simple sequence of movements including running, balancing and rolling. They listen carefully and perform the actions of gesture and travel. Another group of older pupils become absorbed in a lesson where they listen to African dance music and respond well to instruments, developing a suitable sequence of movements to match the tempo. A country-dance session is used well enabling some pupils to anticipate movements using the music as a cue. Lower attaining pupils are dependent on adult support in order to achieve success.

107. Progress in swimming is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in Years 7 to 11. Lower attaining pupils co-operate well with moving and handling techniques in the pool. Higher attaining pupils move through the water using a buoyancy aid and some have the

confidence to float. Lower attaining pupils have confidence given adult support and show progress in body position and basic technique. Some higher attaining pupils have developed arm and leg actions enabling them to propel themselves through the water, but the teaching of skills is less well developed for younger pupils. Most of the pupils thoroughly enjoy being in the swimming pool. They enter shallow water in a safe manner and move across the pool with the surface of the water at shoulder level. Most of them push and glide from the poolside and float for up to ten seconds. Higher achieving pupils swim longer distances, using a variety of strokes.

108. Teaching is good in the upper school and satisfactory in the lower school. The best teaching was seen in the gym where the very good subject knowledge of the teacher resulted in good “on the spot” assessment of technique. Very good use was made of a digital camera and computer to give pupils instant feedback on their technique. Pupils respond very well to this clear feedback and work very hard to improve their style. The teachers in the upper school have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and constantly challenge them by varying the activities aimed at helping them perform a series of movements. As a result, pupils work hard and are proud of what they achieve in lessons.

109. By the time pupils leave school most participate in a variety of games and sports, such as football, circuit-training and athletics, including running, jumping and throwing. They take part in local and regional sports events. Older pupils take part in a residential trip where they are introduced to a wide selection of other leisure activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, canoeing and walking. There are also appropriate opportunities for students in the further education department to learn leisure sports such as cycling. Overall, these opportunities make a significant contribution to learning.

110. The management of physical education is very good and it is led very well by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who has a clear vision for the development of the subject. The curriculum is broad and balanced, enriched by the *Rebound Therapy* provision and a good selection of outside activities. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the results obtained are used to guide teaching and planning. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. The pool is a satisfactory and well used provision, but changing facilities are poor. However, the new building programme should enhance the accommodation considerably. All staff give due attention to health and safety requirements in the subject. The previous inspection highlighted the lack of a policy and planning, this has now been resolved and teaching has improved. Learning resources are satisfactory and appropriately stored. Outside facilities in the playground are good and well used for a variety of physical activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision of religious education since the time of the last inspection when religious education was only taught in assemblies. There was no policy or plan of what pupils should learn. Religious education is currently taught by itself as well as the context of personal, social and health education. A long-term plan of what will be taught in religious education has been developed, which links to the locally agreed syllabus and is appropriate for the needs of the pupils. There is an intention to develop this long-term plan in detail.

112. Achievement of pupils in religious education is satisfactory overall. Because there has been no detailed plan for what pupils should be taught, learning opportunities are very variable and do not yet build on one another to ensure good progress.

113. By the end of Year 2, pupils show some knowledge of the story of Christmas, recognising some of the characters in the story, either from pictures or from artefacts. More able pupils recognise that ceremonies, such as marriages, often require special clothes. They learn about the Hindu festival of Holi and all pupils are helped to produce splatter paintings linked to this. Pupils work together to draw up a class prayer and some add the names of people who are special to them. By the end of Year 6, some pupils know that Diwali is a Hindu festival and all have had the opportunity to look at Hindu artefacts. When learning about Christmas, some talk about how it might feel if an angel appeared in the classroom. Others place characters in a crib as the story is told. By the end of Year 9, pupils have learnt about Harvest, Christmas, Easter and some saints' days. They talk about why people go to church. Pupils take part in music and drama activities that build on their experiences of the subject. Pupils recall the main events of Christmas and record these in appropriate ways, for example, by copying words, or selecting the words to write into sentences. By the end of Year 11, pupils show further knowledge of the story, some naming the gifts of the Three Wise Men and mentioning King Herod.

114. Teaching is good, overall, and some is very good. The best lessons teachers' plan well and meet the needs of the different pupils in the class effectively. Good questioning ensures that all pupils are involved in the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to think about religion, for example, considering how they might talk to Jesus today and one suggested that this could be through prayer. The teacher extended this well to talk about church as a place of prayer, which began the good preparation for a visit to church planned for the following week. Good use is made of a variety of artefacts to support learning, for example, the teacher showed pupils a Christingle and allowed them to hold and smell the different parts, while the meanings were explained. The teacher gave pupils good opportunities to show their knowledge in a variety of ways, for example, in painting. Where teaching is less successful, it is sometimes because there is insufficient use of artefacts to help pupils understand. On several occasions, there was insufficient time available to develop learning fully. In school assemblies, religious themes are sometimes reinforced by teachers, for example, the story of Christmas. Pupils take part in special services such as a carol service and a Remembrance Day service. Some have taken part in a theatre company production related to Easter.

115. The recently appointed co-ordinator, with the support of a colleague, is working hard to develop the new curriculum. Although the subject is now taught in all classes, the time allocated in some classes is very limited. There is as yet no developed system of assessment and recording and pupils are not measured against nationally recognised levels. A useful range of resources is being developed, including books, posters, videos and religious artefacts.

CITIZENSHIP

116. The school places a good emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education within the daily life of the school and in lessons. This is well embedded into the whole-school curriculum and endorses the aims of the school. With the introduction of citizenship and increased links with the local community, there is satisfactory improvement in the school's provision for personal, health and social education since the last inspection. There are appropriate guidelines for work on sex, drugs awareness and health education as well as self-care and self-respect. Provision for the teaching of citizenship is developing well within the personal, health and social education curriculum, and its impact is increasingly evident in the pupils' awareness of the wider world.

117. The quality of teaching of the personal, health and social education programme is good, for example, the daily snack-time provides good opportunities for developing personal

and social skills. In the best sessions, which are planned carefully, the pupils are well organised and there is good attention to safety rules, such as ensuring that all pupils are seated before the toaster is used. However, in some other sessions where there is little planning, the pupils are less well managed and allowed to wander aimlessly around the room. Very few of the discrete lessons in personal, health and social education were observed. However, the analyses of the pupils' work shows they make good progress overall. From Year 1, they gain a rudimentary knowledge of how their bodies work. By the end of Year 11, some pupils have a clear understanding of healthy eating and hygiene procedures.

118. Citizenship has recently been added to the curriculum and, as a result of this, the school has held democratic elections to select its School Council. All classes are actively represented in the preparation of the agenda and at the meetings, and this serves to engage pupils more effectively, because they see their personal concerns being considered. The pupils are very proud of their responsibilities and take great pleasure in describing their successes to date, such as modifying the school menu to getting the television aerial repaired. In the further education department, some students become involved with the local community, such as when helping to design, prepare and plant a garden.

119. Nevertheless, the real and positive outcomes of the provision for personal and social development are apparent throughout the life of the school. Pupils are courteous to visitors and meal times are pleasant social occasions. The positive relationships with staff, along with the personal, social and health education programme make a valuable contribution in helping pupils to become mature and sociable members of the school community. This is particularly so during the school Christmas production, where every pupil participated with genuine enthusiasm.

THE FURTHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

120. The aims of further education provision are broadly relevant to encouraging students' independence and giving them the knowledge and understanding to make informed choices. The curriculum intends to develop students' communication skills and promoting their skills in literacy and numeracy as well as encouraging self-help skills. However, there are some significant weaknesses in this provision, in particular, the lack of detail in planning and carrying out the curriculum. Overall quality and range of learning opportunities provided are unsatisfactory.

121. Students follow a suitable accredited course that concentrates on the areas of life skills, vocational studies, key skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Students generally achieve satisfactorily within each of the modules of study set out in this course. However, the timetable of activities is unevenly balanced and, as a consequence, students do not receive enough teaching focusing on developing their literacy, numeracy and skills in using information and communication technology. These shortcomings have an adverse effect on higher attaining students in particular and, overall, it is not an adequate preparation for adult life. The expectations set for these students and the challenges they face are not high enough. In addition, the achievement of students with additional special needs is unsatisfactory and they do not make adequate progress over time.

122. Most teaching is satisfactory and is good occasionally. In the best lessons, activities are planned well for the majority of students and, by using interesting resources, there is effective learning. Overall, relationships are good and the teacher and classroom assistants manage most students well. However, the strategies are inadequate for ensuring the inclusion of those students with additional needs in lessons. Although these students are very demanding and need managing with great care and skill, the school is not supporting their

learning sufficiently. Consequently, they remain largely as non-participants throughout the day. Lesson plans refer to cross-curricular links and promoting learning in a range of other subjects. However, the plans are not detailed enough to specify which particular skills and knowledge are to be promoted. They also do not detail sufficiently challenging work for higher attaining students.

123. There are good links with other educational establishments. Some students attend Chichester College each week where they follow link courses in a range of vocational areas and others go to Angel Nurseries for a combination of classroom-based activities and practical horticultural work. Local facilities and resources are used equally well. Visits to local markets and shops provide good opportunities for social development and for students to apply their knowledge in everyday situations, such as using money, and trips to places like the waste transfer station enhance students' understanding of recycling.

124. Leadership and management of the provision are unsatisfactory. Whilst there are overall aims for the provision, the co-ordinator has not translated these into a well-developed range of learning opportunities for students. The current accommodation for the further education department is poor. The school have been aware of this and have taken steps to provide a remedy through a building programme due to start in the next few weeks.