

INSPECTION REPORT

ST NICHOLAS SCHOOL

Chippenham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126552

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Dyer

Reporting inspector: Mr H J Phillips
16227

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th March 2003

Inspection number: 249424

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Malmesbury Road Chippenham Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN15 1QF
Telephone number:	(01249) 650435
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Phillip Cutcher
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16227	Mr H J Phillips	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements What should the school do to improve? Special educational needs
9079	Mr R Cottington	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19946	Mr R Baker	Team inspector	Citizenship Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Music Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
27058	Mrs K Cannon	Team inspector	Science History Modern foreign languages Personal, social and health education	How well is the school led and managed? English as additional language
22948	Mrs Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English Art Geography Vocational education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students? Equal opportunities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Nicholas School is a day Community Special School for pupils with special educational needs across an age range of 2 to 19 from the area of North and West Wiltshire. It was built in 1992 and provides facilities and accommodation purpose-built to meet the pupils' special educational needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and are identified as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The pupils are from almost entirely white British backgrounds. There are currently 69 pupils on roll, of whom more than two thirds are boys and approximately 20 per cent are entitled to free school meals.

The school has an agreed capacity for 60 pupils but with increasing demand on places, efforts have been made to accommodate and meet the needs of the younger pupils and enable most pupils to leave school at 16 years of age to take up placements at a local college of further education. Consequently, the present post-16 provision has been amalgamated into the Key Stage 4 'leavers class'.

Since the last inspection the school has undergone significant staff changes, particularly to the school's senior management, which was substantially disrupted by long-term illness of both headteacher and deputy. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2001 and since then a new management structure has been established.

The school aims to:

- provide a stimulating and supporting learning environment;
- celebrate individual achievements; and
- prepare pupils for life in the wider community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Nicholas school is a good school, with many very good features. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly during the last year, and the school has a very good capacity to improve further.

What the school does well

- The very good teaching.
- The excellent leadership of the school, which ensures a clear direction for school development and the commitment of all the staff to school improvement.
- The very good management of pupils.
- The excellent personal development of pupils and quality of relationships throughout the school.
- The very good links between staff and parents, which enable them to work in effective partnership.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

What could be improved

- The ratio of teachers to pupils.
- The adequacy and use of the accommodation to reduce overcrowding, improve pupils' access to practical activities and, as appropriate, meet the continuing educational needs of pupils post-16.
- The use of technology to further develop pupils' skills in ICT, communication and mobility.
- Flexibility in the timing of personal hygiene and therapy arrangements to minimise disruption to learning.
- Provision for extra curricular activities, accreditation and work experience.

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

Through its self-evaluation, the school has already identified the need for improving extra-curricular provision and also plans to make more use of technology to meet learning, communication and mobility needs. The school governors are particularly concerned about the school's capacity to meet the increasing demands for admissions related to the expanding residential developments within the school's catchment area, and the adequacy of the new building outlined in the feasibility study.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, very good improvements have been made since the last inspection.

Much effort has been put in to improve the quality of the school's curriculum so that it now meets with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Improving the planning for curriculum subjects has been managed systematically since the new headteacher was appointed and it is now very good in the majority of subjects.

The need to develop consistent assessment procedures, and to use assessment data to identify specific targets for individual pupils, has been very well addressed. Half-termly assessments are used very well to update pupils' individual education plans and the assessment data is collated and used effectively to evaluate overall provision. The school is now well placed to analyse this assessment information for identifying areas for improvement and setting whole-school targets for raising standards.

The school has fully addressed the previous un-met requirements regarding reporting to parents on pupils' attainment and progress, and in relation to teacher appraisal. Very good procedures are now in place for the performance management of staff and this results in well-considered provision to meet school and personal training needs. The annual reviews of provision to meet individual pupil needs are very thorough and the multidisciplinary contributions are well co-ordinated with the school's assessment and parental views to provide a cornerstone of the school's work.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 2	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	A	very good	A
reading	A	A	A	good	B
writing	B	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A		

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

Standards of attainment are very low in relation to national averages, but pupils' achievement in relation to their severe learning difficulties is good and often very good in educational development, and very good in their personal, social and emotional development.

A very good multi-sensory approach enables pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) to make good progress in the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They become increasingly responsive and interactive in their learning and aware and tolerant of new situations. They communicate their likes and dislikes and use simple touch-talkers to greet others and make statements about a preference. However, there is insufficient opportunity for them to further develop their alternative communication skills. They are involved in practical activities such as cooking but often have limited access to these activities because of a lack of suitably adapted or adjustable furniture and restricted space.

There have been good developments in the provision for pupils within the autistic spectrum which enable them to make good progress. They respond well to the encouraging approach to involve them in group

activities and become more interactive in one-to-one teaching sessions. Good use of photographs and symbols enables them to become more effective in communication and some more-able pupils achieve good basic reading and writing skills, become confident users of computers, and more independent in practical activity.

Pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) make mainly very good educational progress across the range of curriculum subjects and most become good listeners, confident speakers, and increasingly independent in practical activities. They make very good progress in personal and social development. By the time they leave school they achieve a very good level of social competence and have developed mature attitudes of care and concern for others. Through attending courses at the local college of further education, they become confident and prepared to move on and cope with the challenges of adult life. However, at the time of the inspection, there were few opportunities for them to develop work-related skills through enterprise activities and work experience, and there were insufficient arrangements to have their achievements suitably accredited.

The very good behaviour management procedures used consistently by staff enable pupils with emotional and/or challenging behaviour to make very good progress both in self-control and in their educational activities.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy being in school and participate fully in the range of school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave very well although there is, as a result of special needs, some challenging behaviour. Pupils behave very well outside school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. High levels of mutual respect are evident. Pupils show concern for each other. They accept responsibility willingly and show an ability to act responsibly and take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Good. Overall attendance is in line with national averages for similar schools. No unauthorised absences - much better than similar schools.

Overall, the school has created a very positive ethos in which pupils are consistently enabled to do things for themselves. Strong features are the pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and the excellent relationships throughout the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Under 5 years	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Eighty lessons or part lessons were observed during the inspection. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. This is helping to raise standards and improve achievement and is one of the school's strengths. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons observed, good or better in seven out of ten and very good or better in four out of ten. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in the Secondary Department is mainly very good, and in the Junior Department it is consistently good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is very good and the teaching of the required

elements of English, mathematics and science is very good at all stages. Teaching of personal, social and health education is very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils with severe learning difficulties is very good. They have suitable expertise and experience in teaching the curriculum subjects. They use very good strategies and methods to meet the range of needs of the pupils. The particular focus on using objects, pictures, signs and symbols has been very effective in raising the expertise of all staff in enabling pupils to communicate. The present focus on developing staff skills in promoting pupils' physical development is having a significant impact. Lesson planning and the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress are very good and the management of pupils' behaviour is excellent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and made particularly relevant to pupils' needs. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good for all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Teachers maintain an awareness of each pupil's needs for personal development and their targets are frequently reviewed. Very good provision is made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Careful attention to medical and physical needs. Health plans closely followed. Some disruption to lessons because of withdrawal for toileting and medical provision.

All pupils receive a wide range of good-quality learning experiences within a curriculum which is broad, balanced and particularly relevant to pupils' needs. A small number benefit from dual placement at a mainstream primary school. Pupils receive a more structured curriculum as they move through the school, with increasing emphasis on individual subjects. A lack of laboratory experience and design and make activities with resistant materials is compensated for by some secondary-aged pupils joining peers in the nearby mainstream secondary school for science or design and technology, but not all pupils can benefit from this. The very good provision of a soft play area, jacuzzi and a light/sound studio enables pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to benefit from a sensory approach to learning. Pupils on the autistic spectrum benefit from a highly structured programme of activities. Pupils from the age of 14 are prepared well for leaving school through opportunities to develop their social and life skills in the community, by running a class café, taking turns with the weekly coffee shop, attending courses at a local college at least weekly and being involved in a challenging residential course at an outdoor pursuits centre. However, work-related education does not yet include sufficient work experiences and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity for their achievements to be accredited.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school's management by the headteacher, senior staff and school governors is very good.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Through a good strategic use of sub-committees and designated responsibilities, the school governors fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There are very good procedures in place for the school to evaluate its provision. All staff with responsibility for whole-school aspects or curriculum subject areas monitor provision well and effectively present their evaluations for consideration in future planning.
The strategic use of	Very good. The deployment of staff and pupils to classes is very well considered

resources	to make best use of the limited accommodation in relation to the number of pupils on roll. Good use is made of school finances and resources to support school development.
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The school has improved rapidly and substantially since the significant disruption of school management prior to the appointment of the new headteacher along with the majority of school governors two years ago.

Prompt and effective action has been taken to meet the increasingly diverse range of pupils' needs and respond to the continuing demand for places.

The number of teachers in relation to numbers and needs of pupils is significantly below that nationally recommended and the restrictions on organising class groups results in some classrooms being overcrowded and some activities planned by teachers being supervised and managed by learning support assistants. In the main these arrangements are carried out to good effect but there are some occasions when the quality of learning and standards achieved are reduced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and management of the school. • Approachability of staff if parents wish to raise issues. • Their children's enjoyment of school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The availability of post-16 provision. • The range of activities outside of lessons. • The amount of homework given. • The progress of some pupils.

The inspection team fully endorses the overwhelming view expressed by parents regarding the excellent leadership and management of the school. The team further agrees that staff and senior managers are very approachable and that pupils show a real enjoyment and pleasure when in school. Parents' main concern over the lack of opportunity for pupils aged 16, who are not yet ready to leave school, is supported since there is an increasing number of pupils with more severe learning difficulties approaching 16 years of age. There is agreement that currently there are insufficient activities outside of lessons but the school already has plans to introduce such activities. However, the team does not support the views expressed about progress and homework. Inspection findings from direct observations and school records show that pupils make very good progress over time and homework is set in line with pupils' abilities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the Foundation Stage, despite the very good progress in all areas of learning, few children are able to achieve even the lowest steps of the Foundation Curriculum by the time they reach the end of the reception year. They make particularly good progress in communication and language and in physical development.
2. In their personal, social and emotional development, children work together, share their equipment happily and achieve a sense of belonging to a group. In their mathematical development they begin to gain a good idea of cause and effect through use of switches, understand ideas of same and different in relation to colour and shape and are learning to count. They develop an increasing awareness of their environment, experience a wide range of materials, interact with computer programs and manipulate toys successfully. Excellent progress is made in children's physical development. They become confident in experimenting with paint and dough and being creative. In music, they respond well to rhythms and enjoy joining in with songs.
3. Progress in English is good overall. In speaking and listening it is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in stages 3 and 4. In reading it is good up to Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Pupils' achievement in writing is good throughout the school.
4. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils listen well and become increasingly confident in their vocalisations and use of pictures, signs, symbols and basic electronic talkers. However, the use of electronic talkers needs to be further developed to enable pupils who cannot talk to learn to communicate more effectively. Pupils on the autistic spectrum improve listening skills effectively and some develop pre-reading skills through familiarity with pictures and symbols. By the end of Year 6, pupils start to match pictures, words and letters and the more-able pupils read simple text. Whilst some pupils still need help to use a pencil/marker, others write their name and address and simple words correctly.
5. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils greet friends or strangers appropriately and older pupils chat together sociably. Pupils with more profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) use switches to operate equipment and simple touch-talkers. By the time they leave school, more-able pupils enjoy reading leaflets and newspaper articles. Others show pleasure in reading and begin to use phonics to decode unknown words. Their writing improves well and many copy statements and some write independently to record their work, make shopping lists, or write a diary. French is taught in the secondary department and pupils make satisfactory progress in their awareness of the French language and culture.
6. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good overall, with pupils making increasing progress at the secondary stage. By Year 6, more-able pupils count items to 10 and match and sort items according to shape and colour. Less able pupils touch or point to items when learning to count. Older pupils with PMLD learn to count to five through action songs and by counting the number of pupils in the class. They use switches positively, showing an understanding of cause and effect. By Year 9, most pupils count effectively and more-able pupils know numbers to 100. They use a ruler with increasing accuracy. By Year 11, pupils count in twos, fives, and tens to 100 and more-able pupils tell the time accurately and use money effectively when shopping.
7. In science, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils acquire a good basic knowledge of living things through very good practical experiences and by the end of Year 6 they have a broad range of scientific knowledge. Pupils with complex learning difficulties use their senses of touch, taste and smell to investigate materials. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make very good progress and by the time pupils leave school, they have a good

knowledge of the human body and have conducted experiments and investigations which are extended effectively during sessions at a local college.

8. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and good in Key Stage 4. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. They learn to use computer programs with touch screens, switches, mouse and the keyboard, according to learning needs. By the time they leave school, more-able pupils enter text and data, produce graphs and print out their work and many pupils learn to operate the digital camera, video camera and the video recorder. In design and technology, standards in food technology are good, with pupils making good progress towards independence in the kitchen. However, it is difficult for pupils in wheelchairs to access tables and equipment. Standards in designing and making products are generally satisfactory within a limited range of experiences. In art and design, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4 where the influence of the work of a number of artists and cultures is evident in pupils' work.
9. Pupils' achievement in geography is good and sometimes very good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils learn to find their way around school and the local environment. Well-planned visits enable older pupils to recognise the main features in different environments. However, a lack of resources limits achievement. In history, pupils make satisfactory progress. Younger pupils develop an awareness of the passing of time and older pupils get an insight into life in the past through good research with pictures, film and artefacts and acting out events.
10. Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education. They become increasingly independent in their personal skills and achieve good levels of social competence, enabling them to be confident and behave well when out in the community – skills that are very much appreciated by parents. When leaving school they have good knowledge and understanding of their bodies, sex education and about personal safety, and they benefit from links with local colleges. Overall, standards achieved in citizenship are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. They become able to take increasing responsibility for daily tasks and by the secondary stage more-able pupils help and support younger or less-able pupils. By the time they leave school they have an understanding of how society is governed and the responsibilities they have as citizens.
11. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4. By Year 6, pupils follow a simple rhythm by clapping, sing a number of songs and know how to take turns during music making. By Year 11, more-able pupils have good skills of composition and read a symbols chart to play their instrument to accompany a well-known tune. Satisfactory progress is made in religious education. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils gain an awareness of places of worship and celebrations and know about prayer. By the time they leave school they learn about Christian ceremonies such as baptism and have a good awareness of and respect for other religions and faiths.
12. Pupils make very good progress in physical education. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils extend their movement, balance and co-ordination skills through a good range of gymnastic, dance, games and swimming activities. Pupils with PMLD gain increasing awareness of themselves and others during group floor activities which encourage independent movement. Older pupils make excellent progress in games and dance sessions. Pupils' physical education is significantly enhanced by the support of the visiting physiotherapist and the introduction of the 'MOVE' (mobility opportunities via education) programme. However, there is no equipment to enable those pupils who are non-ambulant to learn to control a motorised wheelchair.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good and relationships throughout the school are excellent; these are strengths of the school. These findings are in line with those described in the previous report and confirm the views expressed by parents.

14. Pupils show a real enjoyment, enthusiasm and pleasure when in school. When arriving at the start of the school day pupils are cheerful and greet staff, peers and visitors very warmly. They show an eagerness to begin the day's activities. In lessons, nearly all pupils show very positive attitudes to their work. They listen to what is being taught and to the instructions of teachers and support staff. At times they involve themselves very enthusiastically and take great pleasure from the activities. For example, they were enthralled in a geography lesson when the teacher skilfully simulated wind and rain. In assemblies pupils follow the themes and sing together enthusiastically, with a real sense of enjoyment. Aided by skilful teaching, pupils concentrate and listen very well for most of the time. They try hard when answering questions and show pleasure when they succeed. Their behaviour in lessons is good and they show patience and consideration. For example, in a science lesson when ice lollipops were being used to demonstrate changes in matter, they resisted the temptation to consume the resources being used.
15. Behaviour in and around the school is good. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months. During breaks they show consideration for others and respect the school rules and routines. When outside the school, for example, when visiting a local garden centre or the local swimming pool, their standards of behaviour are very good and a credit to the school. On those occasions when, because of their special needs, pupils do show challenging behaviour, they quickly calm down as a result of the skilful intervention of staff. There was no evidence, during the inspection, of unkindness, bullying or sexist behaviour.
16. Pupils show very good levels of respect for others. They show respect to school staff and are polite to visitors. They show concern for each other, especially if anyone in the class is upset or unwell. At the start of the school day when entering the classroom they greet each other warmly. Relationships across the school are excellent and contribute to a friendly and secure learning environment. There are very high levels of mutual respect. Teachers value pupils' contributions and consistently praise effort and achievement. For their part, pupils follow instructions and try their best to do what is asked of them.
17. Pupils respond extremely well when they are given responsibility and respect the trust placed in them. There are many examples, throughout the day, when pupils are expected to take responsibility, including helping in class, taking registers to the office and finding resources. They carry out these duties with commitment and pride. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and they do so willingly. For example, on arrival in class in the morning many pupils will prepare themselves without being asked by staff. A further good example is the contribution they make to setting targets for their own improvement.
18. The standards of attendance and punctuality are good. Overall attendance levels are slightly higher than similar schools nationally, whilst the level of authorised absence is lower than that of similar schools. There is no unauthorised absence, a figure that compares very favourably when compared to other similar schools. Pupils' attitudes to punctuality in and around the school are very good. After breaks, lessons start on time and there is a prompt start to the school day. Records show that lateness is rare and on the few occasions when pupils are late, this is due to local traffic problems.
19. Overall, the very good pupil attitudes not only make a major contribution to the very positive school ethos but also contribute to the good standards of learning and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and pupils learn effectively. Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all the lessons observed, good or better in seven out of ten and very good or better in four out of ten. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 7 to 11 (Secondary phase) are one of the school's strengths. Good improvements have been made in the last year and a half; this

is helping to raise standards and improve achievement. The teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school is very good.

21. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching is good or better in nine out of ten lessons and very good or excellent in just over a half. There are strengths in the development of children's language and physical skills and in the way children are helped to settle into school, helping them to be confident to learn new things.
22. Teaching is good in the Years 1 to 6. It is good or better in seven out of ten lessons, very good in nearly a quarter and occasionally it is excellent. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good or better in nearly eight out of ten lessons and very good or excellent in nearly a half. In Years 10 and 11 the high quality of teaching is maintained and it is very good or excellent in just over four out of ten lessons. Consequently, all pupils achieve well as they move through the school and as a result of very good long- and medium-term planning, their skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed.
23. Teaching is very good for children under five, and very good overall in English, science, design and technology and physical education. In mathematics, it is very good in Years 7 to 11 and good up to Year 6. It is good throughout in geography and personal, social and health education. In music and art in Years 7 to 11, teaching is also good, but up to Year 6 it is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall in information and communication technology, religious education and modern foreign languages. Because of the timetable, it was not possible to observe lessons in history or citizenship but the evidence from planning and pupils' records indicated that teaching is at least satisfactory.
24. Basic skills in communication are very well taught and very good use is often made of objects, signs and symbols. The use of technology for alternative communication is developing, however, there are some pupils who would benefit from a more systematic approach, with a thorough assessment and some investigation as to the most suitable aid to use. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers are enthusiastic about teaching English and mathematics, capturing the pupils' interest and helping them to work hard, enabling most pupils who are sufficiently able to practice their reading and develop writing skills. Number skills are effectively promoted throughout the school. For example, very good use of counting and positional vocabulary in physical education and use of measures in science and food technology enables pupils to become more secure in their understanding of mathematics.
25. Teaching meets the needs of most pupils well, whatever their special educational needs, social background or gender. This has a positive impact on learning and their interest in the work they undertake. Teachers plan lessons well, with good consideration of the wide-ranging learning needs of pupils identified in the Individual Education Plans and the objectives set. Good use is made of the support available in the classroom and the teaching assistants provide sensitive help. On some rare occasions, teaching assistants fail to follow adequately the lesson plans set by the teacher when working independently with a small group of pupils. In these instances, teaching can be unsatisfactory. Normally, they work closely with teachers and follow lessons plans effectively.
26. In classes taught by job shares, particularly in Years 3 to 6, teaching is sometimes less effective when short-term planning does not include sufficient clear objectives and, as a consequence, some time is lost in organising the class and the work undertaken lacks a degree of focus. In such lessons, teaching was satisfactory overall as pupils' needs were well understood and generally met. In most other classes, teachers work hard to provide appropriate challenges to keep all pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, enthusiastic and motivated.
27. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of how to teach pupils in the age groups allotted to them. This enables them to produce innovative activities to broaden out the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. A good example of this was in a music lesson with a group of pupils mainly in Year 8, where they used a set of symbols to record their

composition. The pupils were captivated by this lesson that skilfully built upon their skills and knowledge, showing great pleasure in the success they obtained in performing their composition. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There have been considerable improvements to the teachers' knowledge in information and communication technology through recent training. This has developed their confidence in their own use of information and communication technology, for example, in downloading information that they can use in lessons from the Internet. They are committed to improving the provision and extending the use of information and communication technology to other subjects and they are beginning to make good use of the new ICT suite.

28. In the best lessons, teachers share the lesson objectives with the pupils, helping them to have a clear understanding of what they are going to learn. They use a broad range of very effective methods and interesting activities to keep pupils motivated and engaged in what they are doing. As a result, pupils work hard. A good example of this was in a Year 9 design and technology lesson where pupils in one group chose their toppings for a pizza while the other group made the pizza dough; after a suitable time the groups swapped. This very well planned lesson, which made very good use of the teaching assistants, sparked pupils' interest and so improved their learning.
29. Teachers intervene in pupils' learning just at the right time to help them correct misconceptions and extend their knowledge and understanding. Wherever possible they make very good use of questioning that helps the pupils think. Teachers and teaching assistants are sensitive to the time it takes pupils to answer questions or to respond with signs and gestures. For example, in a PECS (picture exchange communication system) lesson the teacher repeatedly and slowly questioned a child about what toy he wanted. Finally the child signed 'I want a train'.
30. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and inspire trust that helps the pupils to have the confidence to attempt new things. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent in the Foundation Stage, in the group of pupils on the autistic spectrum and in the secondary phase. It is very good and in all other areas of the school. This helps pupils throughout the school to develop their concentration and attention spans.
31. Teaching assistants are very effective in their support of teachers and pupils. They are well respected by the pupils, who enjoy working with them. They benefit from being fully involved in whole-school in-service training. They use their developing skills to good effect in many areas of the curriculum, for example, in food technology and in language and literacy.
32. Teachers carefully assess pupils' learning and know what they need to learn next. There are good systems for effective recording of pupils' progress. This is well illustrated by the way the 'golden moments' are recorded in the Foundation Stage. In this system progress is recorded on to a small 'post-it' memo and retained with the pupils' file for future use. In other classes there are similar systems and ongoing assessment is good overall. Teachers make good use of the home-to-school books, the provision of homework is improving, and further developments are planned.

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

33. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection, when there was a key issue to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum and to develop long-term subject planning. These matters have now been addressed and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. Subject planning varies from very good, for instance in mathematics, science and art, to satisfactory, as in design and technology, history and in the modern foreign languages. The differences are linked to whether the subject has recently been a focus in the school development plan.

34. The curriculum is broad, balanced and made particularly relevant to pupils' needs. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good for all pupils. Foundation subjects, such as geography and history, are taught through integrated activities within class topics, especially for primary-aged pupils, and planning needs to be more precise to ensure effective subject coverage. Procedures for personal care, although vital, are not always planned sufficiently well to make the best use of curricular time, causing too many interruptions to learning. The curriculum is inclusive. It is well planned to meet the age, stage of development and particular needs of individual pupils. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 receive an increasingly structured curriculum as they move through the age groups. A small number benefit from dual placement at a mainstream primary, sometimes close to their homes. The strong emphasis on sensory stimulation, for example, access to a soft-play area, jacuzzi or a light/sound studio helps to meet the learning needs of all pupils but especially those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The highly structured programme of activities to meet the needs of pupils on the autistic spectrum is effective.
35. The curriculum continues to be good for pupils in Years 7 to 11, with more emphasis on individual subjects taught by specialists. Some pupils have the opportunity to join peers in the nearby mainstream secondary school for science or design and technology. Alternative means of communication such as signing or oral communication aids help pupils access the curriculum but the school recognises the need for further improvement in teaching the use of electronic talkers and communicators.
36. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared well for the next stage of life through increasing opportunities to demonstrate independence and develop the social skills necessary for life in the community. They run a class café daily and take turns with the weekly coffee shop. Demanding activities such as abseiling at an outdoor centre or completing important work nurturing animals at a local agriculture college provide valuable challenges. Work-related education starts in Year 9 and links with the Careers Service are good. Many pupils attend a local Further Education College at least weekly. However, at present, pupils do not have sufficient work experience opportunities and enterprise activities are not fully utilized. Pupils gain confidence and skills during work-awareness activities in school or the community but opportunities are insufficient to challenge all pupils. The curriculum also provides too few opportunities for pupils to gain national accreditation for their achievements.
37. Parents are justifiably concerned that an admissions policy which states 'at the request of parents and the LEA, pupils are able to remain at school until 19, where this is appropriate' is not being implemented consistently. This is unsatisfactory because there is not the room or provision for all pupils who are not ready to leave school at 16 years of age to complete their education at the school. Another area of concern, both of the parents and inspectors, is the barely satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. One very good initiative is the development of a 'Buddies' system. This enables pupils of different ages and abilities to meet together and join in shared activities.
38. Strategies for teaching literacy are very good and have become an established feature of each subject. Subject planning identifies opportunities for cross-curricular links. Communication skills are consistently reinforced in all areas of the curriculum, with pleasing consistency of signing and use of pictures and symbols to reinforce speech. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught as well as the very good development of social language in personal, social and health education or speech and language sessions. More-able pupils read for an increasing range of purposes such as researching information in geography or sequencing activity from recipes in food technology. Opportunities for writing are more limited but include completing graphs and charts in mathematics and writing thank-you letters for Easter Eggs to mainstream peers.
39. The contribution made by the community to the learning of pupils is very good. The school benefits from volunteers who help in the classroom and listen carefully to readers, and others who visit the coffee shop and attend performances. They greet and welcome pupils as they move about the local area, for example, when shopping or on work experience. Local clergy attend school, taking assemblies and welcoming pupils into their churches. The local business

community and members of the armed forces make donations and raise funds for the school. Good links with the fire brigade and police enrich the curriculum.

40. The school has very good partnerships with other institutions. Physiotherapists, speech and occupational therapists provide invaluable input to meet the curricular needs of individuals. Local schools encourage inclusion by accepting pupils into their schools and encouraging mainstream pupils to share activities or undertake work experience placements within St Nicholas. Local college students enhance the physical education curriculum and provide fun as they lead dance sessions. Very good opportunities at local colleges contribute greatly to the social, academic and personal development of older pupils.
41. Strong provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained. It is very good in all areas and is central to the life of the school. Pupils know that they are valued as individuals at St Nicholas. Their uniqueness and their needs are acknowledged so they make very good spiritual development. There is a consistency of approach by all staff, which gives security and helps pupils grow. They are encouraged to explore, not just ever-widening physical environments, but also emotions, values and beliefs and are given the language to help them. This might be through personal, social and health and education or drama lessons or through religious education or assemblies. Pupils understand rites of passage: they learn about weddings, christenings, life and death, through direct teaching and through observation, for example, in church or at an Agricultural College. Assemblies include all pupils and explore Christian themes and beliefs but also introduce pupils to festivals of other major religions.
42. Regard for high moral values are implicit in all areas of school life. Pupils are gently but firmly reminded of acceptable behaviour at all times. Individual behaviour plans are administered consistently and concentrate on the positive. Staff are excellent role models and their kind and courteous approach is usually rewarded by pupils' very good behaviour. Circle time gives pupils the opportunity to make decisions and to show respect to one another. The study of literature provides chances to consider consequences and explore feelings. The study of poetry, especially of the First World War, gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on the rights and wrongs of using force. By constantly seeking new ways to ensure inclusion for all pupils in all activities, the school helps to reinforce a respect and consideration for all members of the community.
43. Provision for social development is very good. This means pupils become increasingly friendly and adaptable, enjoying or tolerating new experiences and ready to meet new people. The careful development of a social language and opportunities in which to use it contribute positively to their development. The very good input from services, such as speech and language therapy and the school nurse, support staff in developing language and behaviour appropriate to the occasion. This is demonstrated during wide-ranging opportunities to make use of local facilities and those further afield so that by Years 10 and 11 many pupils gain the skills and independence to cope in society. Pupils have class jobs according to their ability. Older pupils share the very sociable lunchtimes with younger or less able pupils. Social consciences are developed as money is raised, for example, for Comic Relief or the Women's Refuge.
44. The school has made very good provision for pupils' cultural development and multi-cultural and multi-ethnic awareness. Resources and visits reflect the rich variety of life. Books, artefacts and dressing-up clothes show aspects of life in many countries and cultures. African musical instruments and an Indian fortnight, as well as days devoted to French, Italian or Spanish culture, show pupils something of life in other lands. Visits to churches and mosques remind them that we live in a multi-faith society. British and local culture is celebrated especially through Morris dancing at the Chippenham Folk Festival or by taking part in the 'Moonraker' music project. The work of a wide range of British and world musicians and artists is built into the curriculum and helps to broaden minds and interests. Visits by authors, poets and performances and visits to the theatre support social as well as cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's responsibility for the care and wellbeing of the pupils is very good and a strength of the school. There have been further improvements in this aspect since the last inspection.
46. Underlying this success is the in-depth knowledge teaching and support staff have of every pupil's medical, physical and academic needs. There is a very effective daily exchange of information between home and school as well as a constant review of each pupil's needs. Teachers maintain an awareness of personal development and academic targets and these are frequently reviewed.
47. In lessons, teachers provide very good academic support and guidance. They ensure that all pupils are involved in lesson activities and patiently encourage pupils to contribute and participate. They praise and celebrate success, however limited, with the rest of the class. All contributions are highly valued.
48. Personal development is a high priority and there have been significant initiatives established in this area. For example, a speech therapist assistant has recently been employed and the school has well-advanced plans to develop pupil mobility. Pupils benefit from a range of additional services, for example, the regular attendance of a medical consultant. The school nurse provides very good support and input into the management of pupils and contributes significantly to the curriculum, for example, the delivery of health education programmes.
49. Attention to pupils' medical needs is very effective. Following training by the school nurse, the administration of medicines is sensitively and effectively carried out by teaching assistants and follows closely requirements set out in health plans. The plans are reviewed and regularly updated. During the inspection a good example was seen when staff dealt with a pupil who had a serious seizure. Their skilful and professional response, including the prompt summoning of medical assistance, was very impressive. Toileting needs are managed with dignity and respect. However, these demands for care, hygiene and therapy, at times and in some classes, cause significant disruption during lessons and affect standards of progress. This is due to the number of pupils in the class and the demands on support staff. For example during a religious education lesson, the class, for a while, was reduced from eleven pupils to four.
50. The structures and procedures for dealing with child protection are fully in place and staff have a good awareness of the issues involved. During the inspection no serious risks, posed to the health and safety of the pupils or staff, were evident. However, it was noted that inappropriate storage of some resources on shelves in corridors posed a possible hazard.
51. The school's systems for monitoring attendance are very effective and ensure that standards of attendance are good. The weakness in maintaining attendance registers highlighted in the previous report has now been addressed and the overall standard of this record keeping is very good.
52. Management of pupil behaviour is excellent. Behavioural targets are clearly set out and frequently monitored by teaching staff. There is an underlying ethos of mutual respect when dealing with challenging or inappropriate behaviour, which, together with staff patience and consistency, ensures that disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.
53. Many parents speak highly of the care aspects of the school's work. Their views are very well founded.
54. The schools procedures for monitoring and assessing the pupils' standards of education are very good overall, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
55. The school has developed and implemented very good procedures to track the pupils' academic achievements from admission onwards. There is now half-termly assessment of their personal and academic progress, with annual assessment linked to their Annual Reviews. These procedures are used very effectively to identify higher- and lower-achieving children and to inform

the pupils' individual education targets and care plans. As a result, some older pupils participate in selected mainstream secondary school lessons and a small number of junior-aged pupils are currently on integration programmes with local mainstream primary schools.

56. Assessment is used well to inform the development and planning of mathematics, English, science and personal, social and health education. It is developing well in other subject areas but in some foundation subjects, assessment has only just been introduced. Teachers and support staff keep efficient records of the pupils' academic and behaviour achievements on a daily basis, and use this information to plan lessons and cater for all abilities. Samples of all the pupils' work are evaluated and assessed against the P-levels and National Curriculum levels of attainment by the subject manager, and this is entered into pupils' personal files and used to inform both the curriculum and the Annual Report to parents. Home-school books are used very well by parents and staff and provide a valuable dialogue between the home and school.
57. Individual education plans and target setting have improved and are used well as working documents within the classroom. Additionally, the teachers' very good knowledge of the children ensures that academic and personal targets are both challenging and realistic.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. Since the last inspection, the school has established a very strong partnership with parents. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the involvement of parents was established as a major area for development. This has resulted in a range of successful initiatives to achieve greater involvement of the parents.
59. The views of those parents who attended the parents' meeting and of those who completed the questionnaire reveal very strong support for the work of the school. In particular, 100 per cent of respondents expressed confidence in the leadership of the school. Parents also expressed very positive views about the approachability of staff and almost all parents say that their children like school. These strengths of the school are entirely in line with inspection findings. Although a significant minority of parents are dissatisfied with the amount of homework set by teachers, inspection evidence contradicts these concerns. A wide range of work is set, in line with pupil abilities. A smaller minority feel that there are insufficient activities outside of lessons; an even smaller minority are unhappy about the progress their children are making. Lesson observations and school records show that, overall, pupils make very good progress. The inspection team agrees that there are insufficient activities outside of lessons during the school day. However, the school has identified this area as an issue and is taking active steps to set up a range of out-of-lesson activities.
60. Links with parents are very effective and make a very good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. In particular the home-school books are very well used, by parents and teachers alike, as a means of a daily exchange of information about medical, behavioural or academic issues. The school is keen to consult parents and highly values their views. A good example is the extent to which parents were involved in developing the sex education programme. Their contributions about language and appropriate terminology were highly valued and adopted in the final programme. Parents are actively encouraged to fully participate in Annual Reviews of the Statements of Special Education Needs and the setting of targets in education plans. Parents attending these meetings are given every opportunity to express their views and are treated as equal partners in the process.
61. Parents are kept very well informed about their children's progress. The absence of end-of-year academic reports highlighted in the last report has now been addressed. Parents now receive academic reports at the same time as annual reviews. These reports include coverage of all aspects of the national curriculum and progress made. Parents also benefit from regular, good-quality newsletters, providing information about the life of the school. The omissions in the school prospectus identified in the last inspection report have also now been rectified.

62. A large majority of parents give their active support at home to the efforts of the school and other agencies in addressing their children's academic and personal development needs. They value highly the commitment and hard work of school staff and endeavour to complement behavioural and academic targets so that there is continuity between school and home. The school and the pupils also benefit from the help and support of parents in lessons. For example, parents provide additional supervision during school walks and also during physical education and swimming lessons.
63. The school's very successful partnership with parents makes a very good contribution to the pupils' academic and personal development. The planned future initiatives in this area are likely to further enhance the benefits to parents, pupils and school alike.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. Overall, the leadership and management provided by the school's senior management and the school governors are very good, a judgement fully endorsed by the parents, who consider that the general run of the school has improved dramatically. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, since her appointment in April 2001, has successfully re-established a positive ethos and a particular focus on the quality of education provided without losing the very good quality of care in meeting pupils' needs. Her expertise and leadership have made significant improvements to provision to meet priorities relating to the vital development of staff skills in teaching communication, mobility, and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and establishing positive whole-school approaches to the management of pupils' (challenging) behaviour.
65. A new structure for the school's senior management team has been set up, with very effective deployment of senior teachers as heads of junior and secondary departments as well as including a post of senior teaching assistant. Governors are strategically responsible for monitoring and supporting curriculum development, monitoring the budget and school development. An excellent collegiate approach has been established, culminating in the whole staff and school governors meeting for a full day to decide priorities for the School Improvement Plan. This has effectively created a shared commitment to, and responsibility for, improving provision. Appropriate targets are set for school improvement, including progress of pupils linked to the detailed assessment procedures. The school is now well placed to use its very good assessment data to analyse and compare the progress of pupils with different needs.
66. A very good and comprehensive range of policies for school management and administration is in place. The vast majority have been re-drafted, considered and ratified by the school governors in the last two years and a few of lesser priority are being reviewed. Very good procedures are being implemented for performance management and result in a very good schedule of staff training and professional development. There is a good range of expertise in most curriculum subjects and special needs, and classroom assistants provide very good levels of support at all times. The school is well served by a range of visiting specialists. However, the provision to meet pupils' therapy, care and personal hygiene needs causes some disruption to pupils' learning. The school needs to establish the best strategies and arrangements to meet these essential requirements with sufficient flexibility to ensure that pupils do not miss key elements of lessons.
67. The school is under pressure to admit more pupils and two new referrals were made during inspection. The Governing Body has responded by trying to accommodate these pupils and overall the school is successful in meeting their needs. However, the school is already over its agreed number of 60 places by nine pupils. The admission of these pupils has resulted in some teaching groups of up to twelve pupils, causing overcrowded classrooms, especially with regard to the need and use of large items of special furniture and wheelchairs. This is unsatisfactory because it reduces the effectiveness of teaching and quality of learning in some lessons.
68. Staffing levels fall below the nationally recommended guidelines for similar schools. The number of teachers in relation to the number of pupils and their degree of special educational needs is not sufficient when compared to the national guidance on staffing to meet educational needs.

Current funding is within the lower quartile compared with similar schools nationally and the local authority funds the school for 64 places, which is below the numbers already in the school. Thus funding levels are unsatisfactory overall and prevent the school providing fully for all the pupils in the school but particularly for students who are post-16. At present most pupils leave school at the age of 16 and many are provided with further training opportunities at a local college. Parents indicated a major concern over the lack of places available for pupils to remain at school post-16. They consider that a significant, and an increasing, number of pupils are too 'medically and /or educationally compromised' to be able to benefit from a placement at the end of Year 11 in a college of further education; they feel that their children are being denied the opportunity of continuing educational provision up to the age of 19 and view the loss of protection of the pupil's Statement of Special Educational Needs at 16 years of age with grave concern. Inspection findings support this view.

69. Overall, the school accommodation is unsatisfactory in relation to present numbers on roll. The storage space in the school is limited; most classrooms have insufficient space to manoeuvre wheelchairs and house the amount of essential equipment. Wheelchair access to classrooms and to equipment and resources during lessons is limited and in some cases affects pupils' learning. For example, pupils in wheelchairs in Year 6 use mixing bowls on their knees because they cannot access the work-tables.
70. The designated science room is also designated for design and technology, but is rarely used as a classroom because it is needed as a physiotherapy treatment room for a large part of the week. The wheelchair access into the new information and communication technology room is poor, as is the suitability of the furniture for pupils in wheelchairs. Wheelchair access around the school is restricted by equipment stacked in corridors. Where resources are stored on shelves, these are too narrow and in some areas boxes overhang the shelves by several centimetres, causing a potential hazard.
71. Toilet and shower facilities are good. These areas are well equipped with good quality beds, hoists and pulleys. The standard of cleanliness and maintenance is very good, and is a credit to the hardworking premises manager and his staff.
72. Plans are well advanced for the building of a school extension. However, the planned construction of a single extra classroom needs to be considered carefully in relation to the issues raised and the significant residential expansion in the area.
73. The quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in English, mathematics, and science, but are insufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum in modern foreign languages, history, geography, design and technology and religious education. The small but pleasant library is well stocked with a good range of quality books. It is used well by staff and pupils and also serves as a classroom extension for one-to-one reading. Overall, there is a bright and pleasant atmosphere, with walls attractively displaying posters, information, photographs and pupils' work, which reflects the caring ethos of the school. Externally, the play areas provide a good range of play structures, and the pupils' refurbishment of the sensory garden promises to provide a pleasant area for pleasure and reflection. Ambitious plans are in place to provide a new playground with equipment and facilities to excite and challenge all pupils.
74. The school makes good strategic use of all resources. Specific grants are used well to raise levels of achievement and improve the quality of education for all pupils concerned. For example, the grant for improving teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology is currently being used very effectively to improve teachers' confidence and extend the use of technology. Educational priorities are effectively supported through efficient financial planning and carefully linked to spending in the school improvement plan. The governors keep a close check on the amount of money carried over from last year. They are well aware that it is currently too high and intend to spend it in the near future on improvements to the overall accommodation and on developing the additional ground the school now has available as a result of changes to land use around the school. Consequently, the budget is very well managed

and finance and budgetary controls are good and carefully based on accurate information. The school administration is very good and new technology is used effectively. The school secretary makes a major contribution to the effective running of the school.

75. The school is successfully applying procedures in management and use of resources to get best value. For example, the headteacher and the staff team carefully verify that all expenditures are cost effective. For example, a new contract for the disposal of personal waste has brought considerable saving.
76. Administrative procedures are efficient and the school is well organised to enable teachers to concentrate their efforts on the pupils, and the headteacher to effectively manage her complex teaching and leadership roles. The range of curricular and other opportunities that the school provides is very good, teaching is very good and as a consequence all pupils make progress; pupils' special educational needs are well met, despite the fact that costs per pupil are amongst the lowest in the country. Taking all these factors into consideration, the school is effective and provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to improve the school's provision, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- better meet the learning needs of all pupils by improving the ratio of teachers to pupils;
 - address the inadequacies in the provision and use of the accommodation to reduce overcrowding, improve pupils' access to practical activities and, as appropriate, meet the continuing educational needs of pupils post-16;
 - extend the use of technology to further develop pupils' skills in ICT, communication and mobility;
 - adopt a more flexible approach to the timing of personal hygiene and therapy arrangements to minimise disruption to pupils' learning; and
 - implement its plans to make provision for extra-curricular activities, accreditation and work experience.
78. Additionally, the school should address any shortcomings that are identified in the report, particularly those which are curriculum based.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	127

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	8	23	28	20	1	0	0
Percentage	10	29	35	25	1	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	69
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year				

All pupils were working towards Level 1 (W) as judged by Teachers' Assessments

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year				

There were no pupils in Year 6 last year

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year				

The numbers in this group are too small to report.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest 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	68	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.6
Average class size	10

Education support staff: Y1 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	515

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
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	£
Total income	675,053
Total expenditure	692,672
Expenditure per pupil	10,039
Balance brought forward from previous year	96,386
Balance carried forward to next year	61,155

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	4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	69
Number of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	6	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	40	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	27	30	3	15
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	31	9	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	29	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	0	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	43	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	31	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	51	3	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	27	6	15	6

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

79. The provision for the youngest children in the school is very good. On entry, few children are able to achieve even the lowest steps towards the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Curriculum. Overall, they make very good progress in all areas of learning towards these learning goals by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The progress made is particularly good in communication and language and in physical development. The quality of teaching and learning is always very good overall and sometimes teaching is excellent. It is based on very good knowledge of the areas of learning and very good knowledge of the children and their families. Additionally, all children are expected to do an activity for themselves and are given time to succeed, being praised when they achieve; this ensures that very good learning takes place at all times. The long- and medium-term plans show well how the activities relate to the learning goals, and, through the very good daily plans and classroom routines, children's individual educational plans are very well delivered. There is excellent recording of what children achieve in any given day through a system of 'Golden moments'. These records are very well used to plan future activities and are retained within children's files for use when reporting to parents or assessing a child's overall progress. Very good use is made of all the available resources but, while there is a good-sized, secure outside area for children to play in, the space within the class is too small. Relationships between the children and staff are excellent, as is the management of children's behaviour. Overall, the provision for the education of the youngest children is a strength of the school and provides for the best possible start for these children who have very significant learning difficulties.

Personal, social and emotional development

80. Children make very good progress towards attaining the first steps of the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The development of their personal and social skills is promoted very well and staff encourage respectful relationships within a calm ethos. Most, through the regular circle time routines, have a sense of belonging to a group. Children enjoy practical activities and concentrate for reasonable lengths of time on their own and when working at tasks with adult support. They share their equipment happily and work together when required to do so. Children are aware of the difference between right and wrong and are learning to respond to the needs of others as a result of the excellent, consistent management of behaviour by the staff. Through the stimulating and exciting class activity at such times as Christmas and Easter, children become aware of their own cultures and traditional festivals. Very good use is made of the home-school diary. This not only informs parents of what has happened during the day but also effectively enables consistency in the way basic needs are met in school and at home. These contacts make a very good contribution to the development of children's personal, social and emotional development and skills of independence.

Communication, language and literacy

81. The children make very good progress in this area. Most come into school with very poor language skills and some are unable to communicate. During their time in the class, children learn to make suitable responses, either through facial movements or gesture or through simple signs. Some are developing skills in the use of a touch-talker to communicate and join in classroom activities. Very good teaching makes use of every opportunity to establish their understanding of a small range of simple signs and the teaching is supported well by the teaching assistants. Children enjoy listening to stories and their language development is enhanced by the planned use of 'target language' within many activities. For example, during a group session where pupils were being directed to follow simple instructions such as '*Sit on the mat*', the vocabulary used was clearly stated and consistently signed. The speech and language assistant effectively uses a 'stimulus and response' technique to develop children's

understanding of requests. For example, 'I want the train. Please give it to me'. Action songs also help develop children's correct responses to speech. Children are also encouraged to ask each other to carry out simple actions, for example, to jump, clap or wave. Objects such as books, cups, or toys are frequently used to enable children to learn the meaning of symbols and signs. The most able in the group are beginning to recognise their names in print without prompts. Some children use pencils and crayons to make marks on paper and are beginning to scribble. Children have appropriate access to a range of books.

Mathematical development

82. Children make very good progress in their mathematics development. They take part in a very good variety of counting, sorting and matching activities. Most children are beginning to understand that some objects have the same shape or colour. Children participate in number songs for example, 'five little speckled hens' or 'five green frogs'. The most able children match items one-to-one and count out sounds such as five claps or five drum beats. They handle objects that are long and short, for example, a long ribbon or a short stick, and begin to develop a concept of 'tall' and 'short'. They also have some understanding about concepts of 'full' and 'empty' when they play in the sand tray. Children are effectively encouraged to apply these ideas in practical tasks such as when they were playing with sand and water or mixing a biscuit mixture. Their awareness of shape is promoted well when playing on and with large three-dimensional shapes. Staff make appropriate use of mathematical terms and this has a positive effect on the children's use of the vocabulary such as the names of numbers. Children are beginning to develop a sense of the passage of time through the well-established routines and the singing of jingles to signal a change in activity or a forthcoming session.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. By the end of the reception year, children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Through the encouraging interaction with staff, they investigate the properties of materials by playing in water, pouring and splashing, and extend this activity by using butter-beans and rice in a similar way. They manipulate toys, send wheeled toys down a slope, and the most able children successfully turn handles. They discover that they can activate a computer program using a touch screen, some children can turn on a computer and the most able move the mouse effectively. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties also make good progress such as purposefully pressing the switch on a touch-talker to make it 'say' a message or a statement, and in the 'studio' they use switches to turn on a fan, light or sound effects. More-able children learn to turn on torches and tapes recorders. They acquire a good awareness and basic knowledge of living things. For example, they investigate seeds, touch and sprinkle them and through good use of the video camera, review the growth of these seeds. They also cut fruit and see that there are seeds inside them and look at flower heads to see the seeds there. They watch with interest a 'plant' being pulled up on a pulley. Children gain confidence as they explore different materials and begin to realize, for example, that paper is different from cloth. They become aware of differences in the weather as they choose to wear their coats when going out to play. They develop a good awareness of the local area through visits to places of interest, for example, they identified the park and the railway station and knew they went *under* a bridge on the way to the swimming pool.

Physical development

84. Children make very good progress in developing their physical movements and the way pupils are encouraged to walk unaided or use 'walkers' is an outstanding feature. A few more-mobile children attain some of the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach the end of the reception year and many are supported well in their learning at home by parents. The most able move with increasing confidence, imagination and control during lesson activities and playtimes, and they are developing a sense of space and body control. All children are well motivated and most are able to move from one place to another unaided. The provision for indoor play is limited by lack of space but all can play safely outside. For example, they make very good use of the range of large playground toys and the giant 'Connect 4' is a favourite activity. During weekly swimming

sessions they make very good progress in movement control and co-ordination. They become confident in water and some use their arms and legs purposefully to propel themselves through the water with the support of floats. The physiotherapy programmes make a very good contribution to children's physical development, particularly for those children who have mobility difficulties. Good use is made of some of the features of Conductive Education to motivate children to turn, stretch and reach. Good progress is made in children's fine motor control, for example, when mixing flour and water, moving beads along a frame, grasping and lifting objects and rolling a ball to a partner. Finer movements are developing well as children scribble or tear and cut various materials. By the end of the reception year, children handle small tools, objects and malleable materials safely. They become increasingly independent in feeding themselves, learning to use a spoon effectively.

Creative development

85. The children make very good progress in creative development. They are given a very good range of opportunities to explore these areas through painting and music. They respond well to the rhythms when music is played as they change an activity and particularly enjoy singing songs, rhymes and jingles during 'circle time'. The most able are beginning to show some confident use of paint when they are encouraged to experiment and be creative. For example, when using dough to make biscuits and decorate them, they chose the colour of the icing and the sweet decorations with great care. One child showed considerable progress when she decorated her two biscuits differently and showed pleasure at her second attempt, thus appreciating her successful efforts. All staff promote this area of learning very well and encourage children to take pride in their finished work. The very good organisation of activities and the choices offered to children help to ensure that they build appropriately on their skills and knowledge.

ENGLISH

86. Strong leadership, good teaching and better resources have led to an improvement in the provision for English since the last inspection.
87. Achievement in speaking and listening is good at the end of Years 2 and 6 and very good at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to use their voice as much as possible but are well supported to communicate by good use of a picture exchange system (PECS) and consistent signing. There is use of simple electronic communication aids but this is underdeveloped. There is good additional provision for speech and language through programmes planned by the speech therapy service and usually delivered by a speech and language assistant. Here, very good teaching contributes significantly to the achievement of pupils. Very good signing encourages the youngest pupils to communicate and reminds them of the routines of the day. Pupils on the autistic spectrum concentrate for short periods and improve listening skills when completing tape-recorded work. By the end of Year 6, pupils know words related to individual subjects. 'Our mix is different, it's stiffer. We've put flour in' said one articulate pupil as he made biscuits. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand that language can be used for different purposes, such as the 'tempting' language of holiday brochures. They understand that greetings change to meet the situation and when to use a hand-shake or a hug. Social language development continues to be very good for older pupils, especially when meeting and greeting staff and friends at college. Pupils clearly enjoy making choices of food and drink in their class snack shop then chatting together sociably as they consume it. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use switches to operate fans or tape recorders in their communication lessons but the interruptions to their activities by daily personal hygiene and therapy routines adversely affect achievement. Drama contributes very positively to the speaking and listening of pupils of all ages.
88. Progress in reading is good for pupils up to Year 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The youngest pupils recognise their photographs. They look at pictures and enjoy story time. By the end of Year 6, pupils use a number of clues to help them decode words. They look at the pictures and at the shape of letters and words and start to match them. More-able pupils read simple text and less-able pupils recognise the initial letters of their names. An increasing

awareness of phonics helps pupils, by the end of Year 9, to decode unknown words. They show pleasure in reading to staff, parents and volunteers. More-able pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy reading leaflets and newspaper articles and check the time of television programmes. Sometimes too much time is spent on phonics for pupils of this age and reading books could motivate pupils more by being relevant to their age. Less-able pupils throughout the school are helped to achieve to the best of their ability by very good support and good resources which are very well adapted to their needs. The well-stocked library is a popular spot to share books with adults and friends.

89. In relation to their individual learning targets, pupils' achievement in writing is good in all years. It is helped by very good opportunities for writing in many subjects. By the end of Year 2, pupils make marks on paper or in sand, with some pupils beginning to continue patterns and trace over writing. By Year 6, some pupils still need hand holding to make marks on paper. More-able pupils write their name and address and spell simple words correctly. They dictate whole sentences and then copy them: 'We went to J's house. I bumped my head on the wood.' Pupils in Years 7 to 11 write for an increasing range of purposes. In Years 7 to 9 they complete diaries after reading extracts from Anne Frank. Letter size and spacing of words are often even. In Years 10 and 11, pupils contribute to their annual reviews. They record their plans for life after school: 'When I leave school I want to go to college, cook meals, go bowling.' Excellent relationships help them to work in groups, to choose the subject then to write leaflets such as road safety advice. Pupils with additional special needs make marks using pencils, tools or brushes and with the help and encouragement of competent staff. There are limited opportunities to word process work but some pupils benefit from the use of symbols.
90. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, mainly where the class is taken by a teaching assistant and the teacher's planning is not followed closely enough and pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Otherwise, support staff make a very good contribution to teaching and learning, helping to ensure that pupils of all abilities are included in activities. Relationships are excellent and behaviour is very good so teachers can concentrate on teaching enjoyable lessons. Pupils with additional special needs learn well because teachers have good knowledge of their individual needs. For example, very structured routines for pupils with autism help pupils settle. One pupil coloured the right number of objects on his worksheet, then put his work away. Another used his PECS (picture exchange communication system) symbols to ask for help and a peer used the computer to write 'No yellow flowers garden.' In an excellent Key Stage 3 lesson, very high expectation and good resources helped all pupils succeed. Pupils showed pride as they followed the words in their reading book, and read aloud if they could. Other pupils cut out words and sequenced sentences whilst another group followed the story on the screen, using the mouse to turn pages. The oldest pupils also benefit from good preparation for lessons. The use of digital cameras meant that photographs were available for use in compiling leaflets. 'Look what numbers' one pupil advised another as they searched the index of a reference book.
91. The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator has been successful in planning for the use of literacy across the curriculum. This has had a positive effect on reinforcing skills learned during English lessons. Assessment is thorough and used thoughtfully to help pupils achieve their individual targets. Parents are kept very well informed of achievement and progress in all areas of English. The school provides very good learning opportunities that enrich the curriculum. Poets, storytellers and theatre groups come to school and pupils visit the theatre. Pupils watch and take part in adapted Shakespeare productions and study a wide range of poetry, helping them to express emotions and discuss moral issues such as war.

MATHEMATICS

92. Standards and progress in mathematics are good overall, with pupils making increasing progress at the secondary stage. The teaching of mathematics is good in the junior stage and very good at the secondary stage and is very well integrated into lessons in other subjects, for example, the many opportunities for applying counting skills and an understanding of the vocabulary for describing or moving into position.

93. In Years 1 to 6, well-structured whole-class sessions develop pupils' counting skills and understanding of key vocabulary for position. A good example of this was in a Year 2 lesson when small food items were used effectively for developing the understanding of *one more* and very good use was made of toys to captivate attention when illustrating the idea of *up* and *down*. Through very good teamwork with the teaching assistants, pupils with different needs and difficulties were enabled to respond appropriately and answer questions by speaking, touching, pointing or eye pointing. Teachers use an effective multi-sensory approach to number songs, tracing and writing numerals and matching them to counters, and counting on fingers. However, in some lessons, there are times when pupils lose interest as they wait for others to take their turn. By Year 6, more-able pupils count items to 10 and know how many if *one more* is added to numbers below 10. They understand *up*, *down* and *next to*. Less-able pupils touch or point to items when learning to count.
94. Good preparation and planning continue to enable pupils to make good progress in their knowledge of number and understanding of number sequence. Good deployment of teaching assistants and use of resources, such as pictures and toys, effectively promote the identification and sequencing of numbers. By Year 6, most pupils have a very good understanding of direction and can recognise and describe an object and its position in relation to another.
95. With older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the teaching assistants work hard with high commitment and enthusiasm to involve pupils in tasks set out on worksheets. Excellent relationships contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and responses, such as measuring activities where together they count paces to measure familiar distances and the pupils become aware of key mathematical vocabulary, for example, *long*, *longer* and *longest*. They learn to count to five through action songs and counting the number of pupils in the class. Pupils use switches positively to activate sound and visual effects in the Studio or on a computer and they develop an understanding of cause and effect. However, pupils' good understanding of the use of switches is not sufficiently focused on mathematical concepts such as big and small, long and short, round and square or to enable the pupils to 'say' these words via a touch-talker.
96. Very good relationships and knowledge of pupils' learning needs enable teachers in Years 7 to 9 to confidently and clearly deliver effective lessons which meet the different needs of the pupils. This results in pupils maintaining their interest and enjoyment in mathematics and they make good progress. By Year 9, most pupils can identify a number missing from a sequence and more-able pupils are competent in this to 100 and can identify, for example, two more than 78. They are developing a good understanding of measures and some can draw a line accurately to a given length, in centimeters, using a ruler.
97. In Years 10 and 11, mathematics lessons are conducted at a lively pace and pupils are very well motivated by rhythmic, musical mental math sessions that involve counting in twos, fives and tens to 100 and holding out an object to show an understanding of positions of up and down, left and right, forwards and backwards. Tasks are set that are well matched to individual and group needs and pupils' learning is effectively supported by skilled and experienced teaching assistants. Very good progress is made, with pupils learning to apply their mathematics skills to everyday life. By Year 11, most have become confident in using money and have a basic understanding of time. Less-able pupils know the times of daily events and are beginning to understand coin values. More-able pupils tell the time accurately, recognise coins and can count out amounts of money correctly to above £1. They are using counting on and counting back strategies for giving change during shopping activities. Most-able pupils understand and use shopping lists, add amounts above £1 mentally and can use a calculator correctly for addition and subtraction. By the time pupils leave school, most pupils have a good grasp of basic number and are able to use their skills appropriately in daily life, including shopping, using vending machines, telling the time, weighing and measuring. They are familiar with the use of simple tables, charts and graphs for recording and representing the data they collect from surveys such as pupils' height and weight or their preferences for different foods.

98. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator and the planning for each class is carefully monitored. The National Numeracy Strategies have been suitably incorporated into the way mathematics is delivered. Good arrangements are in place to 'cascade' ideas from in-service training courses to all staff. The monitoring of teaching and learning in each classroom is now firmly established and there is a focus in the subject development plan for extending this, and to provide opportunities for teachers to share good practice. Overall, since the last inspection, the provision for mathematics has significantly improved.

SCIENCE

99. The school's provision for science is good.
100. In all years, pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in their understanding of scientific concepts through practical experience. By Year 2, pupils have made very good gains in their appreciation of living things. For example, they know what plants need to thrive, and they work hard at planning and developing their class area of the sensory garden. By Year 6, pupils on the autistic spectrum visit a local garden centre to select plants for their garden, whilst other pupils experiment with growing seeds and have a broad range of scientific knowledge. For example, they look at nature through mini-beasts and their habitats, and know how food chains work.
101. By the end of Year 9, they know and name parts of human body, drawing and labelling sketches accurately. Pupils with complex learning difficulties learn about forces, using their wheelchairs in push-pull exercises. They investigate changes in materials. For example, they feel fresh mint and coffee beans, which are eventually changed into tea and coffee drinks, which they taste and smell. This links very well to their geography topic, and the multi-sensory approach provides very good reinforcement of their learning.
102. By the end of Year 11 they accurately identify the body's major organs, and understand the reproduction system, which is linked to sex education and basic health and hygiene. For example, during a sex education lesson, pupils examined excellent models and discussed the development of a baby in the womb, the birth process and why sometimes a caesarian operation is necessary. There is evidence in their work and in photographic records that pupils have completed a range of experiments. For example, they conduct tests to ascertain water purity and experiment with sinking and floating properties. More-able pupils extend their earlier learning by attending mainstream lessons or local colleges, where they participate in investigative science, which they are unable to do at the school. In all years the pupils are encouraged to record their findings using prepared worksheets and tables.
103. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and sometimes excellent. Well-planned and structured lessons are lively and fun, promoting the pupil's genuine enthusiasm and interest. Clear explanations ensure that everyone understands the task, and well-balanced sessions allow for oral discussion, practical and written work. Classroom assistants provide very good levels of support where necessary, and opportunities for shared and independent work are good. For example, ten year-olds collaborate well to examine and plant a range of seeds, discussing germination times and growing needs, which brings science to life and provides very good hands-on experiences. Scientific vocabulary is used appropriately and coupled with high expectations. The teachers' very good classroom controls and pupil management ensure a high quality of learning. However, on occasions the almost continuous system of toileting throughout the lesson interrupts learning and some pupils miss out on aspects of the lesson. Relationships are very good and staff are excellent role models. Catering for individual needs is very well planned and the pupils' basic literacy skills are addressed through scientific vocabulary, which is used well during lessons by pupils and staff. Effective brainstorming sessions provoke thought and promote the pupils' awareness of their learning and there is evidence that pupils use CD ROMs and the Internet for research. Staff have a very good knowledge of their pupils' abilities and their achievements are very well monitored and matched against National Curriculum levels of attainment.

104. The science curriculum is broadly balanced in all years. The subject is well managed, ensuring that provision is in line with the National Curriculum guidelines. Catering for individual and complex needs is built into the planning, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has passed on her training in promoting literacy through science to other staff, and this and numeracy are well embedded into the science policy and curriculum. There is a well-equipped science room but this is rarely used because it serves as a speech therapy and physiotherapy room for three days of the week, and also as a design and technology room. There are sufficient good quality textbooks plus a good range of 'Big Books' for science. Practical and computerised resources are good but for valid safety reasons, there are no burners or chemicals. However, more able pupils have the opportunity to use these in a mainstream or college setting.
105. The subject has made very good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in recording the pupils' progress and in catering for individual needs.

ART AND DESIGN

106. There has been good improvement in the provision for art and design since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning are now monitored, pupils make more progress and resources are good.
107. The achievement of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 is satisfactory. It is good by the end of Years 9 and 11. The youngest pupils quickly become used to working with a range of materials which engage their interest. They stick lentils or tissue paper on to outlines of the initial letter of their name. They dip marbles in paint and watch the patterns made as they roll them down paper.
108. By the end of Year 6, pupils use a range of brushes and materials for a variety of purposes. They work as a group to complete a large seascape or reinforce geography work by creating a river scene using materials of different texture. Although more-able pupils work independently, the challenge is insufficient to enable them to make the best use of their skills. Pupils with additional special needs achieve well. Those on the autistic spectrum like the regularity of the work of artists such as Mondrian. They compose pleasing regular patterns using squares only. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience the same work as their peers. They help weave materials around regular shapes, making choices by eye pointing and show some enjoyment as their wheelchairs are woven in and out of cones. However, limited accommodation sometimes restricts their activity.
109. By the end of Years 9 and 11, the influence of the work of a number of artists and cultures is evident in pupils' work. Learning about Native Americans prompts the stencilling of wigwams on fabric and completing bead patterns with rice and lentils. Visits to the local area have resulted in good observational drawings and paintings for pupils in Years 10 and 11, including Avebury and the Cherhill White Horse in the style of Gauguin. Praise and encouragement are used well to motivate pupils to achieve.
110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 6 and good at the end of Years 9 and 11. Staff work together well in teams and manage pupils very well. This encourages all pupils to take part in lessons and enjoy practical activities. Good links are made with other areas of the curriculum, helping pupils to see how subjects connect. For example, shapes are named and used in art and numeracy to compose patterns. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 10 and 11, they designed and made hats and knew that the patterns were repeated. They showed pleasure in their individual designs and pride in their perseverance to tie bows. On occasions the planning in Year 1 to 6 is lacking in detail and, as a consequence, learning is affected. For example, while pupils enjoyed using the outside area for their lesson on patterns in nature, the objects to be used for rubbing were difficult for some pupils in wheelchairs to access. Teachers and pupils use digital cameras to record work at different stages and pictures are retrieved during information and communication technology or in art lessons; in these sessions, keyboard and switch skills are reinforced with purpose.

111. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has used her knowledge well to support less confident colleagues. She has compiled a very good scheme of work that encourages the use of a wide range of media and good learning opportunities. These include the opportunity for pupils to study the work of artists from a wide range of cultures and to visit art galleries. All pupils shared in an art day when a community artist introduced them to the work of Miro, then helped them build up a whole-school picture made entirely of different shapes.

CITIZENSHIP

112. The school teaches citizenship as part of personal, social and health education and the subject is now established. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of what should be taught. The school has developed the criteria for the assessment of citizenship using the P-scales and staff are now beginning to use them.
113. No lessons were seen during the inspection and standards are judged on the scheme of work and the other evidence in the school. Overall, standards are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of how society is governed and the responsibilities they have as citizens.
114. By Year 9, pupils show an understanding of how to negotiate with others. They know who are the special people in their lives and how they might help them to achieve what they want. In group work, they consider how people at work compromise and so get on with each other. They listen to stories of likes and dislikes of others and then discuss what they would do in a given situation. This work is followed up by a consideration of their own 'Dream' job and how to persuade their parents if they choose a place to work that their parents did not like. By Year 11, this work is further developed when pupils sort jobs into categories and follow up the work undertaken at the local college of further education. Pupils also know that they need to get a passport to leave the country. They appreciate the award for good citizenship won by the school and their involvement in the school's council. All pupils in Years 7 to 11 are encouraged to undertake a self-evaluation for their Annual Review and to set their own targets for their future work. The school also encourages all pupils to undertake simple routine tasks, for example taking the registers to the office, and so they develop a sense of responsibility. The pupils enjoyed taking part in a mock election, held around the time of the general election.
115. Citizenship provides pupils with opportunities to help others. For example, older or more able pupils act as 'Buddies' for younger or less able pupils, aiding them with their reading and general educational needs, such as putting their name cards on the register board.
116. The co-ordinator provides guidance for teachers and makes good use of the formal documents and guidance nationally available. Resources are few but the co-ordinator is aware of this and is researching the materials available.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Overall, pupils' achievements in food technology are good and they make good progress towards independence in the kitchen. However, in designing and making products, progress is generally satisfactory, within a limited range of experiences.
118. In Years 1 to 6, lessons are very well planned and prepared, with thoughtful consideration given to meeting the wide range of learning needs within the class. Very good strategies are used to enable pupils to learn in a variety of ways, including giving pupils experiences using sight, touch, smell and taste and using clear signs and gestures to ensure all pupils understand and are effectively involved. Through their investigation into the tastes and textures of different foods, all pupils express their likes and dislikes effectively. More-able pupils identify the products such as cheese, yogurt, butter and ice-cream. Some know the flavours and can explain the reasons why they like/dislike a product according to taste and texture. They explore materials including wood, fabric, metal, clay and plastic, and experience the properties of rough, smooth, hard and soft. With older pupils, a good connection is made to history as pupils investigate the range of

food available during 'rationing' and how to supplement it by growing vegetables. They extend their making skills using construction kits and use junk materials to make models such as robots.

119. Good approaches are used to engage pupils on the autistic spectrum in examining materials, choosing and making greetings cards, and, exploring equipment, finding out how things work and how to operate them for example, a tape player. Pupils use a range of construction kit materials to make wheeled vehicles and test them on a ramp, build houses or rooms using appropriate blocks and lay out 'rooms' with miniature furniture, showing a good basic understanding of their purpose.
120. By Year 9, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show awareness of materials and an understanding of mixing, cutting and fixing when involved in making items such as greetings cards and cakes. Teaching is very good where staff interact closely and playfully with pupils such as when demonstrating 'pop-up' movements. They involved the pupils in using exciting pop-up toys to captivate and maintain interest and attention as they developed an awareness and understanding of the mechanism. Very good use was made of the digital camera to personalise their pop-up picture and make them particularly meaningful to each pupil. However, when working in the kitchen, pupils in wheelchairs are severely restricted in their access to work surfaces and fixed equipment because of the cramped space and furnishings, which are not adjustable or designed for this purpose.
121. In Years 7 to 9, the quality of teaching in food technology is very good. Pupils investigated the ingredients for different pizzas before designing and making their own. Lessons include very good opportunities to use and develop pupils' skills in weighing and using measures and to practice good hygiene procedures.
122. Very good development of pupils' skills in food technology continues into Years 10 to 11. Pupils plan a well-balanced meal, prepare a shopping list and purchase the materials, and follow a basic recipe. Teachers make very good use of symbols to support reading and pupils apply their learning in mathematics regarding temperature and using the oven timer. Pupils have a good range of cooking skills, use equipment safely, including the cooker. Very good teaching is characterised by the emphasis on pupils becoming independent in their use of kitchen tools and equipment through clear demonstration and the teacher taking every opportunity to promote each individual's skills. They design and make slippers for a story character, make appropriate choices and make good progress in using tools for cutting out fabrics and the glue-gun, with support, for joining the materials. Teachers have a good approach to designing and making involving well-planned sequences of experiences such as visiting a shoe shop and choosing fabric before making their slippers. Good opportunities are taken to develop pupils' ability to work collaboratively.
123. The school recognises the need to develop provision for design and technology and has made a good start. Enthusiastic co-ordination has been established by a senior teacher, with support from another from the junior department. They monitor planning and provide good help to other class teachers. An existing scheme of work provides a useful guide by identifying half-termly topics for design and food technology but it is not tailored to the school organisation and lacks suitable progression of experiences. There is no provision for senior pupils to work with resistant materials and although there are adequate resources for food technology, there are insufficient tools and materials to adequately support provision for design and technology. Since the last inspection, limited progress has been made but good progress has been made this year and a good plan for further improvement is being implemented.

GEOGRAPHY

124. There has been satisfactory improvement in geography since the previous inspection. Currently, the geographical content of visits is sometimes incidental and assessment is barely satisfactory. However, teaching and learning are usually good and sometimes outstanding.

125. Pupils' progress and achievements in geography are good and sometimes very good. By the end of Year 2, pupils know their way round school and name many of the rooms. They recognise shops in the locality and follow a trail in the local park. Pupils are keen to dress in waterproof clothing to experience 'rain' and 'wind' and more-able pupils know that rain helps things grow. Trips out in the minibus show that pupils recognise local landmarks and features such as going up or down hill. Better planning could make even more use of visits to help raise achievement. However, well planned visits to the River Avon enabled pupils in Years 3 to 6 to recognise features of a river at different points. Art and literacy skills were reinforced by the good display they then assembled. Pupils on the autistic spectrum developed their social as well as geographical skills on a visit to RAF Lyneham. They tried different foods, sat in the cockpit of an aircraft, and then wrote thank you letters.
126. By the end of Year 9, pupils are achieving very well when taught by teachers. For a very small number of pupils taught by an assistant, expectations are not so high so achievement is lower. Pupils with PMLD respond to Middle Eastern music as they learn about the desert. They tolerate being dressed in Arab clothes and clearly enjoy the trickle of sand on their hands and feet. One pupil laughs aloud as he experiences a 'desert breeze' he has activated by switching on a fan. The impact of watching a Michael Palin video helps other pupils recall that deserts are hot and dry and transport is often by camel. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not study geography formally. However, skills are learnt and reinforced through planning for the residential visit to Wales and experiencing a significant number of environments when at the centre. However, the lack of resources, including maps of varying sizes and globes, constrains achievement.
127. Teaching and learning are good overall, but very good for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Major strengths of teaching are the inventiveness of staff, who plan lessons with a considerable element of fun as well as geographical content. Teachers' knowledge of pupils and their individual learning styles and management of behaviour contribute significantly to pupils' good learning. Teachers use praise and questioning well but miss opportunities to record what pupils have learnt. The contribution of support staff was a major factor in some excellent teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 9. For example, a 'sheikh' leading in a pantomime camel helped set the scene for a lesson on deserts. Digital cameras recorded the scene for future use. Pupils worked in groups to research animals, plants or people, reinforcing their literacy skills as they read their task cards then used reference books and the Internet to complete their work.
128. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new and is aware of the unsatisfactory gaps in resources. Schemes of work and assessment are also in need of development. The subject is in focus at the moment and planning is advanced to overcome these deficiencies, with money allocated. The subject makes a good contribution to social development through group working and visits out. The school uses its membership of the National Trust well to develop pupils' cultural awareness through visits within the local area and further afield.

HISTORY

129. The school's provision for history is satisfactory.
130. History is taught in half-termly blocks, alternating with geography. Only one lesson was observed during this inspection, therefore judgements are based on this together with an analysis of the pupils' work, subject documentation and teachers' records.
131. History is taught in all years. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their understanding of historical events. By the end of Year 2, they recall places and people through photographic prompts, and develop an awareness of the passing of time by looking at peoples' ages. As they progress through the school, pupils examine the way we used to live by dressing up as Romans or Victorians and by planning and preparing feasts relevant to the era being studied.
132. By the end of Year 6, they have looked at life in wartime Britain, and they know how much rationed food was available per person per week. They experiment in supplementing a 1940s

diet by making simple foods such as porridge scones, which broadens their knowledge of British culture.

133. By the end of Year 9, there is evidence in their work that they have an awareness of everyday life under the Tudors and Stuarts. They paint and use body boards of Henry VIII and his wives and this reinforces their learning by making it fun.
134. Aspects of trench warfare during World War 1 are reinforced in Years 10-11 when they study the War Poets and reflect on the impact of war on society. However, there are no opportunities for Year 11 pupils to gain accreditation in history.
135. Too little teaching of history was observed to make a valid judgement on its quality. However, samples of the pupils' work together with video and photographic evidence of the pupils' work indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory.
136. The subject manager, who is a history specialist, is a very recent appointment to the school. In this short time, she has identified areas for development and now has a policy and long-term overview for the subject. However, the updating of schemes of work is still in draft form. The manager co-ordinates and monitors the subject by analysing teachers' half-term planning for history. The monitoring and assessment of the pupils' progress is very good because this follows the whole-school procedures, and allows teachers to match the pupils' attainment against national levels. Attractive displays of the pupils' work, photographs and motivating posters give value to the subject. However, resources are unsatisfactory. There are few hands-on artefacts to support history and off-site visits to historical sites are rare. Pupils make good use of computers for research and there are adequate reference books in the school library.
137. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Departmental documentation has improved and schemes of work are being updated. The issue of monitoring and assessing the pupils' work has been addressed, and the teaching of history is now regularly monitored.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

138. Standards achieved in information and communication technology at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9 are satisfactory and by Year 11 they are good. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. There are clear indications from this year's long- and medium-term planning that this subject is developing well and that teachers are beginning to plan to teach pupils skills and to extend the use of information and communication technology throughout the whole curriculum, although this has not yet been achieved.
139. Teaching is satisfactory and most staff have a good knowledge of the programs they use frequently. Planning is good overall and teachers have a high expectation of what pupils can achieve. In all situations the management of pupils is very good and this aids their learning. Good use is made of video and digital cameras throughout the school and all pupils are taught to turn on or off such household goods as tape records, radios and other appliances.
140. In the reception class, children interact well with the computer and are beginning to learn to use a touch screen in response to prompts from the program. More-able children interact with computers to initiate a story and then watch the screen and listen to the reader. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties turn on lights and fans in the studio. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are managed and supported well in their use of information and communication technology and make satisfactory progress. For example, a Year 6 pupil was observed, with support, selecting the printer icon successfully and then saving work on to the hard disk. In these groups pupils are beginning to search the keyboard for the appropriate letter. Some pupils are greatly helped in this by the alternative keyboards recently brought into use. More-able pupils reach Level 6 in the P-scale, particularly where teachers are confident. For example, such pupils use computers to produce simple graphs on the colour of pupils' hair and the classification of their favourite food. Good use is made of art programs and pupils demonstrate

that, with help, they can start up the program, choose the size of the 'pen' and the colour to use.

141. This satisfactory progress is continued into Years 7 to 9 and pupils are beginning to use computers in other subject areas. In a Year 9 lesson in geography, pupils used the Internet to research deserts and found out that a number of animals lived there. During this lesson, pupils showed that they could use a mouse effectively and identify the icon for the Internet. Their research skills were limited and they required considerable support in this task. Pupils also learned to use simple word processors and databases and there are good examples of repeated patterns being created by the use of a simple graphics package.
142. In Years 10 and 11, teachers increasingly use information and communication technology to enhance learning. In a session on personal hygiene, pupils used the video camera to make a presentation and operated both the camera and the video recorder themselves. In another session, they were developing a multimedia presentation using digital images. Good use is made of programs such as 'Clicker', combined with clip art images to produce work on the 'Harry Potter' stories. Increasingly, pupils develop skills in using art and design programs, word processors, spreadsheets and desktop publishing packages. In these sessions, learning is good.
143. There are some good examples of communication access devices being used throughout the school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties or communication difficulties but these are not used consistently across all curriculum areas and throughout school. The studio is used effectively to enable pupils to make choices and control their environment and all pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit greatly from this provision. This aspect of information and communication technology is very good.
144. The curriculum co-ordinator is presently developing the policy to match the introduction of a range of new equipment. The existing scheme of work is satisfactory. Staff are beginning to use the P-scales for ongoing systematic monitoring of the pupils performance. A newly designed 'logbook' is soon to be introduced and will allow pupils to monitor their own progress and record what they have achieved. The subject improvement plan indicates that there has been a good improvement in the provision in the last year, with good use being made of specific grant funding to develop the new suite and to provide suitable software. This plan includes staff training and most staff have adequate or developing skills. Because of these recent good developments, improvement in provision since the last inspection is satisfactory and overall, the new investment is having a positive impact on improving standards. However, the information and communication technology suite is small and the current arrangement of the furniture prevents good access by pupils in wheelchairs. In addition to the computers in this suite, each classroom has a machine; however, in view of the high pupil numbers in some classes, the provision of classroom-based computers is not adequate. There is now access to the Internet and staff are beginning to make use of it. The school has recently purchased a good range of alternative keyboards and this equipment is now coming into use.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

145. The provision for modern languages is satisfactory.
146. French is taught to 11-16 year-olds. In all years, pupils make satisfactory progress in their awareness of the French language and culture. They have a basic knowledge of everyday greetings and respond accurately to simple instructions such as *hello*, *listen*, or *what is your name?* Pupils identify colours and everyday foods from flashcards, saying whether or not they like these, which extends their use of positive and negative grammar. They name the days of the week, trying hard with their accents. They listen well and participate in question-and-answer sessions with enthusiasm. Relationships are very good and there is no inappropriate behaviour.

147. Pupils also develop an awareness of European cultures through special events such as French, German or Italian days, when they dress up in costumes and plan and prepare European meals or play traditional games. A school trip to Disneyland in Paris allowed pupils to use their learned phrases, which further developed their cultural awareness.
148. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is a good emphasis on oral work and teachers use body language well to reinforce their meaning. French is spoken throughout most of the session and pupils respond well to the teacher's expectations and appropriate levels of challenge. However, in some lessons staff use inaccurate grammar and pronunciation, which impacts on the quality of learning. There is very good teamwork between staff, and classroom assistants provide good support where necessary. Simple artefacts, posters and games are used well to consolidate learning, although the use of computers is underdeveloped. Literacy skills are well promoted through speaking and listening and numeracy is reinforced through counting and number exercises.
149. The subject co-ordinator is a language specialist, and has begun to update the current schemes of work. A policy is now in place and includes guidance on the teaching of literacy and numeracy through French. Assessment procedures are good, and the pupils' progress is well monitored through the use of videos and photographic evidence. There are good cross-curricular links, particularly to geography through maps and pictures, and French makes a good contribution towards the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as promoting their awareness of European citizenship. Resources are unsatisfactory, and rely mostly on holiday souvenirs provided by staff. Available textbooks are good quality, but there are few videos and the use of computers and the Internet is underdeveloped.
150. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, particularly in the appointment of a specialist subject co-ordinator. The quality of teaching has improved and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching.

MUSIC

151. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and the provision is always satisfactory. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and in some instances, teaching and learning are excellent; All pupils enjoy taking part and, by the end of Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. By Year 9, progress continues to be satisfactory but by Year 11 good progress has been made. The development of provision for music since the last inspection is satisfactory.
152. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to sing traditional songs, such as 'If you're happy and you know it' and, by the end of Year 2, most pupils have an idea of tune and can follow a simple rhythm by clapping. They have learned a number of songs. They use a good range of percussion instruments, including many that are made by the pupils, for example, cornflakes in a box. When they sing their favourite songs, in a whole-Key Stage 2 singing lesson in the hall, they respond well to the music and make satisfactory progress, for example, when they sing 'The wise man built his house on a rock'. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 explore sounds and use everyday objects such as pots and pans and bottles to produce sound which are loud or soft. They know that music starts and stops and that most songs have tune, rhythm and words.
153. In Years 3 and 6, pupils sing well a number of traditional English folk tunes, for example, 'Old McDonald had a Farm' and enjoy making the animal noises. In Years 5 and 6, all pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, particularly in their ability to listen to sounds. They know how to take turns and during such exercises they compose as a group using a range of instruments. Good use is made of the sound beam for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Satisfactory planning ensures that pupils are provided with a range of suitable experiences in all the areas within the National Curriculum. Pupils' progress in listening to music, performing and composition is all planned for and, by the end of Year 6 pupils show confidence in appreciating dynamics, rhythms and silence.

154. In Years 7 to 9, pupils begin to explore the texture of music and listen well to solo, ensembles and orchestral music. They know that a conductor gives the musicians instructions and that there are very many different types of music, from jazz to classical. They play a range of instruments, for example, plucking a harp string and playing keyboards. They listen to music from many countries around the world and this work is often linked into other subjects such as religious education and geography. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop their skills of composition very well and in an excellent lesson used symbols on a chart to read and play their accompaniment to a pop tune which had been previously recorded. This lesson was an excellent example of music making and the excellent teaching ensured that the pupils' performance gave them considerable pleasure. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties also show active responses, particularly when music is recorded on to a touch-talker which they activate themselves. The studio also has specific equipment to help pupils experience sounds and vibrations and to be involved in cause and effect when they use the 'light and sound' board.
155. The school pays excellent attention to the use of music to enhance pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to recognise sound and rhythm styles and say which country these come from. Through such activities, pupils' cultural development is enhanced. The school is fully involved in the musical experiences provided by the county and pupils take part in the annual special school concerts. There are good links with local schools and institutions and pupils from these establishments come to the school to play to the pupils. They are visited by a number of professional groups who undertake workshops for the pupils. The school's annual concert in which all pupils take part is well appreciated by parents. In addition to these activities, the school provides other musical experiences when they celebrate festivals or national events. The school recently acquired the services of a music therapist.
156. The co-ordinator is not a specialist music teacher but is experienced. In addition, another member of staff plays the piano well and has considerable musical expertise. Co-ordination is satisfactory and the resources are generally good. There is a successful mixture of tuned and un-tuned percussion, in addition to a number of keyboards. The assessment of pupils' skills in music is satisfactory and more detailed assessment criteria are being developed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

157. The school places very good emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education within the daily life of the school and in lessons. It is well embedded into the whole-school curriculum and endorses the aims of the school. There are very good guidelines for work on sex education, 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, social and health education curriculum, and its impact is evident in the pupils' improving social skills, particularly among pupils on the autistic spectrum.
158. The quality of teaching is good overall. The daily snack-time provides very good opportunities for developing personal and social skills, as do whole-school assemblies, which are sometimes outstanding. Lunchtimes are used effectively as teaching time for pupils' self-help skills and social competences. Many pupils with physical difficulties make good progress towards independence in feeding themselves and are enabled in this by provision of adapted cutlery and dishes. Pupils' competences in attending to their own personal hygiene are very well encouraged as support staff implement the well-considered individual programmes.
159. In registration and circle-time and in discrete lessons of personal, social and health education, the pupils make good progress. From an early developmental stage in Year 1, they gain a rudimentary knowledge of how their bodies work. By the age of 16 they use good-quality models to examine how babies grow inside the womb, and they know how twins are conceived. Relationships with the local community are very good, and in Years 10 and 11, pupils visit places of work and benefit from links with local colleges. Visiting speakers participate in assemblies and local students regularly work alongside the pupils during lessons.

160. Staff keep very good records of the pupils' progress, monitoring this well against the pupils' individual care and education plans. The outcomes of the provision for personal and social development are apparent throughout the life of the school. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Their 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's special event days, where pupils dress up as historical or literary characters with real enthusiasm, or during off-site visits where they mix with members of the community.
161. The introduction of citizenship and increased links with the local community indicates good improvement in the school's provision for personal, social and health education since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in the provision and teaching of physical education. Overall, pupils make very good progress in the development of their physical skills.
163. In Years 1 to 6, good use is made of good-quality, basic gymnastic equipment during lessons in the school hall, which are well structured with appropriate warm-ups, planned activity matched to pupils' age and special needs and a suitable cool-down session at the end. Teachers prepare for gymnastic activities with a well-thought-out circuit with a variety of apparatus that challenges the pupils to extend their movement, balance and co-ordination skills. Pupils make good progress in using their bodies in a variety of ways to move along benches, across mats, up and down steps and over climbing tables. More-able pupils become confident in climbing up onto the apparatus and jumping down onto the mats with safe landing. Less able pupils are well supported as they learn these skills by the teacher, support assistants and volunteers, who work well as a team to meet pupils' needs. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils are effectively managed so that they are aware of safety and develop good self-control, quickly learning to stop to the sound of a drum-beat. Good use is made of praise and encouragement to motivate pupils to extend their movement skills and they are effectively motivated to improve their movement sequences by evaluating each other's performances. By Year 6, pupils extend their climbing, balancing, jumping and landing skills and develop different ways of travelling across high and low apparatus.
164. Pupils within the autistic spectrum benefit from using a community adventure playground alongside local children. They respond well to sharing equipment, waiting for their turn and developing their confidence in using the challenging equipment. Excellent planning and organisation of support staff and volunteers and management of pupils enable them to make good progress in their physical activity.
165. Very good use of large resonance boards enables older pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to lie close to their classmates and reach out to greet each other. Staff enable them to pass textured items and toys to each other and extend their movements purposefully by turning to the left and the right to give and receive. They enjoy this opportunity and respond positively, gaining increasing awareness of themselves and others as well as extending their movement skills. The 'resonance' boards are used well by the staff to further encourage movement to a rhythm as the pupils are motivated by feeling the vibration and sound caused by knocking the board surface.
166. In Years 7 to 11, pupils make very good progress. Enthusiastic, well planned and prepared teaching effectively motivates and challenges pupils to be actively engaged in vigorous warm-up and to persevere in ball control skills, resulting in very good progress being made in passing, stopping and intercepting skills in football. Good coaching and demonstration by the teacher enable pupils to improve directional control in passing. More-able pupils confidently demonstrate these skills to classmates. Teaching assistants are very effective in enabling less-able pupils to achieve progress and take part purposefully in the range of activities.

167. Excellent games sessions are enjoyed by pupils through the very good links with the 'Active Sports' organisation through which students visit to promote pupils' games experiences. These games sessions are highly motivating and provide an excellent progression of activity, resulting in pupils making rapid progress in developing ball control and accuracy and a good spirit of competition and points scoring for their team. Pupils learn to control the pace and direction of the ball during a bowls and boccia game so that they land on the target. Non-ambulant pupils are fully involved and learn these skills using a boccia chute.
168. Dance is suitably included in the physical education programme and pupils learn to move to the rhythm of music and make very good progress in developing movement sequences. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy an inclusion project led by students from a local college. They benefit socially from the excellent relationships and further develop their physical skills. They watch intently as their friends demonstrate the movement routines to music and soon progress from walking the steps to performing to the music.
169. All pupils benefit from swimming sessions and very good use is made of local swimming pools. The leisure pool is used effectively with younger pupils to establish their confidence in the water and they quickly learn the basic idea of moving through the water and achieve skills such as independently entering and leaving the pool. Teachers plan well and liaise with pool staff to organise good instruction. Very good guidance from teaching assistants, parents and volunteers provides pupils with support according to their needs. Pupils respond to the high expectations, enjoy their sessions, listen carefully to instructions and are proud of their achievements as they develop their skills and techniques. Many pupils progress to become independent swimmers. Pupils with physical difficulties are included and make good progress according to their difficulties. Those with more severe difficulties benefit additionally from regular hydrotherapy sessions in the school's jacuzzi.
170. Provision for physical education is now well managed and is undergoing rapid and significant development. A suitable curriculum outline is in place and ensures that pupils receive a good, balanced programme of physical education and the scheme of work is being reviewed and updated with a focus on improving the assessment of pupils' attainments. Provision includes athletic activity, a school sports day in the summer and an opportunity for pupils to experience outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential stay at an outdoor pursuits centre which also adds particular value to pupils' personal development. Very good links have been established with sports development organisations such as 'Soccerability', that provide very good equipment and training for staff. These are effectively promoting pupils' involvement in a range of adapted games.
171. Pupils' physical development is very well supported by the visiting physiotherapist who works closely with staff and parents so that movement programmes may be carried out effectively at school and at home. The school has set in place staff training in 'MOVE' (mobility opportunities via education), a programme to develop pupils' movement skills through daily school activities. This is already having a positive effect as pupils with movement difficulties are being motivated to turn and reach for materials and equipment and become more independent in practical activities. There is a very good prevailing ethos of enabling pupils to do for themselves as opposed to having it done for them. However, the school has not yet provided opportunities and equipment for those pupils who are non-ambulant to learn to control motorised movement leading to the skills needed for independent use of a motorised wheelchair.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

172. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education during their time in school. Overall, the provision is satisfactory.
173. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are introduced to concepts of sharing and caring for others and are introduced to Christianity and other religions through stories and celebrations; for example, the celebrations of Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter, the Chinese New Year and the festival of

Divali. They develop an awareness of the changing of the seasons and that plants die and that trees shed their leaves and in Springtime grow new ones. They develop some understanding of places of worship when they visit the local church and re-create a 'Sunday School' in the classroom. Through following a 'code of conduct,' pupils develop an understanding of right and wrong; this is a particular feature of the work undertaken by pupils with difficulties within the autistic spectrum. In Years 3 to 6, pupils listen to Bible stories in order to explore the human feelings of sadness, anger, hurt and forgiveness. Teachers plan well to follow up this work with a sequence of emotions and a number of suitable Bible stories are dramatised by the pupils, for example, the story of 'The Good Samaritan' and of 'Moses in the Bull rushes'.

174. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress during Years 7 to 9. They explore further the festival of the Chinese New Year and study other festivals for example, the Jewish festival of blessing trees called TuB'shevat and the Hindu festival of Basanta. They know that all the countries in the United Kingdom have saints and listen to the story of the 'Lost sheep', linking this with the work they do in geography. Through further visits to churches they know that each religion has a special place and that in these places of worship there are special books, such as the Bible. Pupils show good respect for other religions and faiths as they learn more about them. However, pupils struggle with concepts of death and what happens to them when they die, and when they are asked to compare and contrast local, national and international commitments to a community. When studying Sikhism, pupils become aware of the three golden rules of living and this work complements the work done in personal, social and health education and citizenship.
175. In Years 10 and 11, pupils compare a Christian Christmas with the secular one and examine symbolism and rituals in the Christian faith. They visit a Sikh temple in Swindon. Good use is made of the video camera in these sessions. Good attention is paid to Buddhism and Judaism. For example, they know how the Buddhists worship. Pupils' understanding is enhanced as they co-operate well with each other and responded well to the challenge to act out stories and rituals. Older, more able pupils reflect on their own feelings, such as joy and sorrow, and know about the different relationships within the family.
176. The quality of teaching in religious education is at least satisfactory. In the majority of lessons, support staff make a very good contribution. In the most successful lessons, teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves and to make personal responses to the matters and issues being discussed. For example, in the Year 8 lesson, pupils ate a fudge called barfi' when they celebrated the Hindu festival of Holi and later on in the lesson reflected on their loss of a colleague. Some imaginative lessons are very effective, for example, Year 10 and 11 pupils took part in a simulated wedding service, which was taken by the local vicar in the church. Through such activities, pupils develop a clear understanding of religious and spiritual rituals. Overall, the satisfactory quality of teaching results in pupils displaying positive attitudes towards the subject and being keen to engage in discussion of issues.
177. The scheme of work is unsatisfactory. It is derived from the Wiltshire agreed syllabus but this is difficult to modify for the pupils in this school because topics require a considerable understanding of abstract ideas and concepts. The co-ordinator is well aware of these issues and is currently re-writing the scheme to make it serve the needs of the pupils in the school. Subject co-ordination has been unsatisfactory because little progress has been made since the last inspection. Further work is required to monitor and evaluate the outcomes for pupils and to extend the use of assessment.
178. The school assemblies are clearly focused on spiritual and moral aspects and add to pupils' understanding of religious concepts and support classroom work. For example, during the inspection the classroom work on the Hindi festival of Holi was supported. Parts of the personal, social and health education scheme of work make a further contribution to the moral and spiritual development of pupils, particularly when they provide a short and focused time for reflection. There is a number of teacher guides in the library but overall the range of resources available is unsatisfactory.

