

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HADRIAN SCHOOL**

Newcastle

LEA area: Newcastle

Unique reference number: 131986

Headteacher: Liz Turnbull

Reporting inspector: Jacque Cook  
2351

Dates of inspection: 30 September - 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 249434

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 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bertram Crescent Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE15 6PY
Telephone number:	0191 2734440
Fax number:	0191 2261150
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Beatrice Brown
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Art and design	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils and students taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17939	Gavin Graveson	Team inspector	Geography History	
16979	Charlie Henry	Team inspector	English Educational inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
22466	Diane Pearson	Team inspector	Physical education Foundation stage Personal, social and health education	
15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Science Integration	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?

1845	Robert Tweed	Team inspector	Design and technology Music Religious education	
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The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hadrian is a mixed community special school for 130 pupils aged between 2 and 11 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is a new school, formed only three years ago when ten schools were closed to make four new ones. Currently, there are 103 pupils on roll but this number is expected to rise as the term progresses. There are more boys (60) than girls (43) and six are children of Nursery and Reception age. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and three have additional hearing impairments. Nine pupils are from homes where English is an additional language and are in the early stages of language acquisition. A high percentage of pupils (52%) are entitled to free school meals, which reflects the economic and social difficulties in the area. Attainment on entry to the school is low and often very low.

The sports hall, indoor riding school and on site riding for the disabled provision are not in use because major building works to create arts and enhanced sports facilities has led to the areas concerned being fenced off.

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

This is a very effective school. Pupils make very good progress, achieve very well and have very positive attitudes to their work because they are taught very well. Leadership of the headteacher and senior staff and the teamwork of the staff is exceptional. They have common goals, which lead to a focus on each child ensuring they are helped to do their best. The school is managed very well and as a result of the very high standards achieved, value for money is very good.

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

- Helps pupils make very good progress, particularly in English, mathematics, science, physical education and personal, social and health education through the provision of high quality teaching and excellent teamwork of teachers, support staff and other adults in classes.
- Makes learning enjoyable so pupils want to come to school, behave very well and develop excellent relationships with other pupils and the staff that work with them.
- Gives children a very good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes.
- Has excellent leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team who with the staff and governing body continually work to improve the education of the pupils.
- Ensures all pupils are included in activities and through working closely with local schools and colleges provides many opportunities for them to work with mainstream pupils and students.
- Has very strong links with parents.

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

- Monitoring and evaluation of progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education.

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

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

The school has not been inspected before.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school is making very good progress towards targets set for individual pupils. Children of nursery and reception age make very good progress and achieve well. The school takes a pride in ensuring all pupils make gains in learning and, as a result, a very good number are improving their standards by at least one level each year in the main subjects of English and mathematics. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in English, mathematics, science, physical education and personal, social and health education. In all other subjects there are indications that progress and achievement are good overall although it is difficult to track progress over time. The exception is religious education, where progress is satisfactory despite the high quality of teaching because there is insufficient time allocated to teaching the subject.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are extremely keen to come to school and are very interested and involved in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are polite and well mannered. A few with behaviour difficulties make very good improvement due to consistent application of their behaviour plans.
Personal development and relationships	This is excellent. Pupils build very strong relationships with each other and with the staff that work with them. They gradually take more responsibility as they get older and learn to work as part of a team.
Attendance	This is satisfactory overall with a very small amount of unauthorised absence and other absence mainly due to medical reasons.

Pupils want to learn and enjoy what they do because of the very close way they work with staff and the very high quality of teaching.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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



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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good and notably so in the subjects that have been prioritised for development, English, mathematics, science, physical education and personal, social and health education. In other subjects, teaching and learning are good overall. Staff have considerable expertise and in depth knowledge of how best the pupils learn. This is used very effectively to plan and teach exciting lessons. Pupils' interest is gained, their concentration increases and all learn because the work is pitched at the right level. In this way, the needs of all pupils are met very well. The work of support staff is of very high quality and all adults working with pupils are consistent in the way they work. Pupils put in a great deal of effort into their learning to please the staff they work with and no time is wasted. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Communication skills are emphasised in every lesson and activity, which helps pupils to make particular progress in that area.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and elements such as what is to be taught for children of nursery and reception age and the subjects of English, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and health education have been prioritised and are very well developed. Very good use of the community enriches what is taught very effectively. Excellent links with local schools and colleges provide many pupils with opportunities to work with mainstream pupils and students.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is very good because there is a clear focus on ensuring the needs of each pupil are met. Although these pupils are in the early stages of language acquisition, additional support is provided successfully through a specialist assistant who visits the school. Also, staff take great care to teach language throughout their lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	These areas are promoted very well and contribute to the very positive atmosphere in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The welfare, safety and care of the pupils are priorities for the school and taken very seriously. Pupils' personal development is monitored and evaluated very well. There are very good strategies for promoting good behaviour and keeping close track of the behaviour of those with difficulties to ensure they continue to improve. Links with other professionals are very good.

The curriculum has, quite rightly, been systematically developed since the school was opened with the needs of all the pupils at its core. As a result, some areas are better developed than others. The innovative, high quality is reflected particularly in the work on physical education. The school has been selected as the only special school to work on the National Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) National Physical Education School Sport Project (PESS) and is also contributing to the Department for Education and Skills CD Rom on disability sport. The plans of what are to be taught from year to year (schemes of work) for the remaining subjects are scheduled to be developed this year to eliminate occasional unnecessary duplication of work. A very successful integration programme enables a significant number of pupils to attend mainstream schools.

Partnership with parents is a strength of the school. Links with parents are established before their child is admitted and are developed exceptionally well. Information provided for parents is excellent, including first rate newsletters and well used home/school books.

The monitoring of the progress of pupils in the subjects where the curriculum has been developed is effective but it is difficult to track the progress of pupils over time in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, and religious education. This is partly because the curriculum is not yet developed in these subjects, but also because there are instances of targets on Individual Education Plans not being sufficiently specific enough to measure progress successfully.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff provides excellent leadership and very good management of a staff that work extremely well towards common goals. As a result, the capacity for the school to continue to improve is very high indeed.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. They know the strengths and the weakness of the school through collecting first hand information and work with the headteacher and staff to provide a very good standard of education in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good procedures for evaluating the performance of the school. Many are used very well, for example monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, but a few, such as monitoring the quality of Individual Education Plans and pupils' progress in a few subjects are not as rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very well.

The aims and values of the school permeate all areas of pupils' learning very well. The school improvement plan is an effective tool in developing the school so successfully in the three years since it was opened. Over the last two years the duties of a member of staff who has been teaching abroad have been undertaken by senior staff which has limited their work in the wider school, particularly in relation to monitoring and enabling co-ordinators to monitor more widely. There are very good levels of staffing and resources. The accommodation is of a high standard with a very good range of specialist facilities. Additional designated funding is successfully gained and used extremely well partly because the principles of best value are very well applied.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The close way the school works with them, provides good information and the ease with which they can talk with the headteacher and staff.</li> <li>The high quality of the leadership and management</li> <li>The very good teaching and the concern of the staff for the children, who they feel enjoy going to school, work hard and learn and develop well.</li> <li>Children do interesting things in school and outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few parents expressed concerns about the amount of work for their children to do at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the positive points made by the parents. They disagree that there is not sufficient homework available. A comprehensive homework policy is clearly followed and older pupils

have regular homework. Additionally, such activities as physiotherapy programmes, reading books and opportunities to use communicators are also provided.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are very good throughout the school. As a result of the very high quality of the teaching, there are consistently very high standards in the nursery and reception class, in Year 1 and in Years 5 and 6. Often, in these classes, pupils make outstanding progress. In other year groups, pupils' progress is not so consistent and ranges from very good to satisfactory.
2. The school has been analysing the data concerning the progress made by pupils for a year in English and mathematics. Analysis of gains made between Performance (P) levels (these measures are produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for pupils who are below the lowest level of attainment of the National Curriculum) and, where appropriate, National Curriculum levels show that many pupils make significant progress in these subjects. This demonstrates a clear link between the well-planned curriculum, the very good teaching and very good achievement and progress made in these subjects. Suitably challenging targets set for this year include the additional subjects of science, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. It is too early in the term to judge how well these will be met.
3. Throughout the school there is a very strong emphasis on meeting the needs of each individual pupil and as a result there is no measurable difference between the progress made by boys or girls or by pupils from ethnic minorities. Pupils from homes where English is an additional language consistently do as well as their classmates because the work is specifically tailored towards ensuring their knowledge and understanding of language is developed effectively. Additionally, the very good teaching of literacy, particularly communication skills, and numeracy, is included in all subjects and taught at every opportunity. Very good attention is paid towards ensuring pupils with additional special educational needs have the correct level of support so that they too do as well as their peers.
4. The very good start children make in the nursery and reception class in all areas of the foundation curriculum is firmly based on the excellent teaching of all the adults that work with them. Children make very good progress in learning to communicate their needs and wishes and to develop listening skills. They enjoy stories and will look at pictures. In mathematics, children begin to recognise objects and understand that when an object is covered it is still there. They explore colour and texture, investigating and increasing their knowledge and understanding of the world. The very effective use of the area outside the classroom widens their experiences. Their physical development is promoted very well through their enjoyment when using the hydrotherapy pool where they float and jump in the water, often assisted by staff and volunteers. They learn to stretch through exercising, following programmes outlined by physiotherapists. Children explore materials thoroughly and scrutinise the effects they make as part of their creative development. They make paintings using sponges, hands and brushes and make sounds using percussion instruments.
5. In English, mathematics and science pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. They continue to improve their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and by the end of Year 2, they clearly indicate choices and many vocalise and begin to use words and sentences. They listen attentively to stories anticipating what will happen next and improve control when they make marks on paper. By the time they are in Year 6, communication skills are greatly improved, often with the assistance of switches and simple communicators. They participate in discussions, look at pictures in books and a few are in the early stages of reading. Many 'overwrite' words or copy underneath and begin to write short sentences. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties enjoy listening to stories and increase the number of words they understand and recall.

6. The use of number rhymes in mathematics helps pupils learn to count and by Year 2, many join in up to five and sort objects by shape or size. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to identify colour and to select the larger of two items offered. As pupils move through the school they begin to recognise and name an increasing number of shapes and begin to do simple addition. In Year 6, they collect data, recognise coins and learn about telling the time. Their accurate use of mathematical language increases and more able pupils tackle subtraction and multiplication. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties discriminate between different shapes and a range of colours. They match objects successfully and understand that an action may have an effect.
7. In science, pupils develop their investigational skills throughout the school. They make good progress by the end of Year 2. Pupils discover that moving air has strength and direction when experimenting with streamers and electric fans. They learn how things grow and thrive. Their ability to predict develops as they get older, becoming more accurate such as in their opinions whether items will float or sink. By Year 6, pupils know that plants grow and they explore what is needed for them to thrive. The properties of materials are identified and articles sorted accordingly. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use their senses effectively to investigate. They handle objects particularly noticing texture. Where appropriate they learn about the range of tastes and smells of food.
8. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in physical education and in personal, social and health education. They experience many aspects of physical education and throughout their time in school become increasingly more confident in water, whether in the hydrotherapy pool or the swimming pool. They bounce and the more able turn and tuck their legs on the trampoline. Pupils improve their skills in ball games and develop a team spirit and awards are won from activities such as riding for the disabled. Pupils do very well in personal, social and health education, including citizenship, because it is taught throughout all lessons as well as in separate sessions. They learn to look after themselves as far as possible and to relate well to each other.
9. It is understandable that in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music standards are not quite so very high because, rightly, time has been invested in getting the other subjects right. Nevertheless, because the standard of teaching is high pupils make good progress and do well throughout the school. The one exception is religious education, where because there is not enough time allocated for teaching, pupils' progress and achievement is satisfactory.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They behave very well in and out of lessons and display very positive attitudes to their work and enthusiasm for school. Pupils are very pleased to come to school in the morning and they smile and greet staff enthusiastically. Indeed, many parents commented that their children did not want to stay at home when they were unwell. Pupils enjoy social occasions, such as when a class dressed up as clowns. They spoke well and showed great confidence and enthusiasm. Their confidence extends to enjoying performing in Christmas productions and in fashion shows often exhibiting a high level of professionalism in trying to make their contribution perfect. Very good relationships between all members of the school's community reflect the caring atmosphere. The pupils' personal development is very good because of the climate of mutual respect and careful planning to promote personal and independence skills.
11. Children in the nursery and reception class build very strong relationships with the staff and with each other. They learn to trust because of the intense and consistent way the staff work with them. This continues throughout the school. For example, Year 6 pupils in a religious education lesson took turns to speak and listened attentively to each other. They raised their hands to ask questions and one pupil with behaviour difficulties tried hard not to call out. A "bestest buddies" system is a great success. Older pupils love to help with the younger ones. They read stories to

them, sing songs with, or to, them, assist with offsite visits and help with learning signs. School council members seek the views of other pupils in the school and take their role very seriously, which is one of the ways pupils learn about citizenship.

12. Pupils are very well behaved. They are particularly sensible and take care in physical education sessions. At the end of one lesson, they put their own beanbags away. At playtime, many pupils play independently on the large wooden play equipment. They are sociable and mix well. They ask questions and actively play and climb. Lunchtime is an orderly meal with friendly chatter and pupils wait patiently for their turn to go up to the hatch. Pupils learn to sign or say "please" and "thank you" and there is a framed poster on the walls encouraging this. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, for example, in an excellent assembly, one pupil responded to the effect of one person's action in a story by saying "That isn't right."
13. The development of pupils' personal skills is very good. They respond well to opportunities to develop their independence. At lunchtime, pupils take responsibility for collecting their own meals in the cafeteria. Those attending mainstream schools as part of the integration programme mix happily with other pupils they meet, for example, playing football with them at break time. All pupils take responsibilities willingly, including taking turns to deliver registers to classrooms and return them to the office. They learn to make choices. For instance, in a physical education session, they choose whether to throw over arm or under arm. Prior to registration in the morning, pupils select books to look at or choose which piece of equipment they would like. They support each other in class, cheering each other on and applauding an especially good effort often without being prompted. One young pupil proudly showed off her 'Ofsted file' and pen as she took on the role of inspector in her class!
14. Attendance at the school at 92 per cent is satisfactory. Most of the pupils' absence is authorised and is due to medical reasons. There have been no exclusions during the previous year.

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

15. The major factor in the overall very high quality of teaching and learning is the excellent way in which the experienced and knowledgeable staff work together. The support staff are exceptionally skilled in getting the best from the pupils. Additional adults in lessons are very well briefed and volunteers and professionals, such as physiotherapists, contribute to the consistency, which provides the framework for successful learning. As a result, pupils quickly learn routines and begin to anticipate what will happen next. This gives them the confidence they need to attempt new activities. For example, a Year 1 pupil learnt to bounce down and up on the trampoline in a 'seat drop' and went on to draw his legs up into a 'tuck' when he jumped. Staff build very strong relationships with the pupils and this is especially valuable in helping pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with communication difficulties to demonstrate their understanding. Pupils lift their heads in response to their name, make eye contact and make their needs clear. Pupils attending sessions at mainstream schools are confident because the level of support they receive is excellent. A support assistant supplied a word list and appropriate support which enabled a pupil to compose and then read out his sentence to the class "conker tree leaves are scrunchy and yellow"
16. Teachers have a clear picture of how the pupils they work with learn best. This information is used very well to plan what will be taught to ensure it is pitched at the right level. In mathematics, for instance, two pupils in a class may be counting up to three and another pupil locating one item. Literacy, including communication skills, and numeracy are taught very well. Words related to specific subjects are emphasised and every opportunity is taken to count. The constant use and teaching of language is very helpful for pupils from homes where English is an additional language and care is taken to ensure they understand what is being said. Staff are well trained in the use of specialist strategies. Pupils in the early stages of learning language and those with communication difficulties are helped to understand through the effective use of signing and objects of reference (items used to refer to a particular place or activity, such as a torch for

going to the multi-sensory room, a square of hessian to represent rebound therapy and books to indicate story time). Good connections are also made for the pupils through sounds. Musical instruments are used very effectively to signify that a class is present at assembly. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 turned to watch for the nursery and reception class to arrive when they heard the bells. Information and communication technology is used effectively, particularly switches and relevant computer programs. Staff are also using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) well, where it is appropriate, to help pupils to communicate their choices. In a few instances, where it is beneficial, teachers are using a modified TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Related Handicapped Children) approach. For example in one classroom a distraction free area has been established for a pupil to work in when necessary. Staff are careful to ensure that where pupils find it difficult to cope with change, they are well prepared in advance.

17. The interest of pupils is captured and maintained because staff make lessons fun and exciting. Stories are read using suitable voices for characters and include actions. A sense of adventure and anticipation is developed and rhymes and repetition help pupils to learn. Pupils in a Year 2 class joined in with the *Little Red Hen* rap enthusiastically copying the chicken actions made by the teacher. Often lessons begin with all the pupils together and then they move into groups or work individually with staff. This works very well because staff are very skilled in making sure that questions are at the right level of difficulty for each pupil. They also wait for answers to give pupils the opportunity to respond, for instance, to make a choice of which book they would like to look at, or which area of the school they would like to depict in a collage. Careful questioning enables pupils to show what they know and have learnt. Often staff work with one pupil which is a very intensive session and leads to real gains in understanding and skills. One pupil with high levels of difficulty consistently showed he could discriminate between two colours and big and small items.
18. In the consistently very good, and at times excellent, teaching and learning in the nursery and reception class and Years 1, 5 and 6 pupils with behaviour difficulties are dealt with very effectively. Their behaviour plans are followed and the pupils learn as well as the other pupils in the class. Lessons have a very good pace. Pupils move from one activity to another in a Year 1 physical education session, without pause because staff are very well briefed knowing exactly which pupils they will work with and what they will be doing. The parachute session at the end of one lesson demonstrated clearly how very well staff work with each other as well as the children. As the adults moved round, up and down and in and out the responses from the children stretching up and curling down with great excitement were of very high quality. Pupils rise to challenges. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils competed intensely to compile the longest list with the most descriptive words of items hidden on a tray. They tried hard to name shapes accurately and described a cylinder clearly because they could not recall the name. In these, and in many other, lessons teachers are very well organised. Conversely, in a small number of lessons, where teaching and learning are nonetheless satisfactory, this is an area of relative weakness. For example, putting equipment needed on the floor in the sensory room proved a distraction to pupils and they were inattentive to what the teacher was saying. Occasionally, in parts of lessons, the pace is too fast and pupils are expected to retain information too quickly.
19. Homework is set regularly for older pupils, which consolidates very well what they have learnt in school. Pupils take home books and a number of activities each weekend and return what they have done during the week. For example, they were asked to cut out and paste in sequence a series of pictures showing how plants grow for topic work. For English they printed in the initial and final letter of three letter words, such as B\_a\_I. Other pupils also have opportunities to take home books and Big Macks (switches on which messages can be recorded) to share with their parents.

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

20. The curriculum is good. It is sufficiently broad and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education is also included but lacks sufficient time for pupils to improve their progress from satisfactory. Being a new school, a decision was taken before the school opened to use expanded Individual Education Plans as a basis for medium term planning in order to concentrate on supporting staff. Since then, as a matter of priority, plans for English, mathematics, personal social and health education and physical education have been very successfully developed. National strategies for literacy and numeracy have been adapted very effectively for pupils. As a result staff are very aware of the need to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and do this very well in all subjects. The school is very aware that the two-year topic cycle does not give sufficiently detailed guidance to ensure work is not repeated in subsequent years. This is a particular problem for design and technology, geography and history. This is due to be resolved as the remaining subjects have plans of what is to be taught from year to year (schemes of work) established as part of the current school improvement plan.
21. Children of nursery and reception age follow the foundation curriculum, which is very well planned to meet their needs. All the areas are included very well. The addition of such initiatives as the Sightlines project, which also involved Year 1 pupils, is continuing to prove beneficial in helping children to investigate in their own way. The most recent project had a darkened area and a white area for children to explore where they investigated and responded to colour, light, movement and music.
22. In order to help ensure the needs of all the pupils in the school are met very well indeed, there is appropriately more time spent on the teaching of physical education and personal, social and health education. The physical education curriculum is particularly broad and exciting as befits a school involved with the high profile National Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) Physical Education School Sport (PESS) Project. It includes such activities as hydrotherapy, rebound therapy, soft play and riding for the disabled. These are very successful, particularly for many pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Additionally, the strong emphasis on including the use of pupils' senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell to successfully help learning is very effective. Specific plans for what is taught in the specialist areas, including the sensory room and the newly developed sensory quadrangle, broaden this area further. The provision for pupils with additional special needs is very good overall. Where it is needed, specific strategies are introduced; for example, a modified TEACCH approach is successful in helping pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The use of signing, PECS and symbols where appropriate, helps pupils in the early stages of developing communication skills and those with communication difficulties. The additional provision of an assistant who regularly visits the school to work with pupils from families where English is not the first language is very helpful. Care is taken to ensure that elements of the cultures of these pupils are included, for example in the celebration of religious festivals.
23. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very good. It is taught both in specific lessons and throughout the school day. The topic plan ensures pupils have a comprehensive and rich range of opportunities through which they learn about themselves, their environment, feelings, healthy eating and dental care. The work of older pupils includes changes as they grow, road safety, teamwork and people that help them. An interesting range of visitors such as representatives from the Royal Navy, the police, fire and ambulance services provides first hand information. The school nurses and other professionals make a positive contribution to health, education in drug misuse and sex education, which are taught effectively. Citizenship is also being taught very well. Pupils learn that they should only make decisions about things when they know about them. Year 6 pupils who transferred to the secondary school last year did so successfully and with confidence. This was achieved through very good introductory arrangements where pupils knew a great deal about it before they went. Staff from the new school visited Hadrian school and pupils visited the new school. They sampled a range of activities. Where it was thought pupils might experience difficulties, additional visits were made to ensure all went smoothly.
24. The range of additional activities organised for the pupils is very good. Although it was too early in the term for it to be running at the time of the inspection, an excellent, weekly after school club



provides a wide range of activities including an information and communication technology club and a sports club where there are regular sessions of football, rounders, trampoline and dance. Lunchtime activities are well organised. There are very good residential experiences for the pupils at outward centres such as the Calvert Trust at Keilder, where for example, special, 'buddy' harnesses enable pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to abseil. Football coaching takes place at weekends at a local college.

25. Very good use is made of the community. Connections made with one large department store have led to talks to parents and their staff working in the school in their own time. This store and three others provided outfits for the very successful pupils' fashion show. Members of the community, including police, firemen and ministers of religion, regularly visit the school. Visits are made to such places as a synagogue, a farm, museums and exhibitions. Regular use is made of a swimming pool for those more competent swimmers. A Toy Library, which serves the whole local authority area, is based in the school. Many pupils attend the activities and borrow from the facility.
26. There are excellent links with other schools and colleges. Students from two local colleges come to school to work with pupils. A very successful initiative involves a teacher from a mainstream school who teaches activities such as art and design and food technology for an afternoon a week to a Year 6 class. Mainstream school pupils accompany her and work very well with individuals in the class. A dance tutor from a local dancing academy comes into school each Friday to improve the confidence and co-ordination of pupils. Opportunities are taken to provide courses for parents. For example, a tutor from the further education college has helped parents to overcome fears about their child attending a special school.
27. An extremely successful integration programme led by the pupil support co-ordinator and a designated special needs assistant at present has 14 pupils placed in seven primary schools. Pupils are selected mainly by the class teachers but also by parents. The support assistant liaises with class teachers establishing what is to be taught and prepares appropriate resources. This enables pupils to study the same work as the others in the class. The headteachers of the schools involved meet at Hadrian school every year to discuss the social progress and the suitability of the placements of the pupils. To ensure that all pupils have opportunities to work with mainstream pupils, there are occasions when classes or individuals from other schools visit Hadrian school to join in work.
28. The school provides pupils with relevant, imaginative and rich experiences, which make a very good contribution to their moral, social, and cultural education, and these are strengths of the school's provision. Spiritual awareness is promoted very well through both planned experiences and incidental opportunities. In personal social and health education lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about the meaning of celebrations. Assemblies, which are effective acts of collective worship, are very well planned and make a considerable impact. They are skilfully and imaginatively prepared to hold pupils' attention and interest. Cheerful songs and hymns are sung and an atmosphere of reverence is created. Pupils put their hands together to pray following the example of the adults and are encouraged to join in and give thanks to God. Similarly, there is a moment of silence before grace is sung at lunchtime ensuring pupils understand the importance of the event. There are many opportunities for pupils to consider the wonders of nature. A video recording of an assembly when a new pony was brought into the hall shows the awe and amazement on the pupils' faces as they stroked it. In lessons, although opportunities for spiritual development are not explicit in teachers' planning, the skill and sensitivity of the teaching results in pupils becoming more aware of themselves. In contrast to exciting and interesting activities, there are quiet times, for instance, during hand or foot massage sessions. The strong emphasis on caring throughout the school, and the mutual respect which is evident, make a very positive contribution to the spiritual climate in which the pupils learn.
29. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a clear moral code in the school and staff constantly reinforce high standards of courteous and respectful behaviour. They wait for and prompt 'please' and 'thank you' and praise honesty. Every opportunity is taken to provide positive role models and pupils are made very aware of what is expected of them in lessons and during

play and lunchtimes. They are effectively encouraged to be considerate of the more vulnerable members of their class. In one science lesson, for instance, when a pupil accidentally fell over, another pupil responded quickly to put a chair in place for him to pull himself up on. In one assembly, a teacher dressed up as the old woman in a story collecting the ingredients for a soup from different people. This helped the pupils to understand the story and reinforced the need to help others. Pupils participate in writing school rules and create displays showing what they mean, such as a framed poster on picking up litter. Moral development is reinforced through stories in English, such as the story of *The Little Red Hen*. Pupils are encouraged to help other people out of school by supporting various charities such as Children in Need, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Operation Christmas Child and St. Oswald's Children's Hospice.

30. Provision for pupils' social development is very good as staff create a happy, friendly environment throughout the school. For example, in a Year 3 registration, pupils responded well to the calm, welcoming atmosphere as they chose a friend to say hello to, by speaking or using a switch. At the end, all pupils held hands in a circle. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion where pupils are able to develop their social skills. Pupils are taught to take their turn and to wait patiently, as at lunchtime, when some pupils had to wait a while to go up to the hatch at lunch. However, they understood that next week they would go up earlier and were happy to take their turn. Sharing is encouraged and reinforced by a framed picture on the wall showing pictures of pupils sharing toys and books. A very successful 'buddy bench' initiative ensures that pupils notice and befriend pupils who may be feeling lonely or unhappy. Staff give pupils many opportunities to take responsibility, developing social skills and becoming independent. The pupil that takes the register often changes daily and help is sought to clear up after lessons. A school council has been formed so that pupils can represent the views of their peers. A team spirit is developed effectively through a wealth of team games played in physical education and in synchronised dance routines. Further opportunities to work together in activities such as the fashion show and class assemblies help pupils to rely on each other. They are effectively taught skills in feeding and personal hygiene. Drink times are treated as social activities and good manners are expected. Moral and social development are supported further by a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education, which encourages pupils to make sensible decisions.
31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and is supported by a good range of visitors, such as ministers from local churches and synagogues, artists in residence and an artist and a musician from Japan. Pupils have the opportunity to appreciate cultural diversity from themed assemblies such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali. A very good display shows symbols and people from different faiths including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism and Hinduism. There is a display of pictures and artefacts brought back from Mozambique where a teacher had spent the last two years. Pupils also become aware of their own cultural traditions from their work in such subjects as history and geography. A celebration of the Queen's jubilee resulted in a very effective display, which shows pupils work and reminds them what they have learnt. It records key events of the last five decades, such as the coronation and the landing on the moon, with appropriate artefacts such as old toys, long playing records, a period telephone and 1970s patterned jeans. The display includes events from other countries and shows famine in Ethiopia and starvation in Bangladesh. The cultural heritage of this country is further explored through visits to important places including the Viking museum in York and the Millennium Bridge in Newcastle, where two pupils were part of the official Guard of Honour during a visit by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. A 'Pop Idol' concert where pupils emulated their favourite singers was very successful. Pupils are involved in activities that explore cultures from different parts of the world. For example 'Casa Hadrian' during an Italian week was preceded by a visit to a pizza restaurant to learn how to cook Italian food and during the week, take away pizzas were made by older pupils

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

32. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and child protection. Child protection policies are extremely detailed, precise and clear. The headteacher who is the child

protection officer and the staff have been appropriately trained. Liaison with the social services department is good.

33. Procedures for the medical care of pupils are very effective, understood and applied by all staff. The level of care and support given to pupils is of a very high standard, which enhances their learning. The school has the benefit of three full time nurses who provide excellent medical care for pupils and support and guidance for staff and parents.
34. A safe environment for pupils is a high priority. The school has won healthy school and smoke free school awards. There are regular health and safety inspections and there is adherence to the comprehensive health and safety policy. Pupils are very well supervised both at lunchtime and play. Midday supervisory assistants are well trained are very effective and often referred to as 'dinner nannies'. There is also tight supervision at arrival and departure times. Escorts who accompany pupils to and from school liaise well with the school regarding any matters of concern.
35. A very successful initiative has been the development of a 'My Book' for each pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties. These documents put together with information from the pupil, parents, staff and often professionals detail information about a pupils' likes and dislikes, how they communicate and their care. They travel with the pupils, are updated regularly and help to ensure that everything is as right as possible and there are no barriers to learning.
36. There are very good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the eliminating and monitoring of oppressive behaviour. Effective training for all staff, including lunchtime assistants, on helping pupils behave ensures that unacceptable behaviour is minimised. An emphasis on praise and encouragement when pupils are behaving well is very effective. Pupils with behaviour difficulties are helped to improve through the consistent application of behaviour plans, which are drawn up after discussion with parents and a group of staff and professionals. A very clear behaviour policy is effective and, as a result, behaviour overall is very good.
37. Attendance is monitored well and the education welfare officer only attends school on an 'as needed' basis. Pupils are encouraged to improve their attendance through awards from the local authority for no absence and school-based awards for almost total attendance.
38. The school has worked very hard to establish the procedures for assessing each pupil's progress and monitoring how well they are doing. There is good practice on entry to school and for the beginning of compulsory education using a baseline assessment. Very detailed assessments by the pre-school team, the speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and teachers ensure comprehensive individual programmes are planned, monitored and extended. These are incorporated well through topic work and activities within subject areas. Assessment is ongoing, especially for pupils with more complex needs and children in the nursery and reception class. A range of procedures is used for tracking progress including the baseline assessment, the performance (P) scales and the Small Steps scheme. These are very effective in English, mathematics, physical education and personal, social and health education. Clear progress can be seen for each pupil. As yet, it is difficult to track the progress pupils make in other subjects. Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed. However, targets on a number of plans are not sufficiently specific. As a result, a few are repeated over long periods indicating inadequate checking and the lack of a sharp focus on progress.
39. The regular monitoring of pupils' achievements and progress is used effectively through most subjects to adapt and extend what they are taught. The excellent records of achievement illustrate the targets the pupils have achieved. The good use of digital photographs especially capture the moment when a pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties gains success or experiences. Annual reviews and half yearly reviews with parents ensure agreed targets, which give both parents and teachers in most subjects a shared awareness of progress.

40. All class teachers and support staff know pupils very well and keep track of how the pupils are getting on in their class. There are good links with visiting specialists such as: speech therapists, physiotherapists and psychologists, all of whom work well with staff to ensure that pupils receive the maximum benefit from their skills. Specialist teachers, such as for the hearing impaired, visit periodically to check provision and offer advice.

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

41. The school has excellent relationships with parents and partnership and links with them are of a very high standard. This close relationship, the very good involvement of parents in school and the high quality of the support given to parents by staff, has an extremely good effect on the progress that pupils make and enables them to thrive in school. Parents have very positive views of the school.
42. A very clear and detailed policy establishes that working with parents has a very high priority. There are excellent means of communication. The brochure is of extremely high quality and standard. It is attractively presented and contains a variety of helpful information regarding the school. The Governors' Annual Report is similarly well presented and contains all statutory information presented in a "parent friendly" fashion. Additionally there is an excellent termly newsletter giving information on events, pupils' achievements, staff appointments and progress being made by groups of pupils. These are supplemented by letters and by notes in the well-used home/school diary during the term. The diary provides a very effective link between parents and school. Staff note details of what has happened during the day, including progress that has been made. Parents use the diary to inform staff of progress or difficulties of their children after school and at the weekend and, as a result, staff have a detailed knowledge of children's life outside school. Annual reports on pupils' progress are written in conjunction with individual education plans and give good information on pupils' achievements on a subject by subject basis particularly for the main subjects of English, mathematics, personal and social education and physical education. Parents contribute towards the target setting process for their children and value the opportunity to comment on progress that has been made.
43. Many parents often continue schoolwork with their children at home. There may be a common target, such as to use a particular type of drinking cup or say or sign please and thank you. A few parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework. It is set on a weekly basis for older pupils and it is clear that parents work effectively with their children to ensure it is returned on time. They often comment on the work as to how the child managed the activity, for example, whether it was easy or too difficult. Parents also borrow switches as communication aids and picture and reading books regularly go home where appropriate. Many parents also continue physiotherapy programmes. This work at home consolidates and continues successfully what is accomplished in school.
44. The headteacher and staff are available at any time, without appointment, to see parents if they have any concerns or wish to discuss progress. Parents appreciate an annual parents' evening and there are plans to hold a second meeting each year. Even before children are admitted to school, good liaison via the Young Children's Special Education Needs Teaching Support Service is established. This enables the school to form a clear picture of pupils' abilities and needs prior to their admission. Staff make home visits to talk with parents about their children. Parental views are valued so parents are very happy to respond to requests for information. The return rate on a questionnaire sent to them last year was very high at over eighty per cent and a high percentage responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
45. Parents are encouraged to come into the school and a special parents room is well used by them. A notice board displays a good range of information including liaison with special needs network. There are coffee mornings and regular school-based workshops, meetings and courses for parents and carers. A session on how to deal with temper tantrums was particularly appreciated. A large number, including grandparents, regularly help, for example, with reading and in the hydrotherapy pool or assist on residential visits or on school outings. There is a small

but active Friends of Hadrian's School and all parents are invited to become members. Although only a small number of parents form the core committee, they work extremely hard and provide valuable funds for the benefit of the school. For example, they recently made a successful bid to a local insurance company to fund the building of a sensory quadrangle and assisted in the local campaign to win a mini bus. In addition, they arrange various successful social functions, such as discos, karaoke nights, and barbecues, which are well supported by a large number of parents at the school.

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

46. The headteacher, supported very well indeed by the deputy head, other senior staff and the governing body, has been outstandingly successful in building a school where staff work extremely well together. They share the desire and commitment that all pupils will make as much progress as they can, both academically and in broader areas of personal achievement. The success of such commitment is exceptional given that the school has only been open for three years, following a lengthy review of special educational provision in the area by the local education authority and the formation of a new staff team from a broad range of previous schools. The clarity about what they want pupils to achieve has been a great strength during this period and has made sure that the well being and progress of each pupil has remained at the centre of the development of policies and procedures throughout the school. Furthermore this success has been achieved by the exceptional role models that senior staff provide to their colleagues, and hence to all pupils. This commitment is shared too by visiting specialist support staff, who are made to feel very much part of the success of the school. The result is a school that is very effective in striving for the highest standards in all that it does.
47. Responsibilities are delegated well to a very wide range of staff. The two heads of the key stages (nursery/reception/Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6) effectively monitor teachers' planning. Aspects of this role are now moving to subject co-ordinators as the process of planning for what pupils learn develops from Individual Education Plans that cover all areas of the curriculum to a greater use of subject centred planning. The school has plans for improving even further the effectiveness of this monitoring, for example in ensuring that the quality of individual education plans and reports of pupils' progress are always at the highest level. Some of this action has been limited by the availability of staff time during the last two years. However, this short-term difficulty has been resolved following the return of a valued member of staff from secondment. Subject co-ordinators are starting to have real effect on their areas of responsibility. The deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team are very effective at co-ordinating developments. The deputy head teacher has regular meetings with subject co-ordinators to review developments and ensure further plans are in line with the whole school development plan. A particularly important part of the school's management success has been the contribution of special support assistants. Each of this very valuable group has a responsibility for an area of the school's work. This has been very effective in ensuring they feel really involved and their resulting commitment to the school is impressive. Three senior special support assistants manage broader areas of the school's work, for example lunchtime supervision arrangements. Administrative staff contribute extremely well to the friendliness and efficiency of the school. This includes the warm reception to visitors as they enter the school and the helpful and, as necessary at times, sympathetic response to telephone calls.
48. The governing body has a very good knowledge and understanding of the strengths of the school. They receive detailed written and spoken reports from the headteacher and other senior staff, and are briefed well about specific aspects of school development, such as the literacy curriculum. There are appropriate subcommittees to support the full governing body meetings. Governors regularly visit school during lesson time so that they also have first hand information about how well the school is operating and opportunity to speak with other members of staff. The breadth and extent of experience of the governors is a real strength and they contribute very actively to school improvements and initiatives where they can. For example, the literacy governor visits regularly to discuss this important area of the curriculum, contributing her professional knowledge and supporting the co-ordinator as the subject has developed. Overall, the rigour of the governors'

monitoring alongside their strong support has contributed very well to the headteacher's confidence in the actions that are taken, in further initiatives that are planned and, more broadly, in shaping the future of the school.

49. The school's self-assessment procedure, its annual improvement plan and the longer-term strategic plan are very good. The improvement plan is detailed and includes all of the important areas of the school's responsibilities. It is linked carefully to the school's budget. The plan is built upon a very comprehensive self-assessment approach, gathering information about how well the school is working from a wide range of sources. Questionnaires are also sent to parents and the local authority has contributed a helpful external perspective. Information obtained from the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and pupils' progress is used very well. The self-assessment and improvement planning process has resulted in important changes that have improved pupils' learning and progress. For example, as a result of monitoring there has been a substantial research and professional development programme involving the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This has included the contribution of a specialist consultant. This project has resulted in improvement in this aspect of the school's work as well as in benefits to all pupils' learning and progress. The improvement plan is monitored regularly and these updates are reported and discussed with the governing body, adding to their understanding of the school. At the end of each year, the plan is evaluated, outcomes are summarised and any areas that need to be carried forward are identified. This information contributes to the following year's plan. The school is continually improving this process to ensure that all priorities are completed within appropriate time scales. The school has also started to set itself targets based on pupils' achievements against P (performance) levels. The results of this target setting are to be used to contribute to the school's self-assessment and improvement planning.
50. Financial planning and management are very strong. The headteacher and the governing body, supported very effectively by the school's administrative officer, exercise great care with available finances. They are very successful in extending these resources through bids from a range of public, private and charitable sources. Such efforts are always aimed at developing the quality of the education they offer and, therefore, the achievements of pupils. Examples include, the extended and enhanced sports facilities through the Space for Sports and Art initiative and the development of a new sensory quadrangle. The school applies the principles of best value very well. There is careful consideration of the needs of the school and the ways in which these can be most effectively met.
51. The numbers, experience and qualifications of teachers and special support assistants match the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum very well. There is clear guidance for new members of staff and a strong emphasis on the continuing professional development of all staff. For example, the midday supervisory assistants have been trained in how to help pupils behave well. Performance management and appraisal of all staff is well established. Teaching is regularly observed and contributes to this process. Targets are set and their achievement is monitored. Each special support assistant meets with the headteacher annually. They really value this opportunity and it contributes very well to their feeling of involvement in the development of the school. The school is also successfully developing a role as a regional training centre. Staff from other schools have attended courses on such areas as rebound therapy and behaviour management.
52. The accommodation is extremely well maintained by the site manager and cleaning staff and is in very good condition. The building is in very good order, is light, airy and pleasantly decorated making a major contribution to a positive environment where pupils learn and flourish. There is very good specialist accommodation including a food technology room, hydrotherapy pool, newly built sensory quadrangle, a sports hall, which is currently being rebuilt, and extremely well equipped medical rooms. Resources for learning throughout the school are very good, including a well stocked library with a good range of books suitable for the needs of the pupils. Because of the extremely good facilities and very good accommodation provided, the progress of pupils, their learning and development of skills is enhanced.

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

53. The governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:

- Establish clear procedures to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education as scheduled in the school improvement plan.

(Paragraphs: 20, 38, 80, 83, 87, 94, 102)

Governors may also wish to consider the following less important issues when constructing their action plan:

- Ensuring all targets on Individual Education Plans are sufficiently specific. (Paragraphs: 38, 47)
- Increase the time allocated for the teaching of religious education (Paragraphs: 9, 20, 100)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number*	11	45	25	8	0	0	0
Percentage	12	50	28	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

\* NB the above grid totals 89 lessons because a teacher from another school taught one session and this is not included

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	103
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	64

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	7.9	School data	0.1

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
94	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: N – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.44
Average class size	7.9

#### **Education support staff: N – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	849

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1223727
Total expenditure	1195458
Expenditure per pupil	9963
Balance brought forward from previous year	52727
Balance carried forward to next year	80996

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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	103
Number of questionnaires returned	72

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	87	10	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	21	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	69	27	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	51	22	13	3	10
The teaching is good.	90	8	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	87	10	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	12	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	7	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	13	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	17	4	1	7

### Other issues raised by parents

No further issues raised

## **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**

54. The provision for children of Nursery and Reception age [Foundation Stage] is very good. Children from the age of two years are supported and referred by the pre-school teaching and assessment service[SENTASS] who provide a comprehensive record of information. This ensures a very good start on entry to school where both parents and children are warmly welcomed. The excellent range of learning experiences together with a very supportive staff team provides a positive individualised small step learning experience based upon the early learning goals of the Foundation Curriculum. Assessment is ongoing with the base line assessment completed by the age of five. The present group of children have been in school from a few weeks to just over one year. Within this time each child has made very good progress in each area of learning in relation to their complex needs.
55. The co-ordinator and class teachers have a clear understanding of how to meet the complex needs of each child. The excellent team work of the teacher and special needs assistants ensure all pupils are very involved in all activities. The effective use of the light room, hydrotherapy pool and pleasant safe outdoor play area provide welcoming and stimulating learning areas. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is very good in all areas of learning. There is a great emphasis on ensuring all children enjoy and join in activities. The children are very much part of the whole school and are included in all assemblies and celebrations.

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

56. Staff are warm and sensitive with the children and give them lots of time to respond. In turn, children give good eye contact, smile and show they are beginning to anticipate during an activity such as a song or listening to a drumbeat. Routines are clearly planned with good use of objects of reference, which let children know what will happen during the day. In contact with other staff, such as the teacher for rebound therapy and the physiotherapist, all adults are very careful to tell pupils gently what is happening. More able children drink from a cup and choose a biscuit or crisps at break time. They are given time to make a choice between two drinks and are beginning to show a preference. One child often says 'gen' to indicate the requirement for more. Lots of praise encourages the most able children to put items back in the box after a game. Records show that a few children are making very good progress to co-operate by independently arching their backs as they are being dressed.

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

57. All the activities are sensitively planned to involve children in communication. The good use of signs and photographs are particularly meaningful to the more able children who are able to give a card to indicate 'more'. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories that capture their interest because of the very good tone of voice of the teacher and the exciting 'props' used such as puppets. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond in a relaxed way to a secure routine. They show excitement by facial gestures and patting the warm water as they enter the hydrotherapy pool. They give particularly good responses to known adults when engaged in individual activities. Quiet music and blowing bubbles emphasise the relaxing time after dance where children appreciate the difference. During music one child reacted clearly to the sound of the maraca and was able to shake it as the staff sang. The excellent teamwork during a rebound lesson illustrated the careful way staff listen to and respond to each child. The enjoyable use of songs using both eye contact and body language shows the high level of involvement of the children.

### **Mathematical development**

58. Good use is made of individual experiences using the light and sound room where children reach out to objects of interest and track moving lights and torches. Children particularly love the bubbles during hydrotherapy time where the most able children reach out for them. During a massage session, one child put a hand out to indicate 'more'. In outdoor play, another child was fascinated by the coloured water hanging up in plastic bags and reached out to touch them. Children make good progress in the recognition of a few objects and explore them such as touching a tyre. The rhythm and games during hydrotherapy encourage children to listen and watch the adults when they sing 'Twinkle twinkle little star'. Children watch the helper's hand and one little girl is beginning to follow the sequence of the song to anticipate when she is lifted into the air.

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

59. Children are encouraged and helped to use all their senses through exciting activities. The good use of games with the children in the autumn leaves provided crunchy sounds. The freedom of trying to walk or lie in long grass showed how much they loved the different sensations. One child reached out for a strand of grass or a flower and carefully grasped it in her fingers. On exploring the wide spaces independently, a child laughed on tumbling into the grass. Another child made happy cooing noises when covered in leaves. All the children liked the taste of blackberry juice. The excellent use of resources encourages more able children to explore their environment in the outdoor play area. One boy tasted the water and patted it, and he moved freely around the space and looked at all the objects carefully. A child played a game of hide and seek under a cloth and in a box with the teacher, responding with smiles and a look of expectation. Children with more complex needs close their eyes and completely relax when massaged with lavender oil to gentle music. One child was able to stretch his arms and one girl is beginning to anticipate repeated movements. More able children understand that they can control the pictures and the sounds made by the computer.

### **Physical development**

60. The soft lights and singing by the adults reassure children as they enjoy the hydrotherapy pool. The rhythm and games enable children to experience jumping, floating, turning, eye pointing and tracking. The physiotherapist plays a full part in this and other activities to encourage movement of limbs and correct positions. The individual needs of pupils are met with the careful planning by the teacher and physiotherapist in order that children are always comfortable and extended physically in each teaching situation such as a standing frame for one girl, special seats and splints for others. Communication and physical development are well planned to encourage learning and anticipation. A child with profound and multiple learning difficulties makes pleasurable sounds and shows his contentment when his arms and legs are moved. One girl smiles when swung in the arms of a special needs assistant and is just beginning to lift her arms to respond to 'again'. All adults know the children well and work hard to gain eye contact and wait for a flicker of response. A more able pupil can jump with support on the trampoline; he holds hands and laughs with pleasure while he bounces. The comprehensive activities show that children are making very good progress to anticipate and respond while developing their physical movements. During dance, the staff use excited expressions for the music to start again. Children give good eye contact and show pleasure in moving in wheelchairs to the music. The good use of tactile colourful objects maintains their interest and concentration. One boy responds to the rhythm with hand waving and children love to watch the swirling ribbons.

### **Creative development**

61. Children's creative development is promoted successfully through art, music and a variety of activities using the senses. During a painting activity the children were encouraged to experience the paint and the effect of paint on their hands and bodies. The good use of paper on the floor and an enclosed environment meant that the children could explore and react to the pleasure of the paint and the colours. The excellent teamwork of the adults ensures that all children are fully involved to react to the touch of a paintbrush with smiles and making sounds. The very good use

of hiding instruments encouraged children to respond to sounds rather than objects. The very small step learning shows that staff know whether a child has responded. One child became still as the teacher used her hand to tap the tambourine. The use of the big drum was particularly effective with two children who reacted to a big bang. Good experience was gained of loud and soft sounds.

## ENGLISH

62. Pupils of all ages learn very well and make very good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This level of achievement is due to the quality of teaching throughout the school, in particular the detailed planning and knowledge that teachers have of their pupils' needs. English and particularly communication are consistently and effectively taught through all subjects. These strengths also result in pupils for whom English is an additional language and those of different ability levels achieving equally well.
63. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use a range of means to communicate their needs and contribute within lessons including short sentences and phrases, adding facial expression and gestures to give more meaning. They listen carefully, learn to follow instructions and are beginning to show confidence to speak within a group setting. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond to people they know by giving eye contact, and they use this means of communication to make choices, for example, when they choose between different fruits at break time. They learn to use objects of reference such as a towel for hydrotherapy and an apron for lunchtime. The use of a simple switch (Big Mack) connected to a pre-recorded tape is effective to give their reply at times, for example when the register is taken. A few are starting to use more complex switches to say 'yes' and 'no' in response to questions. The most able pupils start to ask questions, especially 'why', and also answer simple questions on topics that they know about. As part of the development of early reading skills, less able pupils recognise photographs of members of their family and friends, using eye pointing to show their answers to questions. They show recognition of familiar stories by smiling as they anticipate what will come next. Most pupils enjoy looking at books, they read a small number of words from the earliest part of the National Literacy Strategy, and know a few of the sounds of the letters in their own first name. Anticipation about what will come next in known stories has developed well and they enthusiastically add the repeating sentences, for example, in the story of *The Little Red Hen*. More able pupils identify the main characters in books that they know and say what the story is about. Most pupils copy simple vertical and horizontal lines when writing and they trace over their name when an adult writes it. They are beginning to copy underneath model words too. When colouring in pictures they understand they should stay within the required lines; however, many do not yet have sufficient control to achieve this very well. A few less able pupils hold a felt tip marker although do not yet make marks independently on paper. More able pupils copy simple sentences and write their own names with prompting from a member of staff.
64. By the end of Year 6, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties vocalise and eye point with increasing accuracy towards objects and pictures to express their needs and choices. They choose colours in art lessons and they indicate where they want objects to be placed on a collage. When counting they point to individual objects. Listening has improved well as they follow a story that is read to them. Most pupils use longer sentences and have learned to speak at a slower pace so that they can be understood better. They listen to others' news with interest and ask questions. They describe the characters in well-known stories. More able pupils retell stories, capturing many of the important parts with a little encouragement from staff. Most pupils can read the lowest levels of commercial reading schemes. They know many letter names and an increasing number of the sounds that they make. More able pupils continue to increase well the number of words they read. They know that when they come to a full stop they should pause in their reading. Less able pupils use a special frame mounted on the front of their table so that they can use with eye pointing as they read 'yes' and 'no'. This helps them communicate more effectively. Many pupils write with growing neatness and accuracy, copying underneath words written by staff. Control has improved so that much of their colouring is within the lines of the pictures. More able pupils write short sentences, know that a full stop is used at the end of a sentence. Letters are increasingly well formed. A few have started to use a dictionary to help

write independently. Many less able pupils have now improved their grasp and make marks on paper.

65. In addition to the extremely high quality of planning, a notable aspect of the very good quality of teaching and learning is the very effective way in which the teachers and special support assistants work together. All know their pupils so well and the targets they are aiming for. This consistency leads to pupils making very good progress. Staff work closely with speech and language therapists to develop the best means of communication for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties and for those other pupils who have communication difficulties which is a major contribution to pupils' improving skills in speaking and listening. Information and communication technology is used very well, especially to provide pupils who are not able to speak, or speak very well, with a means to contribute to lessons. Teachers use a wide range of resources, including commercially produced ones and ones made for individual pupils and topics of work. Pupils enjoy what they do and their concentration levels are very high indeed. A really good example was in the telling of the story *The Meanies Came to School*. The teacher had prepared all of the necessary resources to make the story exciting, including footprints on the ceiling of the classroom. This match of the best resources to what it is intended the pupils will learn is very good practice and leads to extended concentration. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use elements of the National Literacy Strategy very effectively. As a result of the consistently high quality of teaching pupils learn very well indeed. They try really hard, want to do well and please their teachers and special support assistants. Pupils rise to the challenge of the extremely high expectations set by the teachers. Learning is often reinforced at home with well thought out homework tasks, for instance, older, more able pupils match words to show opposites. Additionally, pupils practise with their Big Mack communicators at home
66. The subject is very well led by a very knowledgeable co-ordinator with a commitment to 'getting it right' which has resulted in substantial development from earlier approaches to curriculum planning. This quality is acknowledged as part of this work is to be published nationally. The English curriculum has been the focus of a great deal of careful thought since the school opened. The subject co-ordinator, supported by other members of staff, and also the literacy governor, has developed an approach whereby teachers' planning is careful and detailed, and meets pupils' needs very well. This planning makes full use of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Curriculum attainment levels and P levels. The resulting plans are implemented through the school's cycle of topic plans. This well designed approach means that what pupils are taught has a good variety and that enough time is spent on each area. They are set targets at a challenging level that are built upon as they move up through the school. The result is a comprehensive and very effective approach to literacy across all subject areas.

## **MATHEMATICS**

67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. As a result, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils' very positive attitudes and the use of the National Numeracy Strategy contribute to the very good achievement.
68. By Year 2, more able pupils count by rote to five and join in simple rhymes and number songs. They are beginning to match, recognise and order numerals from one to three and can give three objects on request. Pupils understand the concept of getting smaller by removing one brick from a tower. They sort objects by shape, size and colour and can match squares, circles and triangles. Less able pupils replace pieces in an inset puzzle and enjoy joining in number rhymes. They attempt to hold up the correct number of fingers when copying an adult. Action songs such as 'The Five Little Monkeys' help them begin to understand the concept of one item. Pupils help tidy up by collecting all of one set of objects and know the difference between big and small and long and short. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties reach and attempt to grasp an object and remove a cloth to "find" a toy. They press switches to activate toys and will indicate "more" and "again" by smiling and eye contact.

69. By Year 6, more able pupils read and write numbers and have counting skills up to 20. They are using tens and units to do simple addition sums and are beginning to be aware of multiplication as continuous addition. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, a more able pupil consolidated work from the previous lesson by putting two sweets on separate paper 'plates' and working out independently how many sweets were on five plates. In the same lesson, with very good encouragement from the special needs assistant, a less able pupil cut out squares with dots from one to five and sequenced them correctly. Pupils sort objects according to criteria and collect information, for example the colour of shoes. Biggest and smallest objects and coins are accurately identified and pupils use appropriate terms related to time. Most know the order of the days of the week and identify yesterday and tomorrow. They begin to use appropriate terms, correctly naming three-dimensional shapes, for example a cylinder. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties work with a

wide range of materials and explore size, colour and shape. They make choices, for example demonstrating the recognition of colour by eye pointing and have a clear understanding of cause and effect.

70. Pupils' learning in mathematics is reinforced very well through other subjects. For example, in physical education there is good emphasis on sequencing, distance, shape and number throughout activities. Pupils count at every opportunity, the number of pupils present in the morning, the number of baking cases being put out in food technology and spoons of flour. They make patterns in art and design and count bricks and construction equipment in design and technology.
71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6, although improved to very good in Year 6. The adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy framework enables teachers to reinforce skills from previous lessons, particularly mental and oral skills effectively. Good use is made of group work so that pupils' learning is able to be carefully monitored and encouraged by staff who work exceptionally well together. They use mathematical terms so that pupils become familiar with what they mean. Throughout lessons, praise is freely given which encourages the pupils to try hard. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are very good. They celebrate achievement, assess and reinforce learning and also help pupils to be aware of what they and others have achieved. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils identified shapes when colour filling a robot on the screen and a switch was used by a pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties to operate a matching game.
72. In the best lessons, the pace of working is high and pupils rise to challenges and enjoy interesting activities. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked in teams to recall, using appropriate mathematical language, items hidden on a tray. In two teams, they strived to give the most number of descriptive words related to shape and colour. Occasionally, activities in part of a lesson are not difficult enough and pupils do not learn as fast as they should. Older, more able pupils successfully continue their mathematics at home, for example adding up the spots on dogs on a worksheet.
73. The subject is very well managed and the co-ordinator has ensured that there are very good resources that are easily accessible in a well organised storage area. Staff use them to make their lessons interesting, which gains the concentration of the pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

74. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good by the end of Year 2 and very good by the end of Year 6. This improvement is mainly due to very good lesson planning and teaching. Year 1 pupils show an emerging use of scientific enquiry by looking at calm, strong and bursts of winds. They experiment with bubbles, balloons and observe a fan blowing on paper streamers. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed an understanding of life processes and living things



by looking at seeds, for example, in a cut apple and exploring what they need to grow. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very involved in lessons. They stir mixes and get a feel for a range of textures. They notice the differences between materials.

75. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils study the senses and learn to use touch and smell to guess objects and samples of food that they cannot see. Very good pupil and teacher relationships help pupils to learn effectively because they want to do their best to please the staff they work with. Pupils are encouraged to make predictions and more able pupils are able to predict which items will float and which will sink in an experiment. They use their senses effectively, exploring food and drink. Other pupils separate out the two categories after watching what will happen. By the time they are in Year 6, the majority of pupils sort objects into four sets depending upon what they are made of as they explore properties

76. The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Where teaching is of high quality, teachers' expectations are clearly given. They make very good use of questioning to guide pupils' learning and always try to give concrete rather than abstract examples. Pupils learn well because the strong teamwork between the staff ensures that they know exactly what to teach and at what level. Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, in parts of lessons, the pace of lessons is occasionally too quick for pupils to grasp what is required of them and the appropriate use of resources not always achieved. Homework is used well. For example, parents were asked to use the same terminology as the teachers for floating and sinking when they bathed their children and had toys to float or sink.
77. The subject is well led by a teacher who has clear ideas about the development of the subject. A new plan of what is to be taught from year to year is in the course of development. At present, work is occasionally repeated unnecessarily. Staff make very good use of the sensory room for successfully teaching light and sound.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

78. The high quality of the art and design work on display throughout the school celebrates the good progress and achievement that all pupils make in this subject. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils have learnt to use a wide range of techniques. They use their hands to experience the texture and make marks on paper. Their composition skills improve, for example because they are offered and use a variety of materials, for example, to make a collage representing the hydrotherapy pool and another showing the bright colours of the soft play area. Skilful staff demonstration and praise and encouragement help more able pupils master the technique of blow painting and create interesting results. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils build on these skills. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to use their hands to experience the different thickness of paints. They select a colour and use sponges and other materials to print designs. Many improve their control of the effects they wish to create. Pupils make pleasing designs with leaves and twigs stuck to sticky clear plastic. Staff use questioning expertly to help pupils look carefully at objects and as a result, more able pupils learn to make observational drawings, beginning to show perspective through shading. By the time they are in Year 6, many pupils understand what happens when colours are mixed.
79. Pupils enjoy their art work enormously because teachers plan interesting activities ensuring all pupils can do their best. The high quality of teaching is complemented by the very good use made of the work of local artists to improve the quality and the range of media. For example, recently artists have worked with pupils using clay and stained glass. Visits to explore sculptures have resulted in various interpretations of the work showing very good observation skills. Teachers use these experiences well. Elements from a large metal helix sculpture are clearly inspirational in pupils' work using twisted silver coloured strips and a large collage shows the shape and texture of the conversation piece 'The Weebles'. Support staff are effective, particularly when working with individuals or small groups of pupils. This allows pupils to have sufficient time, the right amount of support and constant comment to keep their concentration levels high. Occasionally, the quality of teaching and learning is excellent. In such a lesson with Year 1 pupils, no time was wasted and every pupil was totally involved. Information and communication technology is used effectively. For example, pupils used a program to assemble portraits and they applied appropriate colours.
80. The co-ordinator shares ideas very effectively. When the school was opened, wall hangings were made for the sports hall linking together 30 centimetre square tiles. Each tile was decorated using one colour. In just under a week every pupil and many staff completed tiles and the resultant stunning hangings are now in the sensory area of the school. The co-ordinator also introduced the Sightlines project, which has proved very successful for the younger pupils in helping them to explore media and be creative. At present, much art work is related to topics and used extensively to support other areas. As a result, occasionally there is unnecessary repetition. However, the plan of what is to be taught from year to year is due to be completed this year and the new sensory quadrangle has art as one of its areas of focus.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. During the inspection, most of the lessons observed were in Years 3 to 6. However, the lessons seen, discussion with teachers and scrutiny of pupils' achievement folders indicate that overall pupils make good progress. By Year 2, all pupils have explored different materials such as cooking ingredients and play dough. They learn to use tools and techniques such as mixing, beating and rolling. More able pupils use glue or sellotape to fasten objects to paper to make a collage. Pupils with profound learning difficulties also learn well, as in a Year 1 food technology lesson where they grip a spoon and are helped to stir. By Year 6, pupils make good use of their local environment to learn about types of bridges. They make simple models using play dough, Lego or paper. More able pupils make very simple working models such as cars using balsa wood, and use papier-mâché to make a hot air balloon. In food technology sessions, pupils choose and prepare sandwiches with a range of fillings, and combine ingredients to bake gingerbread men. Most pupils begin to use tools proficiently and carefully for a range of purposes, such as sawing wood, cutting paper or indenting patterns on dough.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan and prepare lessons very carefully to ensure a relevant choice of activities supported by appropriate materials and pupils are keen to explore different media often using their hands or simple tools. Teachers cope well with the very wide spread of abilities in their classes. A lesson for older pupils on joining surfaces together, for instance, offered three different activities to four pupils, and involved making a balsa wood model and a simple collage. Special needs assistants are particularly effective in ensuring all pupils participate fully in lessons; for example, taking time to help pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties smell and taste cooking ingredients. They provide excellent role models which pupils can and do follow. In the most effective lessons, teachers are careful to ensure that pupils understand the nature and purpose of the activity, as in a lesson where the teacher uses the traditional story with pupils to make gingerbread men. Pupils particularly enjoy food technology, and pay close attention to both hygiene and safety requirements. They take a pride in what they produce, and make simple drawings to record their work. All teachers organise their classrooms well and conduct lessons at a very good pace, which helps pupils to concentrate on their work. In a Year 3 lesson on bridges, however, where instructions were not clear, pupils had little idea of what they were supposed to do and their learning was slowed.
83. The curriculum in design and technology is satisfactory but opportunities for pupils to experience cause and effect through simple control mechanisms are too limited. Records of pupils' progress from year to year are slim, making it difficult to track their achievements. This is planned to be tackled this year as part of the development a scheme of work (plans of what is to be taught each year). The co-ordinator leads the subject well. Although the monitoring of the teaching of design and technology has been limited through time constraints, examples of work to demonstrate pupils' progression have been collated. Additionally, staff have been helped through in-service training on using a broader range of media for design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

84. History and geography teaching follows themes, which also include design and technology and religious education. They are taught regularly in separately timetabled lessons, and also as subject matter for work in literacy, and in periodic large projects.
85. The progress of pupils in lessons in these subjects is good and the result of the consistently good teaching they receive. From year to year, pupils' progress is at least satisfactory, but there is insufficient evidence of pupils' work over time to come to a judgement about the extent to which their progress is better than this. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to find their way around the school, and talk about their visit to the town centre. Prompted by photographs they recall the different shops they saw. They are aware of generations, and that their parents and grandparents

were once children like themselves. By the end of Year 6, pupils know about life in the distant past, and some pupils can talk confidently about how the Egyptians built the pyramids and for what purpose. They use correct language such as 'embalming' and proper

names such as Tutankhamun. They know that other peoples, such as the Vikings, had different coins and jewellery, and crossed the sea in open boats. Pupils are also confident about how modern day structures have developed over long periods of time, such as railways and bridges.

86. The quality of teaching and learning in both subjects is good. This leads pupils to enjoy their learning and take an increasing interest in the world around them and the past as they get older. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils are fully included in activities at an appropriate level. Signing is used to aid communication effectively. Pupils have relevant individual targets in each lesson, which most are able to achieve, and progress is reviewed at the end of each lesson. However, records of pupils' work indicate that many of the current targets on Individual Education Plans for these subjects are not specific enough, and that there is some uncertainty in teachers' minds about what constitutes their achievement. The preparatory work on assessment scales that has already been completed is planned to be introduced in conjunction with the proposed new plans of what is to be taught from year to year. Teachers have high levels of patience and assurance and, with their support assistants, they go to considerable lengths to give pupils confidence. They plan carefully to change activities in anticipation that pupils will begin to lose concentration. This leads to a very good level of care, which is well illustrated by older pupils reviewing their work at the end of the day while eating a bowl of 'broth' as typical of food eaten many years ago. The food itself provided new energy and renewed their interest in what they had been learning.
87. Teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum and there is a very good range of opportunities for visits from which work in the classroom develops. Nevertheless these subjects have not been a priority for development recently, though they are part of a planned programme in the course of the current school year. As a result, at present, tracking progress from year to year is difficult. There is a very good range of books and when there are major projects, such as for the Jubilee celebration, the resources are excellent.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

88. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology and their progress are good overall throughout the school. This is mainly due to the good, and in some instances very good, teaching and the very positive attitudes pupils have to their learning.
89. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a clear understanding that moving the mouse and clicking on the mouse button makes changes happen on the screen. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use switches to make things happen, for example to move an electronic toy and to make a greeting. Pupils use subject specific computer programs successfully, operating a range of devices including roller balls, Intelli keys, and switch pads. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils took turns on the computer to select objects of similar size or colour. Good use of the sensory room by all pupils reinforces their ability to purposefully create effects. They quickly learn to turn bubble tubes on and off and to make the carpet light up with star-like lights. By the end of Year 6, pupils have increased their skills in operating computers particularly in English and mathematics but also in other subjects. Pupils use the mouse to drag and drop objects and a few load programs and print their work out. They operate equipment with increasing accuracy such as food blenders when making drinks in a food technology session.
90. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good with instances of satisfactory and very good teaching. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support their subject teaching and learning. They have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well so are able to pitch the work at the right level. In the best teaching, staff are very clear about what pupils are to learn. Plans show where information and communication technology is

to be used and high expectations lead to pupils' understanding improving. Lessons are made enjoyable through good choices of software. Pupils were delighted when the ducks quacked in a program indicating they had matched the right number of ducks. Occasionally, where what it is planned for pupils to learn is vague, they do not do so well. For example, they do not understand how to make changes on the screen, although they know how to operate the mouse or switch.

91. The co-ordinator provides very good management and leadership. Specific observations of lessons are undertaken half termly to ensure staff are competent and confident in their use of information and communication technology. The training programme is very successful notably in the use of new hardware and software and also the New Opportunities funded sessions, which are continuing. There is a clear record of pupils' progress in the Small Steps assessment and a published plan of what is to be learnt from year to year ensures pupils build on their learning. The use of information and communication technology is seen as a school priority and resources are very good. Recently a Smart Board and a suite of five computers have been purchased. A broadband connection for the Internet is soon to be available. All of these new initiatives are, to a great extent, the outcome of the co-ordinator's efforts to ensure teachers use high quality resources

## **MUSIC**

92. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. By Year 2, many pupils play untuned percussion instruments to learn a simple beat and the more able begin to distinguish between loud and soft and fast and slow sounds. Many sing with some expression, and keep time together in a group. They begin to develop skills in composition through using instruments to make sound effects. By Year 6, many sing traditional songs and carols well and repeat simple rhythms on percussion instruments. Pupils use a range of instruments including informal ones creatively to illustrate a Christmas story and dance to traditional local songs such as the 'Blaydon Races'. Pupils know something of the music of other cultures, such as Japanese wind music, or the call and response songs of African origin. They respond well to the atmosphere in classes and assemblies created by the use of good quality recorded music. More able pupils identify orchestral instruments by name such as violin, horn and triangle. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties enjoy making sounds using instruments often putting great physical effort into applying pressure accurately. They operate computer programs switching on the music and pictures.
93. Music is taught well and pupils learn effectively. Lessons are very well planned, as in a Year 6 lesson on fast and slow rhythms where pupils learn to clap to the beat of their own name. Careful preparation, including the use of signs and symbols and objects of reference, ensures all pupils are involved including those with significant language and communication difficulties. Song themes are carefully chosen to appeal to pupils' aptitudes and abilities, as in a lesson for older pupils on music from musicals such as 'Tutti Frutti'. As a result, many sing with a good sense of pitch and timing. The needs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are well catered for, as in a Year 4 lesson where eye contact was used to recognise bells. Teachers are very well organised: resources are to hand and support staff are particularly effective and know what they are expected to do. Any behaviour difficulties are dealt with quickly and discreetly. This enables most lessons to be conducted at a brisk pace, which helps to keep pupils' attention focused on the activity. Lessons are made enjoyable which is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm and pleasure as they participate in unaccompanied singing and perform very well in ensemble performance.
94. The subject is capably led by a very experienced co-ordinator who has monitored a few lessons of colleagues and taught demonstration lessons, which have helped to develop their expertise. Additionally, the knowledge and skills of staff and pupils alike have been broadened through visits from musicians and participation in the recent 'Soundabout' workshops. There remain a number of staff who presently do not have the confidence to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to compose music. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences for all pupils, but the range of instruments is too narrow, particularly for the more able pupils. The plan of what is to

be taught from year to year and the associated system of assessment are planned to be developed in parallel with those for art, science and technology in this academic year to ensure all areas are adequately included.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

95. The provision for physical education is excellent and, as a result of the very good teaching, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well throughout the school. The co-ordinator and deputy head teacher work closely together using a comprehensive range of small step sporting and physical activities which meet the individual needs of each pupil while ensuring more able pupils have excellent opportunities in sporting and team experiences. These include football, basketball, horse riding swimming, cricket and athletics. Local sports personalities help with coaching, which also provides good learning opportunities for staff. The physiotherapist works alongside staff during rebound and hydrotherapy, which provides further knowledge of physical movements. This ensures an excellent learning environment in which all pupils improve their physical skills, fitness and knowledge of games.
96. The meticulous planning for Year 1 pupils ensures they enjoy the lesson and know what they have to do. With good demonstration, the teacher encourages pupils to push themselves along a beam and to balance with their arms out. All pupils enjoy the parachute and laugh, clap their hands and move their bodies when it billows up and down. The staff gain very good responses from pupils; for example, one boy laughed and said 'more' when he wanted to go higher on the trampoline. With support, the more able pupils show each other what they can do, such as bounce, push and turn. By the end of Year 2, pupils enjoy action games where they push coloured balloons across the water in hydrotherapy. More able pupils hold on to the side to kick their legs and one pupil made very good progress to kick across the pool. Pupils are encouraged well to listen to instructions when they aim at a skittle, and show great pleasure when they knock it down. The most able pupils can jump in and out of a hoop and are beginning to throw with more accuracy.
97. During Years 3 to 6, pupils develop great confidence in their movements. Most understand that when they exercise, their hearts begin to beat faster which is explained very well in warm up sessions. The more able pupils understand how to play a game and run very fast. The very good use of music reflects the speed and tempo of their movements; for example, swirling red ribbons in various directions to the music from 'Cats'. The calm tones of the teacher and excellent questions encourage pupils to be sensible, take care and make excellent progress to develop their physical skills. The good reference to distance, shape, taking turns and number, increases pupils' experience of mathematics. Good use is made of the soft play facilities allowing pupils to chase each other enthusiastically up and down as 'roaring' lions. They climb, crawl, swing and jump with enthusiasm. Staff model what they want pupils to do very well by leading the movements of stretching arms and legs while gently rocking from side to side. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties love the feel of tinsel on their faces and the sound of the fast then slow music. They stretch out on the large ball striving to touch the ground in response to the praise and encouragement of the staff that work with them. The well-planned focus on athletics encourages more able pupils to understand team games and the various ways of catching and throwing. Pupils begin to think of the best way to throw and make their own decisions whether to throw over arm or under arm. Most pupils understand stop and start in a team game and many count to 20 to score. The very good teaching of skills encourages pupils to build on their skills and to be aware of what they can do. There is an appropriate emphasis on fun and relaxation where pupils are encouraged to walk, kick and propel themselves and float in the hydrotherapy pool. With the encouragement of the physiotherapist individual programmes successfully increase circulation, tolerance of touch, weight bearing and co-ordination. By the end of Year 6, pupils pick out the colour of their horse and know how to put their boots and hats on. They can ask their pony to stop, start and walk on and make very good progress to trot. Pupils enjoy games in the yard where they follow and give demonstration to each other. They are confident to jump forwards, backwards and sideways, form a line and follow each other. The good use of correct terms such as 'slalom' introduce pupils to the name of the sport. A few pupils

remember how to throw an object over arm, under arm, and remember they need accuracy and distance.

98. The excellent planning and recording of the progress pupils make has been extended to include skills training at break and lunch times. This is beginning to show an increase in positive play and relationships between pupils in the playground while providing training for lunchtime supervisors. Significant improvements in handwriting have been noted as pupils increase their physical skills. An after school sports club has been very successful in involving pupils in competitive games. Pupils also show great confidence while performing dance to an audience in a fashion show at a local hotel.
99. The adventure playground provides good experience at playtime for pupils to climb, jump and swing on the large wooden apparatus. Funding has been agreed for the new sports hall, which when completed, will further promote the excellent sporting challenges for pupils. Riding stables on site provide excellent opportunities for all pupils to experience riding. Good use is made of the local swimming pool for older pupils where they also host swimming galas. Pupils are proud of their football team and they challenge other schools to matches. They gain certificates and medals for their achievements and travel as far as Carlisle and Hull to take part in riding and football events. Visiting instructors to school provide additional activities such as teaching pupils a Russian Dance and routines in dance. Sporting skills are encouraged with expert advice from a wide range of organisations including the Newcastle Eagles basketball team, the Newcastle Falcons, Newcastle United and the Northumberland Cricket Club. The school supports the teachers of special needs pupils in other schools and has been chosen to take part in a film as part of a national project to enhance school sport.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

100. It was only possible to observe a few lessons of religious education during the inspection. Taking account of these lessons, the religious element of school assemblies, pupils' records of achievement and discussion with teachers, indications are that pupils make satisfactory progress despite the lack of sufficient time for teaching. By Year 2, they have some experience of the forms of worship and significant stories, such as that of Noah and the flood, from Christianity and other faith traditions. Their understanding of Christian worship is developed through prayer in class and school assemblies. By Year 6, they know about places of worship having made visits to such places as churches and synagogues. They learn about the buildings and the artefacts. More able pupils draw pictures linked to Christian stories and identify the main symbols associated with the main faith traditions.
101. Indications are that the quality of teaching and learning is good. What is to be taught is carefully chosen to interest the pupils and they clearly enjoy using their art and design and design and technology skills to create large displays illustrating their work such as Noah's' Ark and the animals and Jonah and the Whale. Opportunities are taken to link religious education lessons with personal social and health education, which works well. For example, a session on 'people who help us' encouraged pupils to reflect on relationships. Staff ensure that all pupils contribute to a lesson through very good use of questioning. In a Year 6 lesson on the theme of thankfulness, all pupils contributed to the discussion on the role of God as the provider.
102. The curriculum is appropriately based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, which is itself under review, but the insufficient teaching time limits what pupils can learn. The school is aware of the need to develop a plan of what is to be taught each year alongside the revised local syllabus, in order to ensure that pupils' knowledge develops progressively throughout their school career. At present, the recording of pupils' progress over time is unsatisfactory. However, this is due to be tackled with the scheme of work as part of the school improvement plan. Effective use is made of religious artefacts and visits to places of worship to give depth to pupils' experience of religion.
103. The subject's co-ordinator is relatively new. Although opportunities to monitor teaching of other staff have been limited, colleagues have had appropriate feedback.

