

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODLANDS FIRST AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Harrow Weald

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 133316

Headteacher: Mr J Feltham

Reporting inspector: Mr R I McAllister
2593

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd May, 2003

Inspection number: 249456

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:	3 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Whittlesea Road Harrow Weald
Postcode:	HA3 6ND
Telephone number:	0208 421 3637
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Dresner
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2593	Mr R I McAllister	Registered inspector	Science, physical education, English as an additional language, personal, social and health education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9708	Mrs S Daintrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18261	Mr T Hill	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, educational inclusion, including race equality	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1730	Mrs M Cureton	Team inspector	English, religious education, special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
23629	Mr M Megee	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music, Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodlands First and Middle School is a community special school for boys and girls within the age range of three to twelve years. Pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A number of pupils have more than one disability, including autistic spectrum disorder, behavioural difficulties, sensory impairment and speech and communication difficulties.

The school is situated on the northern outskirts of the London Borough of Harrow and serves the whole of the borough. The school was originally built as an all-age school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. It has been subject to re-organisation and was re-designated as a first and middle school in 2001. There are 37 pupils on roll (20 boys and 17 girls) of whom ten are under six years old. Thirty-three pupils have statements of special educational need. Twelve pupils are eligible for free school meals (32.4 per cent). Twenty-one pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Nineteen pupils are of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin and six are of African origin. As a result of their severe learning difficulties, pupils' attainments on entry to the school are very low compared to that expected for other pupils of their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodlands First and Middle School is a good school. The majority of pupils achieve well in most subjects. Achievements in Years 3 to 6 are very good. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 3 to 6. The leadership of the new headteacher is good. Management of the school is improving since the establishment of Woodlands First and Middle School. Good foundations have been laid on which the school can build. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Strong and effective leadership from the governing body and the newly appointed headteacher is driving the school towards clear long-term goals.
- The school uses the skills, knowledge and experience of a highly committed team of teaching assistants to enhance teaching and learning within the school. They have provided continuity during an unsettled period in the life of the school.
- There is a shared commitment to improvement and a marked capacity to improve.
- Development of pupils' communication skills, and the exceptionally strong relationships between pupils and adults, promotes consistently high standards of behaviour.

What could be improved

- The shared, and often cramped, accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits some aspects of learning.
- Delegation of management responsibilities to include effective co-ordination of all subjects of the curriculum.
- The meeting of all statutory requirements by the governing body.
- Aspects of provision for the youngest pupils in nursery and reception classes.

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

Minor issues

- Child protection training
- Cultural provision
- More effective use of directed time
- More effective management of therapy provision within the school, to ensure curriculum continuity for pupils.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Woodlands First and Middle School is a new school which opened in 2001. It has not been inspected previously under Section 10 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996. There is evidence from Her Majesty's Inspectors' report at the time of re-organisation, and the scrutiny of work carried out during the inspection, that pupils have achieved well and made good progress during the two years. Behaviour within the school has improved. The quality of teaching has been consistently satisfactory or better, and the leadership given by the acting head teacher before the appointment of the new head teacher has been good.

STANDARDS

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

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

The school sets appropriately challenging targets for all pupils in English, mathematics, science and personal and social development. Pupils make good progress towards them in mathematics, science and personal, social and health education, and very good progress towards them in speaking and listening. In other subjects, achievements are good in music, physical education and information and communication technology. Achievements are satisfactory in all other subjects of the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They co-operate very well with the adults who support them and they work hard during lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in classes and around the school. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and challenging behaviours are particularly well managed and, as a consequence, behave well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with each other and with staff. Those with challenging behaviour improve their ability to behave in a socially acceptable manner. Pupils learn right from wrong. They are caring towards each other and learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. Exceptionally harmonious relationships between all members of the school community help to create a very positive learning environment.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils generally arrive on site punctually, but vehicular congestion around the entrance to the school leads to some pupils arriving later into classes. Attendance statistics are comparable to those for similar schools.

The school has a very positive ethos that encourages very good behaviour and excellent relationships between all members of the school community. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. A particular strength of the school is the complete absence of oppressive behaviour, which creates a very positive climate for learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

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

Teaching, based on the skills and knowledge of individual teachers, is good with some particularly strong features. It is good in English and very good in mathematics. It is good in science and personal, social and health education, as well as in music and information and communication technology. Where the teaching is better, lessons' aims are more closely targeted on individual needs, the pace is brisk, work is clearly differentiated and very good use is made of the skills and knowledge of the teaching assistants.

Good use is made of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and communication is completely embedded within the curriculum. The high quality teaching of communication skills is a strength of the school.

The school meets the wide range of pupils' needs well. Teaching of pupils with a number of additional special needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder, is good and makes a significant contribution to their learning. They learn as well as other pupils in the school. All pupils enjoy a full social and educationally inclusive experience.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Satisfactory at the Foundation Stage. Good in Years 1 to 6. Provision for information and communication technology is improving with the acquisition of new computers. Curriculum provision for pupils with additional special educational needs within the school is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has a small amount of additional funding for pupils with English as an additional language. High quality provision for developing pupils' communication skills helps them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral and social development is a significant strength, but opportunities are missed to support pupils' cultural development across the curriculum. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements for monitoring pupil progress through annual reviews are good. The school is exceptionally successful in encouraging good behaviour, and procedures to encourage attendance are very good. Good support for pupils comes from a wide range of visiting professionals from different disciplines. Training and guidance in child protection are not up to date and there is no health and safety policy in place.

The school fosters satisfactory links with parents and keeps them informed about how their children are progressing. The school provides very well for the complex needs of the pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils and meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The recently appointed headteacher sets a clear direction for the work of the school. Co-ordination of core subjects is good overall, but where there are no co-ordinators in post for the other subjects of the curriculum, teaching and learning are less effective.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The headteacher benefits from the support of a well led, committed and increasingly expert governing body. The governors have been resolute in their determination to improve the school by appointing high quality senior staff, raising standards, and having a clear strategic vision for the imminent move to new premises. The governors do not fulfil some statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. External evaluation by representatives of the local education authority and an independent consultant has helped the school to develop a good understanding of what needs to be further improved. An audit carried out by the new headteacher has highlighted priority areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial administration is very good. The school has recently used various sources of funding well to support improvement. Long-term planning includes a successful Private Finance Initiative bid to build a new school on a different site.

There are sufficient teaching and non-teaching staff in the school. Staff are well qualified and this is further enhanced by an induction programme that improves staff capacity to fulfil roles within the school effectively. The provision of medical and other specialist support is good. The resources to support learning are good. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is well led and managed, but this should be enhanced by the appointment of a deputy headteacher. The school effectively applies the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good teaching that helps develop high standards of behaviour and personal development. • Children enjoy going to school. • They are well informed about their children's progress • Daily written reports in the home-school link books. • The care provided for their children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. The team found that a satisfactory range of activities have been offered since the inception of the new school, but agree that there is scope for increased provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The learning difficulties of the pupils for whom the school caters mean that attainment is low compared with national standards. It is inappropriate to make judgements against national standards, but the report does make judgements about the achievement of the pupils, and what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in pupils' statements and annual reviews and the progress they have made.
2. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactory standards. They are learning to recognise each other and to take turns. In communication, language and literacy they are beginning to understand the school's routines, and express their own choices and preferences. In mathematics, older pupils use songs to learn to count from one to five, but the younger children have not developed any concept of number or sequencing. In creative development there are too few opportunities for imaginative or purposeful play.
3. In English, pupils achieve very well in both key stages. By age seven, they are learning to appreciate stories, and some make connections between stories read to them and objects they are given to touch, taste or smell which help their understanding. They are enthusiastic about books, and can demonstrate their understanding of familiar stories and songs by showing anticipation of events, recognition of characters and joining in songs. By age eleven, all can communicate very well. The highest achievers have a small sight vocabulary. Others identify letters in simple words.
4. Achievements in speaking and listening are particularly good. The school has a high proportion of pupils with communication disorders. Effective teamwork, between teachers, teaching assistants and speech and language therapists, has equipped staff with expertise to enable them to develop pupils' communication skills very well. Pupils are assisted in developing these skills by a school environment that is rich in opportunities for communication. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder learn to understand signs and symbols, and use cards with pictures or symbols on them to indicate their needs, wants or choices.
5. In mathematics, pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6. The use of the National Numeracy Strategy results in a structured approach to teaching mathematics. The teachers use their very good knowledge and understanding to strike an appropriate balance between number and other aspects of the subject. Basic skills are taught very well. The good teaching is promoted well through the leadership and management of the co-ordinator. Teachers make very good use of resources to ensure pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education programmes. Good use is made of computers to aid pupils' understanding of mathematics.
6. Pupils' achievements in science are good. Practical approaches to the subject, made possible by the recently improved resources, motivate pupils and help them to understand scientific concepts. Good curriculum planning, and improving use of assessment, enables pupils to build systematically on their knowledge, skills and understanding.

7. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in their personal, social and health development. Achievement reflects the very wide range of learning experiences offered to the pupils within the school. A limited range of off-site visits, for example to local shops, enriches the pupils' experience further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and a strength of the school. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the way in which staff help their children develop high standards in these areas.
9. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Parents strongly agree that their children enjoy school. This enjoyment can be seen at the start of the day when the teaching assistants collect the children from the transport escorts and take them to their classroom. Pupils of all ages, ethnic and ability groups respond very well to the calm purposeful learning environment that is successfully created by the staff. Most are usually able to settle quickly to the required activities and persevere well. A significant number of Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils, with severe learning difficulties, can concentrate on tasks without support. Sometimes, understandably, the attention of some of the nursery and reception-aged children with profound and multiple learning difficulties wanders because they are tired or require feeding.
10. All pupils display consistently high standards of behaviour throughout the school. Pupils are very well behaved in classrooms, corridors, the dining room and the playgrounds. They respond exceptionally well to the presence of visitors. Those with autistic spectrum disorder are making very good progress in controlling their behaviour and understanding the impact of their actions, thanks to the highly skilled support of all staff. No instances of challenging behaviour have been evident since the start of term or during the inspection. Records show that there were a number of incidents in the autumn term but the school's very successful measures have reduced these to zero. One pupil with autistic spectrum disorder was excluded for one day, following an incident, in order to give the school time to adjust its arrangements so that it can better meet his needs. Otherwise, there have been no exclusions in recent years.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. From the youngest age, pupils are very effectively encouraged to develop self-esteem and confidence. This is done through use of praise, photographs, displays and celebrations of birthdays and achievements. Pupils are consistently offered choices to promote their skills of decision-making. They enjoy the opportunities to collect and return the registers to the office. Relationships are excellent and a major strength of the school. They are based on the dedicated care provided by all staff, notably the teaching assistants. Nursery and reception children of all abilities establish very productive one-to-one relationships with their teaching assistant, through whom they are able to access the learning going on in the classroom and develop awareness that there are other children to interact with. They are very good at waiting for their turn, for example in handling an artefact that encourages recognition of numbers. As they get older, they become more confident in relating to other adults. Pupils in the oldest class show an impressive level of respect for each other, including those with different disabilities from themselves, for example during the 'good morning' session at the start of the day when they greet each other individually.
12. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance rates are broadly in line with those for special schools. Unauthorised absence is low, which indicates good support by parents in

ensuring that their children attend school regularly when they are well enough to do so. Authorised absence is high due to a significant amount of illness, medical appointments and treatments which are undergone by many of the pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory at Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Altogether, inspectors saw 42 lessons. Of these 37 were taught by teachers. One was excellent, six were very good, 15 were good and 15 were satisfactory.
14. Both teachers and teaching assistants have good expertise in teaching pupils with the range of difficulties catered for within the school. In particular, staff are skilled at signing, which helps to ensure that all pupils are included effectively. Good teaching of communication skills is helpful for pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language, as their general learning difficulties present the most important barrier to learning.
15. Teachers and support staff have responded well to the increasing numbers of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. These pupils are included in classes of pupils grouped by age. Staff have extended their skills in the management of pupils' behaviour, the promotion of communication skills and planning for pupils with a wide range of different abilities.
16. The management of pupil behaviour is particularly good. Staff have high expectations of good work and behaviour and they make these clear to the pupils. Pupils respond well and show enthusiasm. They try hard to achieve their best.
17. There are clearly documented strategies for managing pupils with challenging behaviours and these are consistently applied by all staff. However, the strongest influence on the pupils is clearly a combination of the very caring ethos in the school, good teaching, the very strong positive relationships between all members of the school community, the very positive role models exhibited by staff and the way that communication lies at the heart of everything the school does. This combination results in the pupils being relaxed and secure in the school and able to engage well during lessons, and the almost total absence of oppressive behaviour. Occasional outbursts are not allowed to interfere with the learning of others. When a pupil strays from a planned task, staff have a variety of strategies to bring the pupil back on task. In extreme cases pupils are removed from class, but return as soon as they are settled enough to re-engage with the lesson.
18. Teaching of speaking and listening skills is a particular strength. Good liaison between teachers and speech and language therapists ensures that all pupils have suitable targets on their individual education plan. Staff use their expertise in signing well. There is a good range of resources, including symbols, picture cards, objects and artefacts, to help pupils to attach meaning to language. There is an increasing use of new technology, with some pupils using simple switches, which enable them to activate recorded words or short sentences. For example, pupils are able to press a switch to say 'Hello'. Others use computers to produce digital photographs of other class members to assist with recognition.
19. Teachers are skilled in devising approaches that will appeal to the pupils. For example, in a science lesson the teacher used a 'hands-on' approach when pupils had to rummage with their fingers through compost in search of earthworms or other

mini-beasts. In a literacy lesson, another teacher used dressing up with music and scenery/props to create a virtual journey on a train for the pupils.

20. Strategies for teaching literacy are very good, and those for teaching numeracy are good. In both areas suitable individual targets are set and regularly reviewed. There is a structured approach to teaching both subjects. Teachers know the pupils well, and they are skilled in asking questions to make sure the pupils understand, or to deepen their understanding of a particular topic. They differentiate well within the lessons to ensure that all pupils have different learning objectives depending on their ability.
21. There is very effective use of music in a therapeutic setting to support the development of communication skills.
22. Arrangements for homework are good, with work being given to be carried out during the holidays. Parents of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are provided with a structured pack of work to be done at home, which consolidates work done in school. If carried out effectively this improves the learning of the pupils.

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

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements and the Code of Practice. There are no disapplications and the curriculum is effectively modified to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils for whom the school caters. The core curriculum is a strength, with co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science developing those areas well and ensuring that they are well resourced. The curriculum as a whole is derived from a commercially produced package which ensures that all subjects are planned for and taught. However, learning would be more closely targeted on individual pupil need if the school developed its own curriculum, based on a full audit of present strengths and weaknesses. At present the staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to develop their experience, knowledge and understanding of the whole National Curriculum. Their efforts are impeded by a lack of subject specific knowledge in some areas and the lack of co-ordinated leadership and guidance in the foundation subjects. Teaching assistants are valued for the bedrock of support they have provided for the curriculum whilst the school has been through a very difficult period of staff and management changes.
24. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all year groups is not yet fully developed. The recently purchased computers ensure that the school is well placed to enable improvement to take place. Music and physical education are relative strengths of the foundation curriculum, with music particularly well supported by the specialist music teacher, the music therapist and a teacher from the nearby mainstream school who brings both harp playing and making skills to the school. Physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and occupational therapy make a significant contribution to the physical well being of pupils with more profound and complex special needs. The way in which these therapies are managed within the school, leads to considerable disruption to some lessons for individual pupils, and this has an adverse effect on learning.
25. The sensory curriculum has been well developed in classrooms, with each room providing a sensory area and teachers and support staff using a multi-sensory approach to their work with the pupils. There is a need to extend the sensory curriculum to public areas inside and outside of the school building, using sensory trails for instance, and making more use of the display space to set up sensory areas and to use objects of reference to symbolise the school. There are two sensory

areas, recently set up, which give examples of what can be done. This would support the communication curriculum for those with more complex and severe needs. At the same time it would offer opportunities to extend all subjects of the school and National Curriculum.

26. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are based on the National Strategies and are very effective. The provision for teaching and learning literacy skills pervades the curriculum as the key support for communication throughout the school. The speech and language therapy team provides specialist support. The team work on feeding plans and other specific provisions to support the speech and language needs of pupils with more profound and complex special needs. All staff are able to sign fluently and are aware of the communication limitations of individual pupils. Much use is made of signing, although more use could be made of hand-on-hand co-active signing, to ensure that pupils with more profound and complex needs can make more rapid progress in developing communication skills. Both literacy and numeracy skills are improved through their use in personal and social sessions such as the 'hello' and 'goodbye' sessions that begin and end each day. They are also improved through the drinks breaks, when pupils are required to make choices and to respond as they practise social skills. Opportunities to teach numeracy skills are sometimes missed during lunchtimes, toileting times and some breaktimes.
27. Personal, social and health education has an appropriately central role in the school curriculum. It is based on a commercial scheme of work. This has been developed to meet the individual needs of pupils and has both a taught component and a separate cross-curriculum component. The discretely taught component builds from self-knowledge through family structures and the wider community. It includes awareness of the physical self, family growth, feelings about self and others, celebrations, health, safety and hygiene, responsibility in the community, including care for animals and the environment. Through sessions at the beginning and end of the day, mealtimes and breaktimes, there is further provision for personal and social education. Toileting is an occasion for raising awareness of personal and health education amongst pupils with more severe and complex special needs.
28. Extra-curricular activities are limited, in part because pupils require transport at the end of the day, although the headteacher is considering an extended day to promote extra-curricular clubs and activities. A part of each lunchtime is taken up with games and activities that are supervised, but which are not planned as learning activities. The lunchbreak is long and invites the development of social and learning clubs and activities that would extend the curriculum. Visits are made and events are put on or attended, some involving the attached special high school or the nearby mainstream first and middle school. On occasion, visitors are invited to support religious education, art and design and other subject areas, but these are infrequent and many opportunities to extend the curriculum in this way are missed.
29. Relationships with the attached special high school are well developed, with many events, assemblies and visits shared by pupils from both schools. Relationships with the nearby mainstream first and middle school are being developed in a planned way in order to ease the transition to a shared site in a few years time, when the rebuilding programme is completed. The enthusiasm with which the staff and governors of both schools are anticipating the move to a fully inclusive school should ensure that it develops in an exemplary way.
30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and that for social development is very good because staff know the pupils' social needs very well and work hard and carefully to meet them. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.

31. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good across the school. Pupils learn about the values and beliefs of Christianity and other religions in their religious education lessons. Pupils in every year, including those who are under the age of five, make visits to churches, mosques and temples. The school celebrates religious festivals like Diwali with a big assembly, in which parents take part and pupils have the opportunity to eat food from other cultures and wear their special clothes. Opportunities are provided for all pupils, at the beginning and end of each day, to have a quiet reflection time. In one class, the teacher puts on pleasant, calming music and then says a few words about the rain, the flowers growing and the birds singing. The teacher encourages the pupils to sign the key words; 'sun', 'rain', 'flowers' and 'birds'. Those who can, repeat the words out loud. Then the pupils are asked to sit quietly, close their eyes, breathe deeply and listen to the music. The pupils are clearly familiar with this routine, and they relax and appreciate the tranquil atmosphere. In another class, a teacher lights a candle and plays soft music while the pupils sit quietly or read books. These lessons happen in every class and pupils are well prepared for the journey home.
32. There is a delightful atmosphere at lunchtimes and the staff demonstrate how devoted they are in their care of the pupils. Grace is said every day. Music and art and design lessons help pupils to recognise the spiritual aspects of their lives. Contemplative listening to music and joyous singing are strong features within many lessons. The work of the music therapist is outstanding in this respect. Through her playing and singing, she provides an uplifting experience for staff and pupils alike. The staff also speak highly of the member of support staff who sings unaccompanied in assembly and improvises songs about topics like the weather.
33. A weakness in spiritual provision is that it has been left to individual members of staff to get together and to do what they can. There is no whole-school approach to determining the way in which pupils' spiritual development can be systematically fostered and sustained. The lack of leadership in creative areas like art and design also means that pupils have too few opportunities for self-expression that could make a significant contribution to their spiritual development. The new headteacher has some good ideas about how to improve matters over the next period.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Staff throughout the school make sure that pupils know what is expected of them in their behaviour and work. Through good devices, like visual timetables, pupils come to know the routines of the school and anticipate what they should do at certain times in the day. Staff use signing well to show what they expect, and you often see staff and pupils with thumbs up (the sign for 'good') when pupils have done the right thing. Staff provide good role models for the pupils and this is reinforced by the very good relationships and teamwork between members of staff. At lunchtimes, staff make good use of individual behaviour plans so that everyone applies consistent rules to enable some quite difficult pupils to conform to what is normally expected.
35. Some pupils have deep-seated problems in interacting with others, like those with autistic spectrum disorder, for example. With these pupils, where sanctions and rewards may be inappropriate or irrelevant, staff show patience and forbearance. This may be time-consuming but it is effective. For example, one boy who has autistic spectrum disorder was very put out when he had to see the music therapist instead of doing the drawing which he expected. When he returned to the classroom clearly upset, a support assistant took him out and comforted him so that he settled down and was ready to work.

36. Some classes make good use of symbolised reward charts which are reviewed at the end of the day. In one class the staff appropriately use the terms 'happy' (smiley face) meaning 'behaved well' or 'unhappy' (sad face) meaning 'had difficulties'. This puts the responsibility for behaving well much more in the pupils' hands, as well as reflecting to the pupils how others in the school feel about poor behaviour. In turn this helps the pupils to recognise the effect of their behaviour on others. Unfortunately in this class, the chart is not positioned so that all the pupils can see and benefit fully from the review.
37. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Staff have a very good understanding of who the pupils are and what they need. So, in all lessons, staff provide good individualised opportunities for pupils to gain social skills and show pupils that they are valued. In this way they are helped to gain a good self-image. In an art and design lesson, the support staff very effectively communicated with the pupils consistently through the lesson, giving them guidance and encouragement. This guidance extended to sharing the tools and to washing the clay off the tools when they had finished.
38. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities for integration with pupils in mainstream education. In one lesson, pupils from a local school came with their teacher to show pupils what harps sound like. All the pupils were very interested in each other and a very pleasant and friendly atmosphere was quickly created. All the pupils stood silently in awe watching a pupil from Woodlands struggling to make a sound on the harp, and there was palpable relief and praise when she eventually achieved this. There are very good plans for the future for physically integrating with a mainstream school, and this will give excellent opportunities for both sets of pupils.
39. At lunchtime and drinks times there are clear, written objectives for individual pupils. In the drinks sessions, pupils are encouraged to be independent in choosing and consuming their drinks and biscuits. Those who can, choose the drink and pour it themselves, while others eye-point to show what they would like, and are assisted by the staff to drink carefully. Pupils also take responsibility for helping each other and clearing up after eating or after a messy lesson such as art. In one short lesson at the end of the day, the teacher chooses some examples during the day where pupils could have said 'thank you'. They are then invited to sit quietly and think about saying 'thank you'. During these same sessions, teachers sing personalised goodbye songs with pupils, politely saying goodbye to each other through speech, gesture or sign. In one lesson, a pupil noticed that the class had not said goodbye to the inspector and made sure he was not missed out.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities in the vicinity of the school are not fully exploited, but in school there are good opportunities to learn about pupils' own culture, for instance in music, art and design and English. Pupils visit nearby amenities like Thorpe Park, and visit art exhibitions and events like 'Colourscape'. Musicians, such as peripatetic string, woodwind and brass teachers from the local education authority's music service, visit the school. Pupils have experienced music from Brazil and Ireland, and live bands. Many members of the staff contribute musically to the life of the school. There are singers, and players of the piano, recorder and guitar. There are lively displays around the school, but there are missed opportunities for the pupils to see the works of great artists, local artists or art from other cultures.
41. The school works hard to ensure that the curriculum is socially and educationally inclusive. The planned re-build of the school incorporates the physical connection of the special school with its mainstream link school. This should provide exceptional

opportunities to work on fully effective planning for the pupils across the very wide range of attainment and special educational needs, to the benefit of pupils and staff from both special and mainstream schools. There are good links with the existing attached special high school and developing links with the mainstream link school. Both staff and pupils from the mainstream link school have planned links within the music curriculum. There is staff enthusiasm and managerial determination from governing bodies and senior staff of both schools for furthering such links. Pupils on the autistic spectrum disorder and those with more severe and complex special needs generally have similar opportunities to participate in all curriculum and other activities. The school staff are well qualified and experienced to ensure that those pupils are effectively included in both social and educational ways. However, the organisation of the classes for reception pupils and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties impedes the delivery of an inclusive curriculum, because of the wide difference in learning needs and curriculum entitlements of pupils in those classes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides very good day-to-day care for all groups of pupils. Parents are very pleased with the care provided for their children. Staff know pupils and their families very well and are very skilled in meeting their personal needs. Teaching assistants are trained in first aid and manual handling and good records are kept of the medication which they administer to pupils. The school administrator plays a valuable role in the care of pupils through, for example, her links with parents and her very well-organised records of accidents and equipment checks. There are good working relationships between school staff and transport escorts which ensure that the transition of children between home and school is managed as well as possible within the constraints of the accommodation and site. There is effective and close liaison with a wide range of external professionals, for example the school nurse who is on the premises most days. Arrangements for the feeding, care and recreation of the pupils during the long lunchtime are very well organised. The school has put in place effective measures to ensure the security of the site and the building. There are useful policies for personal hygiene and manual handling but no overall policy for health and safety, which is a legal requirement. This is unsatisfactory. Staff have not had recent training and guidance on child protection, although they are confident in identifying, reporting and recording any concerns. The new headteacher is experienced in child protection and health and safety matters, and has already begun the process of remedying the gaps in the school's provision of care.
43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The school is developing the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning. This is better established where curriculum co-ordinators are in post and leads to more effective learning in those areas.
44. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour are very effective. Attendance registers are well kept by teachers and the data is transferred to a computer program so that it can be analysed easily. Staff work closely with the education social worker to reassure anxious parents that the school can meet their child's personal needs. There is detailed written guidance available for staff on managing behaviour and this is carried out very consistently and successfully for all groups of pupils. On the occasions where a pupil continues to display inappropriate behaviour, staff share strategies with each other and with parents in order to plan for structured support for that individual.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents have positive views about the school. A sound proportion of them attended the meeting with the registered inspector and returned the parent questionnaire. They strongly agree that their children like school and that the teaching is good, their children behave well and make good progress. They feel well informed about their children's progress and that the school works closely with them. A significant minority do not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, with one parent commenting that there has been a reduction in the number of outings. The inspection team found that a satisfactory range of activities have been offered over the past few years but agree that there is scope for increased provision.
46. The school's links with parents and their involvement in the work of the school are satisfactory with several good features. Parents highly value the daily reports written by staff in the home-school link books. These are used consistently and effectively in all classes to maintain communication about the children's personal needs. Information and medication are also passed on successfully via the transport escorts. Parents welcome the new headteacher's programme of home visits to every family which has a child at the school. They receive an updated copy of their children's individual education plan every term and are involved in the targets and strategies developed to improve their children's learning, health and behaviour. Parents are pleased with the arrangements, which often include contact with external agencies, for informing them of how they can help at home. Annual reviews are usually well attended and parents receive good review reports on their children's progress in English, mathematics and personal development. However, progress in other subjects is not reported on with the same clarity and detail and not all subjects are included. This is significant because parents do not receive a separate written annual report as they would in a mainstream school. The school has tried to inform and involve parents in aspects of the school's provision, such as its new arrangements for autistic pupils and its plans for the new building. Staff have been disappointed by the level of parents' response to these meetings, but some parents report that important information does not always reach them. Now that the school has a permanent headteacher, it is well placed to build on its links with parents and to involve them further in the work of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership of the school by the new headteacher is good. He is giving clear direction to the work of the school. He is ably supported by the governing body and teachers with management responsibility within the school. This has a positive impact on standards in the school. There is a vacancy for a deputy headteacher and this reduces the headteacher's capacity to take the school forward.
48. During the last two years, the acting headteacher succeeded in creating and maintaining a learning environment where relationships are extremely positive and pupils feel valued and that staff care for them. This is the basis of the very positive ethos on which the new headteacher has begun to build.
49. With the support of officers of the local education authority, the attached adviser and an independent consultant, the school has constructed an appropriate school improvement plan, including timescales, success criteria and costs. Good progress has been made towards the implementation of the plan, but crucial to its ultimate success will be the move to new premises.

50. The governing body are very active in their support of the school. Some governors visit the school regularly and observe the working of the school on a day-to-day basis. They make a good contribution to the running of the school. Others are very much at the stage of raising their own awareness of the school, in preparation for a more formal monitoring role. The governors are resolute in their determination to maintain standards and to raise them further. The chair of governors has a very clear understanding of the work of the school and works closely with the headteacher to achieve the shared aims. There is clear direction for the school which ensures that it is strategic decisions that determine educational and financial planning.
51. Governors have some important and relevant skills to bring to the governance of the school, such as experience in business and personnel. They have established a committee structure and individual governors have designated responsibilities. They have not ensured the nomination of a special educational needs governor and they are not carrying out some of their statutory responsibilities. There is no health and safety policy, no staffing pay and conditions policy and no child protection policy, as well as omissions in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.
52. The headteacher, governors and staff of the school know its strengths and areas for development. The school has its own strategy for improvement based on a thorough initial audit by the headteacher. A particular strength of the school is its staff, supported by an effective induction programme and planned continuous professional development. Further development of the number and role of subject co-ordinators within the school is necessary for the effective planning and teaching of the curriculum throughout the school and to raise standards further.
53. Staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters, pupils' individual education plans and wider issues such as the future of the school. Staff use their time and professional expertise well to support one another and to ensure that the school improves. Good use is made of existing resources. In spite of the unsatisfactory nature of many aspects of the accommodation, staff are able to successfully minimise its impact on teaching and learning. The school is efficient in its strategic use of resources. Financial planning and control are good. The chair of governors currently takes responsibility for the close monitoring of the school budget, with the headteacher exercising day-to-day financial control within agreed limits. The day-to-day financial controls, procedures and administration of money are very good.
54. The school has sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, including areas of learning for the under-fives as well as for the number of pupils on roll, given the wide range and complexity of learning needs.
55. The quality of the teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are well trained, very committed and work in harmony with the teachers in the best interests of the pupils. This leads to very effective learning for all and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved.
56. The kitchen staff and the dining room assistants make a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school, and the lunchtime arrangements for the pupils enhance their general educational experience within the school. The school is clean and well maintained. This reflects the school's attitude to the pupils, and makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development.
57. Staff morale is high and reflects the strong team spirit that is a characteristic of the school.

58. The school provides good value for money and is very well placed to continue the recent improvements.
59. All teachers are suitably qualified or experienced in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, but some staff lack curriculum expertise in the foundation subjects. Overall deployment of staff is satisfactory and has a positive effect on teaching and learning. However, there are no co-ordinators for core subjects and this seriously weakens the management, and limits the development of the curriculum in the school.
60. Each class has teaching assistants who are fully involved in working with pupils. Their varying backgrounds, qualifications and experience make a particularly valuable contribution to the education of the pupils. Learning is significantly enhanced by the very effective, close collaboration between teachers, support staff and therapists, which is good in relation to planning and the management of pupils.
61. There is a planned induction programme for new staff. Teachers take opportunities to attend a variety of courses on aspects of their work. Staff do not have any up-to-date training in child protection and the school lacks an appropriate policy.
62. Performance management for teachers is not yet fully established in the school. A draft policy exists but has yet to go before the governors for approval; this is a weakness.
63. The school currently makes good use of financial resources and has good procedures to ensure that best value is obtained for school development. The role of the governing body increasingly involves them in determining financial targets, and the chairman effectively monitors expenditure.
64. The day-to-day running of the school accounts is good and there is secure financial control and effective procedures for informing the headteacher and governors of the current financial situation. The school office works well and good use is made of information technology to handle and improve routine communication with the local education authority and essential internal tasks. Specific grants made to the school for professional development are used and administered appropriately.
65. Governors and managers are fully involved in school development planning, particularly concerning the successful Private Finance Initiative bid to fund the building of the new school. As a result, sufficient funds are available to secure the future development of the school. The move to the new premises will enhance the educational opportunities for the pupils within Woodlands School itself and also significantly improve inclusion opportunities.
66. The school has adequate resources to deliver the full National Curriculum together with religious education. These are used effectively. There is a good range of materials for mathematics and science, and for music. New computers just arrived in school will enhance the school's provision for ICT. This is a significant improvement. The school uses its curriculum resources well.
67. The school's current accommodation is unsatisfactory. Many facilities are unsuitable for the numbers, ages and disabilities of the pupils on roll. For example, the classroom for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, a significant number of whom are of nursery or reception age, is far too small and there is no easy access to an outdoor play area. The corridors are too narrow for the comfortable use of wheelchairs. Some rooms are shared with the special high school on the same

site, which limits access to resources. There is no specialist room that can properly meet the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. The school makes good use of the available accommodation and has made sound efforts to improve the accommodation where it can. For example, there is a good quality playground for younger pupils with severe learning difficulties and a good soft play room facility. Classrooms are enhanced by effective displays of pupils' work. The local education authority is funding the installation of tracking for two lavatories, but overall the toileting facilities are poor and compromise the dignity of the pupils. There are potential health and safety hazards in the quality of the surface in the playground for older pupils and in the lack of sufficient storage space which results in clutter around the school. The smallness of the car park and the shared transport arrangements with the special high school produce congestion and delays at the start and end of the school day. There are exciting plans to move the school to a new building on the same campus as a mainstream primary school in two years' time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. The governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:

- a) improve accommodation by ensuring the successful move to the planned new premises;

(Para refs: 41, 49, 65, 67)

- b) improve further the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all subjects of the curriculum are effectively co-ordinated;

(Para refs: 52, 59, 111, 115, 116, 119, 123, 149)

- c) improve the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that they fulfil all statutory responsibilities; and

(Para refs: 51, 62)

- d) improve aspects of provision for the youngest pupils in nursery and reception classes.

(Para refs: 41, 71, 72, 75, 80, 81, 82)

The governors should consider including the following minor points in their action plan:

- Child protection training
- Cultural provision
- More effective use of directed time
- More effective management of therapy provision within the school, to ensure curriculum continuity for pupils.

(Para refs: 24, 28, 40, 42, 61, 67)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	16	12	0	0	0
Percentage	3	17	44	33	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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	37
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

Attainment at end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Numbers of pupils eligible are below 10 so results are not reported here.

Attainment at end of Years 3 to 6 (Year 6)

Numbers of pupils eligible are below 10 so results are not reported here.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	9	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	7

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	700,240
Total expenditure	623,780
Expenditure per pupil	16,539
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,235
Balance carried forward to next year	21,611

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	35
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	36	0	0	14
Behaviour in the school is good.	7	64	0	0	29
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	43	7	7	29
The teaching is good.	50	50	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	29	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	14	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	36	7	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	21	64	0	0	14
The school is well led and managed.	21	57	7	0	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	50	7	0	14
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	36	14	14	7

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

69. The school makes satisfactory provision for children in the Foundation Stage. While children's individual needs are broadly met, the curriculum and teaching does not at the moment reflect the national developments for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum provided for any child not yet aged five covers all the recommended areas of learning, although these are identified as National Curriculum subjects
70. The school provides for ten children in the Foundation Stage. The number of sessions they attend increases as they get older, therefore, most of these children attend on a part-time basis. Children in the Foundation Stage have a very broad range of needs, including severe and profound learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and complex medical needs.
71. The way in which the school organises its Foundation Stage provision is not effective. At the time of the inspection, five children in the reception year were based in a class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, which also has pupils up to the age of ten. The nursery class on the other hand contains two pupils in Year 1. This means that teachers, who are relatively inexperienced and new to the school, have difficulty in planning specifically for this age group. The new headteacher, the governors and staff are committed to developing the early years provision, and the school plans to link with the mainstream school on its new site. This should ensure that within the next two years, the school will be meeting the needs of these youngsters much more effectively.
72. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Despite their relative inexperience, teachers are enthusiastic and keen to learn, and receive considerable support from the teaching assistants and external professionals like physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The teaching assistants are very committed to their work. They have been at the school for some time and have built up a good knowledge of the pupils, what they require and how they can best be nurtured and cared for. Adults share very good relationships with children and the quality of teamwork between the teacher, nursery nurse and support assistants is consistently very effective. This means that the children place great trust in the staff. They are very willing to learn and make satisfactory progress. The teaching teams place an appropriate emphasis upon supporting children's communication skills. However, the curriculum provided is not yet as good as it could be because the specific needs of younger children are not fully taken into account. The school has yet to develop a wide choice of learning opportunities for children to work and play individually and in both small and large groups. Plans for child-led activities and purposeful play are not as effective as they should be because the timetable is focused on older pupils, and this limits the ability of the staff to react flexibly to children's spontaneous responses. This is unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Classroom staff recognise its importance in providing the basis for children's learning in other areas. The school provides a warm and safe environment which helps the children to learn happily and confidently. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models and children quickly learn how to behave well. In one numeracy lesson, for example, staff showed the children how to take turns and share. Throughout the day staff manage children's

behaviour well. They work very well together to ensure that children are not unsettled when they have to move from one location or activity to another. During these times, very little time is lost. On one occasion, a teaching assistant sensitively supervised a boy when he walked around the room to have food through a gastrostomy tube, allowing him to look at his own image in the mirror on the way.

74. Staff have appropriate expectations of children developing independence in feeding themselves at snack and lunchtime. They devise individual programmes alongside the external professionals for each child and provide sufficient time and encouragement for children to achieve as much as possible independently. Children are also encouraged to clear away after themselves and this happens in lessons too.
75. Within the classroom, staff give children opportunities to make choices and to learn how to assert themselves. However, there are limited opportunities for children to select equipment or activities that they then explore over a longer period of time. Even more crucially, the timetable does not allow for pupils to engage in purposeful play, where they can experiment, take risks and make and learn from their mistakes. These omissions mean that pupils do not develop their communication and social skills as quickly as they might.

Communication, language and literacy

76. The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall.
77. Members of staff work well as a team to provide children with a means and a desire to achieve.
78. Verbal communication and signing are well used. The provision for the subject is enhanced by the very good resources available and by the assistance of the speech and language therapist. In one lesson, for example, the speech therapist was present in the classroom and made a skilful contribution towards the lesson in helping the children develop their communication and social skills.
79. The whole team is successful in helping children to understand the school's routines and to express their own choices and preferences. In one lesson, the children were given good opportunities to choose between two books and to read with an adult. The range of books included a beautiful collection of rag books, as well as more conventional ones. Those children with more complex needs are interested in people and their immediate environment. They follow people around the room with their eyes and express their interest by paying attention to the activities which the staff have provided. One boy was given a complicated rattle instead of a book. The rattle made interesting sounds, and he concentrated on this for some time. Staff also use a range of sensory props to illustrate a story and encourage children to use switches or a 'Big Mac' to respond.
80. The provision for this area of learning does have some weaknesses. The planning is insufficiently detailed to allow for an accurate assessment of what pupils have achieved. The lack of timetabled opportunities for child-selected activities and for purposeful play means that progress in this area is not as good as it should be.

Mathematical development

81. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their understanding of number, size and shape. Progress is only satisfactory because the planning has some positive aspects and some weaknesses. The teachers and staff enjoy a very good relationship with the children and are calm and persevering. The staff work well together, and the more experienced staff do their best to compensate for their less experienced colleagues. Children's mathematical understanding is developed through a range of activities which are broadly appropriate for young children, such as stories, songs, and games. In one lesson, the teacher uses songs to teach counting from 1 to 5, and then moves on to the story of the Hungry Caterpillar, using a good range of objects which the caterpillar ate and which can be counted. This is appropriate and effective for the older pupils in the class. However, it is less successful for the pupils aged under five because many do not yet understand counting or the concept of numbers. This failure to plan effectively for everybody became very apparent in another lesson when only one child was present (the others were sick or out of the room) and the activities selected were not at all relevant to her stage of understanding. The situation is made worse by the fact that there are insufficient opportunities on the timetable for children to develop their mathematical understanding through the use of imaginative play activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. There is a balance between good aspects, which include good resources and skilful support staff, and weaknesses, principally in planning and assessment. For example, in a geography lesson on the weather, which contributes to this area of learning, the class teacher used a good range of multi-sensory resources including ice, warm clothes to represent winter and summer clothes for summer. Teachers and support staff skillfully used questions to encourage pupils to learn, and gave good praise and feedback to the children. However, the planning did not sufficiently take into account the children's individual needs or the length of the lesson, which meant that the teacher ran out of planned content ten minutes before the end of the lesson and had to finish early. Because there was no individual focus for the lesson for each pupil, the assessment was only anecdotal and descriptive; 'She liked to feel the hot and cold things – she loved the ice – she hated to wear the gloves and scarf.' This means that the planning of future lessons will not be based upon what children know, understand or can do, and so their progress may be slower than one would expect. The timetable does not allow for the use of purposeful and imaginative play which would enable pupils to increase their understanding of the world from their own perspective.

Physical development

83. No teaching was seen in this area of learning during the inspection and there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the provision for physical development.

Creative development

84. The teaching of creative development is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. This is because the adult-led activities like music and art broadly meet the needs of the children, but there are too few opportunities for imaginative or purposeful play, or for children to lead activities of their choosing.

85. In a music lesson, children respond to a 'Hello' song by beating a percussion instrument like the Agogo. They strike the wind chimes or xylophone as an accompaniment to another song. The children listen to recorded music like Pachelbel's Canon and watch the teacher playing the ocean drum. The teacher evaluated the lesson and recorded the children's response to the activities, but no assessment was kept which recorded how each child improved their skills, knowledge or understanding in music.
86. In an art and design lesson, children are given objects found on the beach like shells and then they are asked to make a collage of a beach scene. Good use is made of a recording of sea sounds to give children more of a sense of what was required. The lesson was not well planned in that there were no objectives set for individual children, and the activities only lasted for fifteen minutes – half the allocated time. The staff did not provide any opportunities for children to use their imagination to develop their own ideas and this is clearly not part of the routines of the class.

ENGLISH

87. The school delivers English as part of a whole-school approach to communication. Provision for the development of pupils' communication skills is very good. Progress and attainment in speaking and listening is a significant strength. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from this whole-school approach.
88. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils pay increasing attention to the teacher, the teaching assistants and each other, and are sometimes able to listen attentively. They increasingly join in group activities, sometimes activating their personal tape-recorders to make themselves heard. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties tolerate classroom activities well at this stage. They begin to be aware of others. The skilful individual attention of the teacher and teaching assistants ensures their attention is caught and held. They are helped to explore the textures of the furry animals and damp earth which helps their understanding of the big book 'Mrs Wishee Washee', for example. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder respond positively to the very softly spoken, clear instructions they are given, and successfully make the connection between symbols and objects. The consistent use of signing and the symbols they are shown ensures they know what is going on around them and what will happen next. Some make their needs and wants known by giving cards with symbols on them to the adults in the classroom.
89. Pupils enjoy books and stories in Years 1 and 2 and delight in choosing between two that are offered. They love stories and tales particularly when they have the undivided attention of the teacher or teaching assistant. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties pay attention to the striking illustrations in a big book, and some make a connection between the simple tales which are presented to them and the objects they are given to touch, feel, taste and smell which help their understanding. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder listen to stories with varying degrees of understanding. Some rapidly engage with a well-illustrated text. Others read a sequence of symbols to reinforce their learning.
90. Pupils confidently grip a pen in these years groups, and are helped to make marks on paper with some degree of control. High-achievers realise that marks on paper can denote meaning. Others fill shapes with colour, and copy simple linear patterns with their crayon. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience a range of textures and materials with their hands and fingers and some of them begin to

make purposeful marks. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder copy and overwrite letters and simple words.

91. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made consistently good progress towards their targets, although their attainment shows a wide degree of variation. All, however, communicate very well and according to their capacity, and have been well taught to use augmentative aids such as signing to help them to do so. They show consistent attention to the adults in the classroom, and respond to what they say or sign by speech, signing or personal tape-recording. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties use pointing, gesture and facial expression to help them to communicate. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make excellent use of picture exchange cards, often supplemented by signing or some vocalisation to make sure their requirements are met. By the end of Years 1 and 2, all take pleasure in sharing a story. The highest achievers have a small sight vocabulary. Others identify some letters in simple words. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder read sequences of symbols which they connect with the written word. Pupils' writing varies widely in scope, but pupils overwrite and copy letters and have some understanding that their name can be written down. The pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties also make marks on paper and copy patterns and letters. Those with autistic spectrum disorder make sentences in their personal books of symbols.
92. Pupils' behaviour in literacy lessons is very good, with all of them purposefully engaged. Pupils who have behavioural difficulties have their needs well met by consistent application of the school's very good behaviour policy. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are not so easily distracted from their tasks as is usual. As a result of consistently very good behaviour management, all pupils show themselves capable of concentration and a few of them some of capacity for independent activity.
93. Literacy lessons are taught well. Teachers know their pupils well, and their generally good assessment procedures give a sound basis for the next steps in pupils' learning. Teaching assistants provide an excellent standard of care and support to all pupils. The exceptional standard of liaison between them and the teachers provides a high level of individual help to pupils and is a significant strength in all lessons.
94. The school has taken on many of the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy, such as the frequency and length of lessons and the use of big books and these improve pupils' learning. Cross-curricular links are very good and help pupils to learn. In a lesson in Year 2, the teacher linked music, drama, science, geography and swimming by creative use of the National Literacy Strategy to address communication as a key skill. This lesson, based on a train journey, was particularly effective because teaching assistants ensured the participation of pupils by making objects available to individuals to feel, thus anticipating action and encouraging vocalisation and signing. Learning in this lesson was fun, as pupils experienced the teacher acting as a ticket collector. They were enabled to experience the sounds and darkness of going through a tunnel, to 'see' a hot air balloon in the sky and finally to reach the sea to the crash of breaking waves. They then were enabled to experience the water, sound and light of the seaside and see shells and model boats. In this lesson, pupils used instruments to make sounds, and enriched their musical experience by singing 'Row, row, row your boat'.
95. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make particularly good progress in communication as they are withdrawn from lessons for three periods of 30 minutes weekly to receive well co-ordinated and highly appropriate individual lessons in surroundings well suited to their needs. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very good progress because multi-sensory resources for them are

also suitable, and they receive a high level of physical care which enables them to be comfortable and alert.

96. The development of communication in the school is very good because it is central to the curriculum in every subject and planned to take place throughout the school day. When pupils arrive on Monday mornings for example, they have good opportunities to tell others their news. Speech and language development is well supported by therapists, who advise on the literacy targets for all pupils. Resources, including computers, are very good and help teachers to fully meet the needs of their pupils and enable them to make the greatest possible progress.
97. Management of the subject is satisfactory. During the long-term absence of the co-ordinator, teachers have successfully taken on responsibility for the subject. Previous management initiatives have helped this process, and have proved both effective and durable. The school is aware that sharper assessment procedures would improve the focus of the curriculum, and this is being addressed in the context of subject reorganisation.

MATHEMATICS

98. The pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and very good progress through Years 3 to 6. The progress they make in Year 1 is slowed down by the inclusion of reception year pupils with more profound and complex special needs, whose curriculum needs are different from other pupils in the class. Well-planned daily numeracy lessons and the sensitive teamwork of teachers and teaching assistants enable very good progress to be made overall. Pupils whose first language is not English make similar progress to others. Pupils are familiar with the number songs and activities and look forward to joining in.
99. Higher attaining Year 1 pupils can identify the triangle from two given shapes and can verbalise the colour red. They know that removing an object from a group of three leaves two remaining and can verbalise the number two. Pupils with more profound and complex special needs experience and explore objects, searching when they are hidden and indicating by eye pointing and gesture where they are. They develop tracking skills effectively, using a Big Mac switch to activate toys. Year 2 pupils observe empty and full containers and can pour sand with minimal support to experience volume. In one lesson observed, a pupil with individual teacher assistant support was able to create a sensory number from scrunched paper and trace it with her finger. Higher attaining pupils are able to use a computer 'cause and effect' program to consolidate their learning. Pupils communicate effectively with adults, although those with more severe communication difficulties do not get sufficient practice in coactive signing.
100. Year 3 pupils are beginning to differentiate shapes and higher attaining pupils indicate an understanding of some of the characteristics of a cube, feeling confident in the excellent relationships they have with adults. They learn to sequence numbers from one to five. By Year 5, pupils are able to anticipate a sequence of events from their daily introduction to the class timetable. They use the picture exchange cards to make choices between two objects, or to identify the next activity. Higher attaining pupils match geometric shapes in discrete piles, without support. They choose the correct length of string to gauge the circumference of a circular object. In Year 6, pupils with more profound and complex special needs are able to activate electrical items, such as a fan, a tape recorder and bubble tubes, using a single switch. They are able to choose from two objects and develop their tracking skills using a light source.

101. All pupils are very well behaved and most show a keen interest to learn. Those with more severe communication needs feel safe in their classrooms and show no adverse reaction to strangers. The excellent caring relationships that are built up by adults ensure that all pupils are engaged in the lessons and make generally very good progress.
102. The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Staff in the Year 1 class have to face a complex group of pupils whose needs are very diverse and educationally challenging. The numeracy hour is well planned, so that all pupils can engage in the activities as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class. Teaching assistants are a particular strength, using their knowledge and experience of the pupils to support the enthusiastic young teachers, whose commitment to work with pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties is very clear. The excellent relationships in lessons ensure a very positive and enjoyable learning experience for all pupils. Teachers use the plenary sessions of the numeracy hour to celebrate pupils' achievements and consolidate learning. These are well-managed sessions that set a good pace to learning. Opportunities to experience and explore mathematics occur in most other subject areas and staff are generally quick to take advantage of them to consolidate learning. In personal, social and health education lessons, for instance, pupils visit local shops to gain experience of handling money.
103. The co-ordinator has worked hard to give the subject a clear direction and to ensure that her colleagues understand their role in the teaching of numeracy. This has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. She is planning to use opportunities presented in lunchtime and breaktime activities to explore pupils' mathematical knowledge, using ancillary staff to support learning. At present there is no formal monitoring of the department, including teaching. The co-ordinator is establishing an attainment baseline that uses 'P-level'¹ scores to check on the progress of pupils over time. Good use is made of the touch screen computers and software, especially for work on correspondence

SCIENCE

104. Pupils' achievements in science are good overall, and pupils make good progress across all year groups. Teaching and learning are good overall and are supported by a relevant policy on the teaching of science. There is a wide range of interesting and motivating learning experiences. The strong emphasis on an investigative approach and practical activities enables the pupils to learn well. There is a system of assessment in place. This is improving and is beginning to allow the school to build on what pupils know, understand and can do, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
105. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy science. Communication is embedded within the science curriculum. The pupils roll objects and learn to react appropriately to the words 'push' and 'pull'. They are able to anticipate a swinging action. Some pupils are able to use torches to shine through coloured cellophane in a darkened room. They can use eye movements to watch torch patterns on paper and reflections from a mirror ball. Higher attaining pupils learn to turn a light on and off using a switch. Scientific language such as 'rough' and 'smooth' is introduced, supported with appropriate signing as pupils touch sandpaper with their fingers.

¹ 'P-levels' are a measurement scale used to recognise the progress pupils make before they reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum, developed by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in 2001.

106. Pupils in Year 2 are able to explore the nature of fruits in different ways using taste, touch and smell. With support, pupils are able to squeeze citrus fruit and taste the juice.
107. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build effectively on earlier learning. The younger pupils look at light and dark using blankets and torches. They learn to switch torches on and off and make shadows. They recognise themselves and others in a mirror. Older pupils feel the vibrations in a plucked guitar string and react with pleasure. Higher attaining pupils can distinguish between soft and hard materials, and distinguish between farm animals and jungle creatures. The teachers use every opportunity to develop pupils' language skills. They introduce the correct scientific terms such as 'annelid' and 'setae'. The pupils respond positively to this approach.
108. The quality of teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 3 to 6. Pupils learn well in science throughout the school. The attitude of pupils towards science is good. Behaviour in science lessons is generally good and often very good. Lessons are well planned for all abilities to provide exciting and challenging practical activities. As a result pupils learn at the level of their ability. The management of behaviour in the classrooms is so good that the pupils remain calm even when excited by the activity. In the best lessons the pace is brisk, and frequent changes of activity assist in holding their interest. They concentrate and listen well. Resources are good and the teachers' good planning and preparation ensure that they are readily to hand. This ensures that everyone has something to look at or to do throughout the lesson. Singing songs and signing are both used effectively to help the pupils understand the scientific ideas involved. For example, a Years 3 to 6 class sang a song about a 'Wiggley Worm' at the beginning of a lesson on earthworms.
109. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together. Both groups have skills, knowledge and confidence in the teaching of science and this has a marked positive effect on the pupils' learning.
110. The subject co-ordinator is established in the post. She works hard and provides good leadership. The school makes good use of a commercial scheme of work in science, but this could be further improved by developing a curriculum more closely matched to the school's specific needs. The co-ordinator is given time to observe other teachers and offer support and advice as appropriate. This helps achieve a consistently high level of teaching of science in the school. The governors monitor the delivery of science within the curriculum by lesson observation and by receiving reports from the co-ordinator on a regular basis. This helps to ensure the maintenance of high standards.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in art and design. Teachers provide pupils with a variety of art activities using a good range of art materials. However, these activities focus almost entirely on the development of pupils' practical skills and opportunities for pupils to express themselves through art and design are limited. As a result, the contribution which the subject makes to pupils' spiritual development is not as strong as it could be. This has arisen because the school has no-one who co-ordinates the art and design provision, gives a lead to colleagues and inspires the work of the school.
112. By the end of Year 2, pupils are given opportunities to explore the feel of sand and to make a seascape collage from glue, sand and paper. They also explore paints with their fingers, hands and feet as well as paint brushes and develop awareness of

colours and making marks. The pupils use a touch screen program to make marks. They link their pictures with their literacy work and so they decorate butterfly shapes with paint, tissue, sequins and felt-tip pens to illustrate the Hungry Caterpillar story. In another class, pupils illustrate a book called 'The Train Ride' by painting shapes derived from the story and then sticking on wool and tissue. Pupils show a good sense of colour and some show a sound sense of pattern. Pupils are encouraged to improve their handling of paints and crayons by colouring inside outline drawings of animals and objects like fish and balloons. For the more able pupils, these activities will help them to learn how to write.

113. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils learn how to use brushes to paint and to make marks, while others enjoy using their hands to cover paper in colours of their own choosing. They roll out clay with a rolling pin and then press objects like fir cones, cake cutters and shells into the soft clay to make pleasing marks.
114. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The work in lessons is characterised by the very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, and the warm relationships between staff and pupils which reflects a good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs and the approaches that will enable them to become actively involved. Some teaching assistants have attended training courses in teaching art and design. On the other hand, opportunities for pupils' self-expression are limited, the planning is not always matched to the needs of each pupil and there is no really tight assessment of what pupils have achieved at the end of each lesson. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were to make a collage of a beach scene. However, the planning merely mentioned that some pupils would need extra help without specifying what that help would be, and the assessment sheet recorded that the pupil 'wasn't very happy', rather than what he had achieved. This lesson also lasted a very short time, much shorter than was allocated on the timetable. Another lesson finished early because the activity (trying out paint brushes) was not intensive or challenging and most pupils could do this anyway. In a much better lesson, pupils remained very involved in their tasks, and there was a photographic record kept of each pupil on a digital camera.
115. The co-ordination of art and design is unsatisfactory; there is no subject leader, although the school can call on the advice of the specialist teacher in the special high school which shares Woodlands' accommodation. There is no subject policy and the scheme of work is a commercial one that needs to be adapted to suit the range of pupils within the school. The new headteacher has plans to remedy the situation as soon as possible. Resources have been increased and are good. These resources include a good range of art software. While most art and design lessons take place in the classroom which is satisfactory, there are opportunities for the school to use the specialist room in the attached special high school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Only one lesson in design and technology was seen during the week of the inspection, so there is too little evidence to make a reliable judgement on teaching and learning in the subject. There is no co-ordinator for the subject which is unsatisfactory.
117. There are some good displays in one classroom which show some good quality junk models constructed by individual pupils. In the very good lesson seen, pupils in the oldest class are engaged in a project to make a spider from play dough. The teacher makes sure that all pupils are included, by using a range of communication skills such as signing and symbols. One pupil sings and signs the song of Incy Wincy

Spider' to the class, and all the pupils co-operate well, helping each other out where appropriate. A pupil who is able to, turns the pages of the book and responds well to the pictures and signs to support his facial and gestural responses. A pupil who requires help is given hand-on-hand support to break pieces of dough away from the lump. The support staff give excellent support to the pupils throughout, each taking responsibility for the less able pupils. They enjoy an excellent relationship with the pupils; they are very caring and are well informed about each of them. They work hard to challenge the pupils and constantly communicate with them to keep them on task. The lesson has a very good pace to it and it is fully interactive and inclusive. The lesson ends well with pupils being asked to recall what they had learned.

118. The school has some resources, mainly on a trolley that can be moved around, and each class has a budget. There is a satisfactory array of suitable software, electric toys and construction games. The school shares a cookery room with the neighbouring school, and a portable cooker can be moved from room to room as required

HUMANITIES (Geography and History)

119. Insufficient lessons of geography or history were seen during the inspection to enable a clear judgement to be made on teaching and learning. With no co-ordination of the subject it has proven difficult to evaluate the humanities curriculum and the impact that it has on pupils' learning, or to make secure judgements.
120. From work seen during the inspection and from the small amount of teaching seen, the provision for the subject is satisfactory and pupils in all years are making satisfactory progress in learning.
121. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 with more profound and complex special needs can indicate four different doors around the classroom and from symbols and pictures are able to identify the function of them. Higher attaining pupils make postcards and, with support, visit the post office to buy stamps. They stick them to their postcards and post them correctly. Pupils are able to place playground equipment symbols on the appropriate equipment. All pupils develop an awareness of time passing, through the morning greeting and afternoon preparation for home sessions. Each morning they go through the timetable, with staff using signs, symbols and words to show the activities that can be anticipated through the day.
122. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 can identify buildings such as shops, churches, supermarkets and schools from pictures. Higher attaining pupils can name them and say what they are used for. Pupils with profound and complex special needs experience travel over different surfaces in their wheelchairs and learn to navigate the school, with some support. The school is not well signed and the use of objects of reference and sensory trails to map the school for those pupils with more severe communication difficulties is only now being developed. There are many missed opportunities in taught time, to enable pupils to consolidate their awareness and use of space and their sense of time passing. The passing of seasons is celebrated through art and there is reference to weather at some point in the school day, but without co-ordination these opportunities are not planned for and there is no clear tracking of pupils' progress in awareness and understanding. A digital camera is used to record and identify areas of the school and all pupils have the opportunity to handle the camera and view the results. There is little evidence of the use of genealogy and no evidence of the experience of staff or visiting adults being used to demonstrate

different periods of time in a robust way. No evidence was seen of the use of picture maps to prepare for local trips, or for negotiating the immediate environment.

123. The school uses a commercially produced curriculum to plan the subject, but there is a need to augment this with a curriculum that grows out from the school's setting and resources. With no co-ordinator to drive the subject forward there is no monitoring or evaluation to inform the curriculum and it is only the commitment of teachers and teaching assistants in using the available curriculum that ensures a satisfactory learning experience for the pupils. This is a weakness.
124. With the move to new premises and a caring and committed staff, led by a co-ordinator, as planned, the subject has a good capacity to improve in future years.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

125. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well in ICT.
126. Only two discrete lessons were observed in ICT during the week of the inspection. Pupils' work in lessons shows that they are making good progress overall. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3, pupils work independently with a touch screen to control the program. They use battery toys and they understand the use of switches to produce an effect, like turning on the radio. In another lesson, a pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties activates the touch screen by raising one arm, and tracks the moving symbol on the screen. Meanwhile a more able pupil knows how to animate the image on the screen and he communicates to his fellow pupil using speech and sign language. There is a very friendly relationship between the two pupils, with one pupil helping the other by raising his arm and touchingly wiping his mouth for him.
127. The quality of teaching is good overall. Staff are excited about the arrival of a lot of new computer equipment and they use it wherever they can. Lessons have very clear objectives. All staff have an enthusiasm and good knowledge and are confident in using the equipment. Teachers and support assistants work well together as a team and give a high level of support to ensure that tasks are understood and pupils can complete the activities. Praise, encouragement and constant communication maintains pupils' interest and increases their confidence. There is an appropriate emphasis on encouraging the pupils to wait their turn.
128. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and is committed to improving the teaching of the subject and increasing resources, which she has audited. She sees ICT in its widest sense and pupils and staff have access to a good range of resources. All classrooms have at least one computer and pupils have access to a shared specialist room that is just being set up at the time of the inspection. In addition, classrooms have a sensory area for pupils for whom this is appropriate. These areas have a good range of interactive equipment. During lessons, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties operate specially adapted electronic switches and a 'sensory suitcase' is available. Staff encourage pupils to use these devices so that they can have some control over their immediate environment and can make as many choices and comments as possible. Pupils' files contain pictures which show that the school makes good use of the digital camera and software, especially to keep very good photographic records of pupils' achievements. The co-ordinator is keen to move the subject forward and her priority is to develop a new assessment system. She regularly observes her colleagues teaching the subject and has given formal feedback to them.

129. There is a satisfactory subject policy, though the scheme of work is a commercially produced one that has not yet been adapted to suit the specific needs of the pupils at the school. Teachers regularly use ICT in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and in other subjects such as science, and in a humanities lesson, pupils used the digital camera to take pictures of the school. In a mathematics lesson, pupils use the touch screen throughout the lesson and there is interactive software which relates to the school's reading scheme.

MUSIC

130. The school's provision for music is good overall and is significantly enhanced by the contribution from the music therapist and from other staff.
131. The younger pupils, up to the end of Year 2, sing and play percussion instruments, like the wooden Aggogo, shakers, wind chimes and xylophone, responding on cue to the teacher. They listen to recorded music like the 'Peer Gynt Suite', 'The Garden of Dreams' and the 'Carnival of the Animals'. They make personal responses by dancing and playing their instruments. They learn how to improvise on the drums. Older pupils learn about harps, how to pluck them and what they sound like. They play the claves and drum in accompaniment to a tape. They listen to music from Africa, Handel's Water Music and John Lennon.
132. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The co-ordinator splits his work between Woodlands and the attached special high school, and plans and teaches across the school. The planning, however, does not precisely match up the activities with the learning needs of individual pupils. In addition, there is no assessment of what musical skills and knowledge have been gained by each pupil during the lesson. This means that the planning is merely a list of contents for each class over a half-term and there is no means by which the musical achievements of the pupils are recorded and recognised. The specialist teacher is enthusiastic about his work, and the pupils enjoy his lessons. He plays the guitar and sings and makes sure that he relates the activities to the pupils' work in progress, for example the current literacy text. In one lesson, there is a particularly joyous part of the lesson in which all the pupils are encouraged to move and dance to the theme of 'Sunny Day'. Listening skills are promoted well, and pupils listen to each other with respect and attention.
133. In another excellent lesson, a music co-ordinator from a local mainstream school brought some of his pupils to the school along with his collection of harps. This lesson related to the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk', which was the text the pupils were reading in literacy. The mainstream teacher played the harp for the class, and all the pupils were spellbound and could not wait to have a go themselves. One pupil with autistic spectrum disorder immediately got down on the ground and put his ear to the sound box to get an additional effect. Everyone in the room fell silent when one girl struggled to reach the strings and make a sound. When she did so, everyone was relieved and full of praise for her achievement. A lovely relationship developed between the two sets of pupils, and the experience was quite memorable. Towards the end of the lesson, one boy walked over to the book of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' and pointed to Jack's harp.
134. A very good addition to the school's provision is the music therapist's contribution. Her skilled performance in singing and piano playing captures the attention of all the pupils in her group. One pupil who was very upset on entering the room is instantly calmed by the piano playing and then fully engaged when she is allowed to pluck the lyre, as the therapist sings to her. In another activity, the pupils are encouraged to play some bells, while the therapist plays and sings. The combined effect of the sustained piano

chords, the chiming of the bells and the singing, together with the intense concentration of the staff, is very evocative and uplifting for everyone.

135. Other staff play an important part in the musical life of the school. All teachers sing with their classes and some staff play the piano, guitar or recorder. Assemblies are enlivened by a talented teaching assistant who sings improvised solos which relate to the theme of the assembly.
136. The subject is satisfactorily managed, although the brevity of the co-ordinator's time in the school means that he does not have sufficient time to advise other teachers, or to participate in whole-school staff development.
137. Resources are good and have been recently audited. Each class has a good selection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. There are electronic keyboards and musical cause and effect toys. A soundbeam is available for the school to borrow. Visits from music groups such as peripatetic teachers of string, woodwind and brass instruments, and Irish performers give pupils the experience of live music.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

138. Good opportunities are provided for the personal development of the pupils. Throughout the school day staff assist pupils to gain independence and social skills. Pupils are encouraged to help each other and often do so, for example when a Year 6 boy helped another pupil who was struggling to put on an armband.
139. Individual education plans contain targets for pupils' personal development, and these contribute to the good progress that pupils make. They include personal care needs, as well as developing independence and communication. Although opportunities are missed at Foundation Stage to fully develop personal and social education, the start that is made there is built on positively as pupils move through the school. They are encouraged to be aware of others. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder use real objects and daily timetables with symbols which help to predict the order of the day and so help them cope with changes more easily.
140. The quality of teaching in personal, social and health education is good. All staff recognise its importance in providing the basis for pupils' learning in other areas. It is firmly embedded throughout the curriculum as well as being taught as a discrete subject. There is an emphasis on practical learning experiences, with discussion, investigation and problem solving. The school provides a warm and safe environment which gives the pupils the confidence to learn happily and well. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models and pupils quickly learn how to behave well. Throughout the school staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They work very well together to ensure that pupils are not unsettled when they have to move from one location or activity to another, or when visitors enter the room. Staff have appropriate expectations of pupils developing independence in feeding themselves at lunchtime. They devise individual programmes alongside the external professionals for each pupil and provide sufficient time and encouragement for pupils to achieve as much as possible independently. Pupils are also encouraged to clear away after themselves and this happens in lessons too.
141. Pupils are given opportunities to make choices and to learn how to assert themselves. They communicate effectively using signs, vocalisations and picture cards as they develop their communication and social skills. Pupils with autistic

spectrum disorder make choices about joining in or sitting out. They contribute to the pleasant ambience during reflection time.

142. Very good music therapy enables pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and pupils with autistic spectrum disorder to gain social skills such as making eye contact, turn taking and attending and responding to others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress in physical education. Pupils experience a wide range of physical activities including gymnastics and games. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties follow a scheme based on the Sheborne approach to movement. This is closely linked to the physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes for individual pupils within the school. There is a common folder on this approach in all classes, but there is no overall scheme of work. There is, as yet, a lack of a consistent recording system, although the school plans to use 'P-level' descriptors to assess achievement in physical education. Pupils' physical needs as expressed in their individual education plan are well met. Achievements against individual targets are recorded. This is the basis of carefully targeted teaching of individual developmental skills and makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils.
144. Only two discrete physical education lessons were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to form a judgement on the quality of teaching. Scrutiny of lesson plans and records show that teachers plan their lessons well, with careful attention being paid to individual needs. Teachers and teaching assistants display an enthusiasm that communicates itself to the pupils and ensures that they enjoy their work in lessons and try hard to succeed. Some teaching assistants have had training in physical education for pupils with severe learning difficulties and this contributes to the good standards achieved in this subject.
145. Good use is made of the shared hall. Although there is no co-ordinator in place for physical education, the staff make good use of the expertise of the co-ordinator in the attached special high school to advise and support them in providing for the pupils' needs. As a result, provision is satisfactory overall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. Provision is satisfactory and the pupils make satisfactory progress.
147. By the end of their time at the school, pupils have had some experience of major religious festivals such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Hannukah. They have also developed some knowledge of the family life of those who follow the world's major religions. During the inspection, pupils learned about Mohammed's birthday and how Muslims celebrate it. Pupils in Year 3 celebrated the birthday of one of their classmates. Family and friends were invited into the classroom where they all tucked into crisps and birthday cake after enjoying traditional party games, such as 'pass the parcel.' As a result of these lessons, pupils have some realisation that festivals are associated with important religious and personal occasions.
148. The curriculum is satisfactory, appropriately adapted from the locally agreed syllabus. All major festivals of religion represented in the school are celebrated. Provision is enriched by visits to a Hindu temple and Christian churches of various denominations. A local vicar visits the school to take services at harvest festival and Christmas.

149. This subject effectively links with the school's daily acts of worship. These help pupils to associate their knowledge of religion with quiet reflection, and sometimes with a very simple prayer. There is no subject co-ordinator. This makes monitoring and evaluation of the subject more difficult, and impacts negatively on learning.