

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHARLTON SCHOOL**

Charlton

LEA area: Greenwich

Unique reference number: 133400

Headteacher: Mr Mark Dale-Emberton

Reporting inspector: Mrs Kathy Hooper  
2971

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 249464

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 students:	7 - 19
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Charlton Park Road London
Postcode:	SE7 8HX
Telephone number:	(0208) 854 6259
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roger Ballaster
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2971	Kathy Hooper	Registered inspector	Geography	The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed?
9420	David Martin	Lay inspector		Students' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Child protection Health and safety
18379	Olga Miller	Team inspector	English History	Special educational needs English as an additional language
12920	Mary Kingsley	Team inspector	Science	How well are students taught?
17147	Judith Ragan	Team inspector	Design and technology Modern foreign languages Religious education	Education inclusion
8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	
10325	Roger Pleace	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Curriculum Residential Care
17694	James Forrest	Team inspector	Music	How well does the school care for its students? Post 16
30281	Dorcas O'Dell	Team inspector		
19827	Mary Henderson	Team inspector	Art and design	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Charlton School is a new community school for 166 students aged 7-19. All the students have Statements of Special Educational Need. Most of the students are drawn from the borough of Greenwich which has a high incidence of social deprivation. Twenty-seven students are drawn from neighbouring inner and outer London boroughs. All the students are brought to school by bus or taxi. Many of them have journeys well in excess of an hour due to traffic congestion in the area. About a third of the students are from ethnic minority families. There are 26 students who come from families whose first language is not English. The school makes residential provision for 10 students. The school has been created as a result of the reorganisation of four of the special schools in the borough. Although the school has been open since September 2001, a quarter of the students have been in the school only since September this year. Although there is an intention to bring the school together onto one site in 2004 as a secondary school for students aged 11-16 with mainly profound and multiple learning difficulties, at the time of the inspection, the school was on two sites, three miles apart. On one site, where there are four flights of stairs, there are students aged 11-19, some of whom have severe learning difficulties and others who have difficulties on the autistic spectrum. On the site with no stairs, there are students aged 7-19, most of whom have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is inappropriate, therefore, to compare students' achievement with national age-related expectations.

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

The school makes good provision for its students and has some very good features. Students achieve well because they are well taught. Leadership and management of the school are good. The school has very quickly established itself as an effective school where morale is high and students' needs are well met. It has very good capacity to improve. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Teaching and learning are good overall because teachers ensure that students enjoy their lessons and learn to communicate very well.
- Students achieve well; they achieve very well in the development of their social and personal skills through the use of a very good range of communication aids and in art and information and communication technology.
- The school is well led and managed; there is a strong sense of community within which individual needs are addressed. This results in a very good ethos.
- Students have very good attitudes to their learning; they develop good levels of independence and very good relationships with their peers and adults.
- The quality of care provided by the school is good; students are treated with respect and dignity and there is high priority on developing students' skills of self-advocacy.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and there is a very good range of accredited courses for post-16 students which meet their needs very well.

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

- Some aspects of management including day-to-day administration to support teaching and learning and the development of the role of middle managers to ensure consistently good provision.
- The curriculum to ensure that students receive sufficient time in lessons and that teachers ensure that students make consistent progress.
- Strengthen links with parents to support students' progress and ensure smooth transition at post-16.
- With the LEAs, address the very late arrival of transport in the morning to improve students' punctuality and to ensure that students do not have unduly long journeys.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has had no previous inspection and therefore no judgements on improvements since the last inspection.

### STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
Speaking and listening	A	A	A	very good A
Reading	A	A	A	good B
Writing	C	C	C	satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	

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

Students achieve very well in speaking and listening because of the emphasis placed on enabling students to communicate through signing and symbols and the use of a wide range of communication aids. Their ability to communicate enables good learning in all lessons. Students make very good progress in reading. Their progress in writing is satisfactory. Students' achievement in mathematics is good. They progressively learn to order and sequence numbers and to handle money in everyday situations. Students make very good progress in their personal, social and health education because of the emphasis placed on self-advocacy. Students make choices and decisions at appropriate levels. Students' records show that they make good progress in achieving the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans. Students make very good progress in their skills and knowledge of information and communication technology and in art. Their progress in design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education is good. In history, music and religious education, students make sound progress. Post-16 students make good progress because there is a very good range of relevant accredited vocational courses and access to colleges of further education.

### STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students enjoy school because lessons are enjoyable and relationships with adults are very good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Students are enabled to behave appropriately and sensitively because of very good role models on the staff and very good strategies for behaviour management.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students are treated with respect and their dignity is preserved at all times.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of unpunctuality is high at the beginning of the day due to the late arrival of buses. Unauthorised absence is high due to registers not being accurately maintained.

The school has a very good ethos on both sites. This has been quickly established and permeates all aspects of the school. The very late arrival of some school transport impinges on students' learning. For example, the first session of the day is severely curtailed and, on occasions, it is abandoned.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	Years 3 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.*

Two thirds of teachers have qualified outside the United Kingdom or are unqualified or are temporary supply staff. Nevertheless, they understand how to meet a wide range of special educational needs of students within a nurturing environment. The number of support staff, including those employed by the school, students and volunteers, add substantially to the quality of students' learning. The school's emphasis on self-advocacy for students and the way it enables students to communicate, enables them to make good progress across the curriculum. Teaching and learning are very good in English, in personal and social education, in information and communication technology and in art. They are good in mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages, music, religious education and physical education. Teaching is sound in history.

All teachers address literacy and numeracy well in their lessons. Teachers have a good understanding of how to provide different ways into learning for students with a range of complex needs. Teachers have a good understanding of strategies that meet the needs of students with autistic spectrum disorders and those with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In the majority of lessons, students have enjoyable learning experiences because they are involved in activities and learn through all their senses. Where the teaching is only satisfactory, students are not so well involved.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. However, the school day is shorter than recommended and time is further eroded by the late arrival of school transport.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Good. Students are well supported through the use of signing and symbols.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Students have a very good range of experiences within and outside their lessons that extend their personal development.
How well the school cares for its students	Good with some very good features. Adults know students well and provide a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

The school has a range of strategies for working with parents, but this is an aspect of provision that should be improved.

All National Curriculum subjects are taught. The curriculum is enhanced by personal and social education and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are very good links with the community and other schools, both special and mainstream. All of these benefit the students' experiences. However, history and geography are not sufficiently defined. The length of the school week is shorter than national guidance recommends.

The school provides a safe and caring environment for its students and provides very good support for students' personal development. However, some areas of provision need further attention. For example, ensuring that all staff are familiar with school policies on attendance.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good with some very good features. The headteacher provides very good leadership. There are inconsistencies in the management of the curriculum. Day to day administration requires improvement.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive, responsible and hold the school to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has identified appropriate priorities for development as a result of its own analysis.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Despite the inexperience of staff, the school is able to provide good experiences within which students achieve well.

The school has made very good progress in establishing itself as a new school. There is a very clear vision for the school. There is very good morale in the school and teachers and support staff are knowledgeable about how to meet a very wide range of individual special educational needs. Middle management is not yet sufficiently well developed to ensure consistent practice. The day-to-day administrative systems do not support teaching and learning sufficiently well. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

Overall, the adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. There is a generous number of adults who are very well deployed. The accommodation is good on one site, but that on the temporary site is only just satisfactory. There is a good range of resources and excellent use is made of technology to support students' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with any problems.</li> <li>• The school expects students to work hard.</li> <li>• It is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work children do at home.</li> <li>• The amount of information received about their child's progress.</li> <li>• Closer links between parents and school.</li> <li>• The range of interesting activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The evidence gathered during this inspection supports the positive views of the parents. The team found that there was insufficient use of homework and that links with parents and the information given to parents could be improved. However, the school has a broad range of extra-curricular activities. In view of the disquiet expressed by some parents at the time of the school's formation, significant progress has

been made in improving its partnership with parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There is a wide range of achievement across the school and all students make good progress in relation to their special educational needs and prior attainment. Students achieve well because there is an emphasis on communication for all of them. Teachers have a good understanding of how to meet students' special educational needs and, as a result, all students achieve well regardless of their special educational need or background. Students from ethnic minority groups make good progress, in line with other students in the school. In a numeracy class for example, a Nigerian student whose first language is German, showed a very good understanding of English and responded to oral questions accurately. All students are supported by the very clear assessment of individual needs.
2. Students achieve very well in English. They are all helped to communicate effectively. They achieve very well in speaking and listening and in reading because they use a wide range of communication aids. Students make very good use of signing and symbols, communication books and technological aids. The more able students are becoming fluent readers and older students understand how to make best use of a factual book, for example, by using the index. Students' writing is satisfactory.
3. Students achieve well in mathematics. Key Stage 2 students learn to order numbers and make money calculations. Key Stage 3 students recognise coins and use numbers in familiar situations, for example, when cooking. Key Stage 4 students are familiar with numbers to 100 and post 16 students use their knowledge of money to learn about interest rates.
4. Students' achievement in science is good. More able Key Stage 2 students carry out simple investigations. Key Stage 3 students know that materials, for example, water can change its form and can identify some healthy and unhealthy foods. Key Stage 4 students predict when doing experiments. Post-16 students learn increasing independence through their awareness of diet and health.
5. Students' achievements in information and communication technology are very good. They become very familiar with technological aids and devices by using them to learn more easily. Their confidence and ability is much improved by their growing control over their environment and their increasing ability to communicate.
6. In art, students achieve very well because of the high level of knowledge and expertise of the teachers. In design and technology, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education, students achieve well. Their achievement in history and music is satisfactory.
7. The school's philosophy of self-advocacy is very well implemented and students are expected and encouraged, to make their own choices where possible. Students develop their personal and social skills very well because of the high priority placed on this aspect of their development. They are very confident, give their own thoughts and opinions freely and contribute very well to discussions.
8. Students' achievements are well documented through records of achievement and accredited courses. Post-16 students achieve well because they have access to a wide range of relevant experiences that prepare them well for life after school.

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

9. Students have very good attitudes to school and their learning. They enjoy coming to school and are interested in the work they do. They are enthusiastic about their learning and willingly

participate in the extra-curricular activities. For example, at an assembly the collective delight of students who received endeavour awards and those who received rowing achievement certificates was very apparent. Students interact well with each other at break-times and respond well during Circle Time sessions.

10. Students work hard and put a great deal of physical effort into their learning. Some students are able to evaluate whether they have completed their work unaided or received support. Students take pride in doing work of a good standard.
11. Students are courteous and friendly in their dealings with each other and with adults. They are friendly in their approach to visitors and form excellent relationships. Students show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others, for example, by maintaining a minute's silence for Remembrance Day, and they enthusiastically clapped those who received achievement awards. One group of students was observed respectfully reflecting upon the death of a fellow student. Others thoughtfully debated genetic screening issues with mainstream students.
12. Students show initiative and assume responsibilities around the school. These are enthusiastically and conscientiously carried through. For instance, students represent others at the School Council. A non-verbal student in a wheelchair returned the register to the office using a pre-recorded message. More able-bodied students stacked chairs after assemblies. Some younger students make food choices at lunchtimes and assist others who are in wheelchairs with communication aids. Older students contribute very well to discussions and make informed decisions for further education courses.
13. Students collaborate well, for example, in physical education classes and in playground games. They work well independently, for example, when constructing bird boxes at college. Students are aware of, and strive to meet, their own personal targets.
14. The behaviour of students is very good. Those with difficulties relating to challenging behaviour learn to moderate their behaviour in response to the support they are given. Exclusions are low. There were two fixed-period exclusions of a single student during the last academic year. Students are aware that oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, will not be tolerated and, therefore, there are few such incidents.
15. Attendance is satisfactory at 90.5 per cent. Unauthorised absences are high. However, they are mainly attributable to the long-term absences of four students due to circumstances that are beyond the school's control. Additionally there are inadequacies in the way registers are maintained. The punctuality of students is unsatisfactory on both sites. On several occasions during the inspection period, the buses and taxis that bring students to school, were appreciably late. As a consequence, students lose a significant amount of teaching time, sometimes up to 45 minutes. Some students spend an unacceptable amount of time on the buses, sometimes up to two hours. The school should address the transport issues immediately by drawing up written strategies for improvement.

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

16. Overall, the quality of teaching is good because teachers enable students to communicate in a variety of ways. As a result, all students were able to contribute to the lessons and make good progress.
17. In good lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and this was seen in many lessons. For example, in an art lesson about Mexican art, the teacher's enthusiastic description of design led to bright, imaginative work by the students which was carried out with accuracy and care. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, for example, words that had arisen in one lesson were put onto the computer, for use by the students the following week. However, some opportunities are lost for teaching subject specific vocabulary, particularly in science. There is good use of symbols and technological communication aids across all subjects. Signing is not consistent in all lessons.

18. Good, detailed planning that describes outcomes for different students ensures individual students' needs are effectively met. The majority of teachers provide good introductions to the lesson so that the students are clear about the relevance of the learning. In art, the use of video helped to remind the students what they had done the previous week. As a result, new learning was more effectively understood. Teachers have high expectations of the students and this was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson where Key Stage 4 students were using a 100 square, telling the time and counting to 30. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods designed to motivate and engage the students. They use a mixture of class teaching, individual work and group work effectively supported by a learning support assistant. Role-play is used to involve the students, for example, in practical mathematics; the students had to 'buy' their break time drinks. The teachers work hard to engage and maintain students' attention, for example, in a music lesson, the use of a superb range of musical instruments from all over the world enabled students to participate enthusiastically. Teachers' skilful use of questioning encouraged the students to extend their knowledge. In the best lessons, questions were individually tailored to ensure that students were able to succeed.
19. The students are well managed and the teachers have high expectations of the students' behaviour. The school makes very good use of all adults in the school, support staff, trainers, students and volunteers. As a result, in some classes, there is one to one support for each student and students' involvement is very well maintained. The support staff work with groups or individuals on different tasks that are well matched to individual needs. The deployment of the support staff is very good and is a strength of the teaching in the school. The use of information and communication technology in lessons is widespread and is very effectively used, particularly in the core subjects, to support individual learning needs. The teachers and learning support assistants assess students' work and, in the best lessons, feedback to students helps them to improve their work. This practice is, however, insufficiently widespread to be more than satisfactory.
20. The use of homework is effective in supporting and consolidating learning, for example, in some science lessons for Key Stage 4 students. However, homework is not routinely set across the school and this factor was identified by parents in their feedback to inspectors. The school should review its policy on homework with a view to developing strategies, which ensure that homework is a consistent feature of the school.
21. Teachers generally make effective use of students' individual education plans, setting objectives that are reflected in their lesson plans. The teaching meets the needs of students with additional needs well. There is good use of Signed Supported English, for the students with significant hearing impairment and large print papers are provided for students with a visual impairment. The teachers and support staff know the students well and this helps the teachers to meet the students' particular special educational need. The school makes effective provision for those students with English as an additional language. Staff are patient but firm and positively reinforce good behaviour. The lessons for students with autism are well managed. Teachers use consistent and appropriate methods, for example, rewarding students for completing a task by allowing them to engage in a favourite activity. The teaching of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties is very good. The school makes very good use of multi-sensory resources and students frequently enjoy one-to-one support. Their good eye contact, smiles and perseverance indicate very good levels of engagement.
22. The inexperience of some staff, together with the difficulty of monitoring across the split site, contribute to a minority of lessons not being as good as the majority. Whilst no lesson was judged unsatisfactory during the inspection, several weaknesses were identified. In some lessons, the planning is too general and does not identify individual learning outcomes or address individual targets for students. As a result, the students' progress is slow because the tasks are not sufficiently closely matched to individual needs. Occasionally the concepts are too difficult or confusing for students to understand. Some lessons lack sparkle because the teaching strategies that are used are unimaginative and students' engagement is intermittent. In some lessons, the boundaries on behaviour are not sufficiently clear for students to understand. The quality of

learning in lessons at the beginning of the day is significantly reduced by the late arrival of some students.

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

23. The curriculum is good. Overall, it is a broad and balanced curriculum. It meets statutory requirements at all key stages. Nevertheless, there are differences across the sites and the contribution of geography and history at Key Stages 2 and 3 is insufficiently well defined. The curriculum is relevant to the wide range of learning needs of the students and Schemes of Work refer to Programmes of Study. For students at Key Stages 3 and 4, it pays due regard to the National Curriculum and statutory requirements are met. The school uses the Local Education Authority approved curriculum for religious education. Students, at Key Stage 4, work towards a very good range of internally and externally accredited awards which allow them to demonstrate the extent of their learning at school and support their confidence and personal development.
24. Practice across the sites is inconsistent. This is partly because students on the two sites have differing needs and also because clear guidelines have not been established for co-ordinators to monitor students' work in a consistent manner. On the temporary site, two thirds of the school population joined the school only this September and they arrived with limited records of previous learning. The quality of monitoring of the curriculum on the main site is outstanding, but has not yet been sufficiently extended across both sites. Other issues that have not been adequately addressed yet relate to the levelling of work and progression. The school has a large number of inexperienced staff and the long term planning does not support them sufficiently to understand how to ensure students' progress over time. There are inconsistencies in judgements about levels of achievement between teachers. This is partially due to teachers' lack of experience of the National Curriculum but also due to the lack of opportunities to observe each other's practice and moderate students' work.
25. At Key Stages 2 and 3, all National Curriculum subjects are covered. Key Stage 3 students are taught either French or Spanish as the modern foreign language. In addition personal, social and health education is taught. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is augmented by vocational courses, but includes English, mathematics, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education, careers, life skills, dance and religious education. Two classes of Key Stage 3 and 4 students for more able students take double science. There are good opportunities for gaining a wide range of external accreditation at Key Stage 4 and post-16.
26. Post-16 students are offered a wide a variety of vocational courses. In addition, they benefit from community networking, inclusion initiatives and information and communication technology access. There is a wide range of activities that extend the curriculum for some students beyond the lessons shown on the timetable.
27. The school week is 22.5 hours for each key stage and is below that recommended in National guidance. This is further exacerbated by the late arrival of the students in the mornings. Long travelling times mean that students arrive tired and miss parts of the first lesson of the day.
28. The school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The skilled use of up to date computer technology and communication aids enhances students' learning and supports their progress very well.
29. A particular strength of the school is its inclusion policy. The curriculum is well modified to meet a very wide variety of intellectual needs. A standard planning pro-forma is effectively used to identify different learning outcomes for low, medium and high attainers. All staff adapt the curriculum well using written and spoken language augmented by symbols, pictures and photographs. Some students respond orally, others sign or use communicators. British Sign Language communicators translate for students with hearing impairment. The school gives communication a high priority. Students are given choices where possible and opportunities are well used to enable them to have their say. This allows each student to take part in school activities using their own method of communication. Makaton signing is used well but is not consistent. The school does not yet collect or analyse data on particular groups of students within its population.

30. The programme for personal, social and health education gives students very good guidance on health matters including sexual relationships and drugs. There is a good emphasis on physical development and all students are encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves. The very good use of communication aids also helps students to become independent.
31. Careers education is very good and statutory requirements are met. Key Stage 3 students learn about different occupations. At Key Stage 4 and post-16, the career service supports the school's provision very well and all students have work experience.
32. Extra-curricular activities make a very good contribution to the school's curriculum by reinforcing students' learning and extending their personal and social development. There is a very good range of activities available at lunchtimes and after school, for example, boys' and girls' football, drama, cooking and dance. Very good use is made of the local community to promote awareness of special education needs and issues. For example, there is work with the City Learning Centre, Greenwich museum and the Anne Frank museum and equal opportunities events. In addition the school takes part in many artistic, musical, cultural and sporting activities. For example, there are visits to the Maritime Museum, to the Globe Theatre, charity and sporting events and games. School teams compete against students in other schools. In addition to these activities, boarding students have their own programme of activities. The school works with many local special and mainstream schools and local further education colleges. Mainstream students come to work in the school and special needs students travel to local schools to work with their mainstream peers.
33. The provision for the spiritual, moral and social and cultural development of the students on both sites is very good. Students' spiritual development is very good. Schemes of work for many subjects promote students' spiritual awareness. Religious education, art, music and literature all support students' awareness of a higher being. Students have opportunities to reflect on the day during circle time. The school deals sensitively with bereavements of students. For example, the child's family is invited into the school to join with the students and staff to celebrate the life of the child. A display board is used by staff and students to record thoughts and memories of the person who has died. These are then presented to the parents who are encouraged to keep in touch with the school. Speakers from a wide range of religions visit the school to share their beliefs with students.
34. The contribution that the school makes to the moral life of the students is very good. Students are given opportunities to consider issues such as the problems associated with genetic engineering or black history issues. There are meetings with mainstream students to discuss such matters as current affairs and aspects of equal opportunities. Staff set good examples of fairness and act as appropriate role models to the students to develop their understanding of right and wrong.
35. Provision for cultural development is very good. Cultural matters are very well represented. Speakers and visitors from other cultures are invited into the school. Within history, students consider the various types of cultures of the world. They sample Spanish cooking, costumes, and the manner in which various cultures treat their major celebrations such as Divali and Hanukah. Visiting musicians show students how different cultures use music and dance to express their approaches to life.
36. Provision for social development is very good. The school provides a very wide range of activities to promote social awareness. Together they celebrate the achievements of others and are taught a very good range of social skills. In circle time, students practise a range of strategies that help them to develop their social skills. For example, Year 7 students practised calm breathing and spent time in silent reflection, passing a candle round as each student gave thanks for some aspect of their life. All the students listen respectfully to each other.
37. The school council encourages students to raise relevant issues. Staff act promptly on their suggestions. Students celebrate staff successes, too. There are many opportunities given to students to mix with other schools, for example, sharing pantomimes, charitable work and working with students on advanced level courses in mainstream schools to design wheelchairs.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

38. The arrangements for the health and safety of students are good. Teachers know the students well and their dignity is respected at all times. There is a high level of understanding among the staff of the individual needs of students with special educational needs. The needs of all students are well addressed within the school's nurturing environment and their contributions are explicitly valued. Nevertheless, there are areas of the school that require improvement.
39. Attendance registers are not consistently and accurately completed. The high level of unauthorised absences is partly due to teachers not recording the reasons for absence. A termly analysis of the rates of absence at each site is undertaken, but this is not always extended to ascertain the causes of absence. Nevertheless, the school has been successful in improving the attendance of certain students who had a history of extensive long-term absence. The school has a number of policy documents relating to the monitoring of attendance but all staff are not aware of them. The school should ensure that all staff are aware of the current policy on attendance.
40. The school meets regularly with the transport providers to review the late arrival of buses and taxis. The reasons are concerned with extensive road works, the shortage of staff and the legal procedures for vetting of staff who work with young people. Action has been taken in some cases where students were experiencing excessive journey times. Nevertheless, the school has no clear records of the impact of students' unpunctuality upon the teaching time. It has not thoroughly evaluated the total time spent each day by students on their journeys to and from school. The school should keep records of the impact on students' learning of unpunctuality due to late transport.
41. The school's system for monitoring and managing students' behaviour is one of its strengths. There is a detailed and up-to-date behaviour management policy and a list of school rules is displayed on many classroom walls. Positive behaviour stickers are used to reward students who behave very well or make substantial improvements in behaviour. Students are quick to tell you that there is no bullying in this school. There is a policy on physical intervention and staff have benefited from a recent staff training on the procedures. The school has very good systems for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. There are behaviour management programmes for all students with challenging behaviour. These include a list of 'trigger points' which help to alert all staff to each student's behaviour patterns. Each class has a risk assessment sheet, which may be adjusted for an event like an off-site visit.
42. All incidents are logged immediately although they rarely involve other students. A computer system is used to analyse the data to identify trends such as the location of the incident, the most common time of day, part of the week or term and which students are involved. This leads to adjustments in the student's behaviour management programme or care arrangements. The information from these records is made available in the termly reviews of behaviour and at Annual Reviews. The records show that many new arrivals with challenging behaviour settle down after a few months and that their behaviour becomes more consistent.
43. The school has good systems for assessing students' attainment and progress. Schemes of work show assessment opportunities for each module, linked to pre-National Curriculum and National Curriculum levels where appropriate for the group. Students who have been in the school for some time have these levels included in their records and these are used to develop new academic targets in their Annual Reviews and Individual Education Plans. New students undergo baseline assessment soon after arriving in the school. However, the assessments are not subject to agreement trialling across classes and the standard of record keeping varies across the school.
44. The best lesson plans include the monitoring of individuals' progress towards their own termly targets. Another example of good practice is when students' targets are copied into the inside of the appropriate subject exercise book or folder for ease of reference. Learning support assistants are well placed to share in the assessment process in class. However, this practice is not applied

consistently across the school, so that some assessment opportunities are missed. For students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, there is increasing use of systematic recording and photographic evidence of individual progress. The school is currently developing a system for making a computerised record of achievement for these students. Post-16 assessment procedures are well run and are closely linked to external course criteria. Students enjoy opportunities for self-assessment and a simple self-assessment process, using 'with help' and 'without help' stickers is being introduced lower down the school. The school makes good use of a computer program to record students' levels and to check trends in progress in each subject.

45. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and supporting students' personal development. Students' personal and social targets from their Annual Reviews and Individual Education Plans are linked to nationally recognised levels for social development and are shown clearly on students' profiles in the classroom. The recent introduction of the 'IEP-writer' program on the school network is helping to indicate the student's next personal target as soon as one is reached.
46. There are effective links to various support services such as educational psychology service, the sensory support services, education welfare service and health and social services, particularly for the resident students. There are strong links with the local community police officer.
47. Statutory requirements are met with respect to Annual Reviews. The school's procedures, organised by the special needs co-ordinator, cover a good range of achievements and targets, many of them very specific, for instance "to recognise 20 sight words from the National Literacy list". Over three-quarters of the parents attend the Annual Reviews and they are given reports of progress each term. These comment on all subject areas although there are no separate comments for geography or history. They list the students' targets in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education. The very good continuity between the Annual Reviews, the Individual Education Plans and the termly reports makes the system very effective. The system should, however, be streamlined.
48. The assessment of additional special educational needs is generally good. Statements are clear and relate well to the assessment information. Most Annual Reviews are completed punctually although Transitional Reviews have not been completed on time. Statements for students for whom English is an additional language have useful information on language, background and cultural factors which need to be taken into account. Their Individual Educational Plans are satisfactory and some are good. The best Plans have very specific targets identified and teaching strategies are well matched. The school is helped by the expertise of the staff who belong to the Centre for Micro-Assisted Communication who are based on the main site. They substantially add to the school's effectiveness in the assessment of students with physical disabilities as well as severe communication difficulties. They modify and adapt technological and computerised aids for the needs of individual students. This is funded through a government communication aids project.
49. A feature of the school is the warmth of relationships at all levels. Some transport drivers return to the school in their own time for after-school activities and ancillary staff told inspectors how rewarding and satisfying they found their work with students. Drivers and escorts have been given training in behaviour management and in communication methods. Some of them have observed students in the classrooms in order to learn more about them. Occasionally, students' perceptions of their experiences of travelling are fed back to the transport company.
50. Effective child protection procedures are in place and staff have been trained. However, the school's documentation is less satisfactory. The policy for child protection, the written information for non-teaching staff and parents and the manner and extent to which it is made available all require improvement. These are, therefore, identified for review in the school's improvement plan.
51. Practices and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of students are satisfactory. Risk assessments, some checks of structures, testing of equipment and systems, including fire drills, are organised and safety measures have been taken in playground areas. The school has been made aware of a number of minor items relating to health and safety that may require attention.

Extensive medical facilities are available and a good number of non-medical staff are trained in First Aid. Although the school's existing written policy for health and safety is inadequate, the policy has been reviewed and a new one is in draft.

## **RESIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

52. At the time of the inspection, the small residential unit on the main site provided boarding for ten students for up to four nights a week. Although there has been a review of local education authority services that includes this residential unit, no decision has yet been made about its future role. Almost all of the students' boarding places are funded by Social Services; although one student is partly funded by the education department of the Local Education Authority. Boarding provision is provided in line with students' statements. All of the students who are resident, have a high dependency on adult and medical care and nine are non-ambulant.
53. The accommodation for boarders is accessible from the school and is largely suitable and of a good standard. The unit is in good order. Toilet and bathing areas are well maintained and hygienic. There have been many improvements concerning health and safety matters recently. Staff carry out risk assessments for the students' and students' visits. During the inspection, there were no health and safety concerns about the building. Inspectors saw no unsafe equipment or poor practice concerning the welfare or the safety of the students.
54. Through supervision training, the residential staff have reviewed the requirements of the new minimum standards. As a result, several areas for development have been identified, one relating to privacy and the other to staff training. There are two areas that will need to be addressed as soon as possible. The bathrooms offer little privacy to the students. Students have to be taken past other students in baths in order to access the toilet areas. The toilet areas have transparent plastic curtains rather than normal doors. Whilst the staff have received training for matters such as first aid and child protection there are requirements for staff training to National Vocational Qualifications level 2 and for the Head of Care to at least level 3 by 2005. The headteacher is aware of both issues and the need to negotiate arrangements for developments with officers from the National Care Standards Commission. An inspection is due next year.
55. The unit is well staffed by day and night. Other staff, such as learning support assistants, have duties in the residential unit. The acting Head of Care and her staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Staff relate well to the students. They are friendly and caring and relationships are professionally productive. This represents good practice.
56. The staff help the students to join various out of school activities. In this way the curriculum of the school is extended. Staff seek out ways that allow students to be involved in events such as youth clubs, bowling, scouts and life-skills, for example, organised shopping expeditions. Staff help the students with homework.
57. Pastoral record keeping is satisfactory. There is an effective diary of contacts with parents and other professionals and a log of significant events in the students' lives. Procedures for hand-over at the beginning and ends of the day are effective. The Individual Education Plans of the students are passed to the residential care staff and the Individual Care Plans are added to the school main records. The staff make termly assessments. However, more detailed record keeping will be necessary to cover the requirements of the National Care Standards Commission in the future.
58. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. The staff have tried to keep in contact with parents through home school contact books but these have proved of limited value. However, links with parents are satisfactory by telephone and through regular reports.

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

59. A third of parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire but only two parents attended the

pre-inspection meeting for parents. Analysis of the replies received shows that the large majority of parents are satisfied with the school. However, a significant minority of parents have concerns about the amount of homework, the quality of information provided by the school, including that about their child's progress, how closely the school works with parents, and the range of extra-curricular activities available for their children. Broadly, parental satisfactions and concerns are supported by the evidence gathered during this inspection. However, in view of the disquiet expressed by some parents at the time of the school's formation, significant progress has been made in improving its partnership with parents to its current satisfactory state.

60. Information is provided to parents through the use of contact books and letters regarding various topics which are sent to homes. However, there are no regular newsletters issued to parents. Parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's education at the time of the Annual Review and at regular parents' evenings. Parents receive a termly report on the progress of their child, which sets out what has been achieved. However, these reports have some omission. For example, they do not give attendance data or provide comments on all core curriculum subjects. Opportunities are missed for identifying areas for improvement and how parents might help their children and there is no space for parents to comment upon the content of the report. Other statutory information for parents, such as the prospectus, is satisfactory. The school has a draft of a home-school agreement, setting out what is expected from each of the parties, but this is not yet in operation.
61. The school provides a meeting place for parents and carers and for other members of the community. The school regularly hosts a 'one-stop-shop' for parents/carers to meet with professionals from the school, health services and social services on one day. It has a wheelchair clinic on site, involving the physiotherapy service and a wheelchair engineer. It trains its own willing students to become 'wheelchair support assistants' with an in-house trainer and assessor.
62. It is difficult for parents to come into the school to help in classroom activities because of the distance of students' homes from the school. About three quarters of them attend the annual review meetings because transport is provided. There was good attendance at a lunch and Easter Bonnet display organised by a parent and at the coffee mornings arranged for each class on the temporary site. The school uses telephone calls effectively to keep in contact with parents and carers who do not usually come into school. Individual parents or carers attend school when invited to specific discussions about their children. Telephone contact is also used effectively to ensure close co-operation between parents and the school's transport. The school uses the Education Social Worker effectively to provide liaison with students' homes. There are beneficial links between the school and parents/carers of students in the residential unit.
63. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is, overall, satisfactory. The school acknowledges that its policies could be improved and links with parents are a priority in the school's improvement plan.

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

64. Overall, the leadership and management in the school are good. Under the headteacher's very good leadership the school has rapidly established itself as an effective and vibrant institution. The headteacher has a clear vision which has been translated into a positive ethos that values all and acknowledges the very wide range of learning needs of students. The school sees itself as a centre of the community and has established a very good range of after-school activities to encourage them into school. The headteacher is very well supported by his senior management team. For example, the deputy headteacher has established very good systems for behaviour management and the assistant headteacher has made an outstanding contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The role of the middle managers is not yet developed and is a priority on the current school development plan. Co-ordination is made very difficult by the distance between the sites and the current traffic congestion due to road works. As a consequence, delegation is not always successful and the standards across the whole school are not always consistent

65. The governing body is relatively newly formed but there is a very good relationship between the chair of governors and the headteacher. Governors are effective and take their responsibilities seriously. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. In addition to the committees, there is a strategy group which discusses issues and supports the long-term planning for the school. Planning to ensure good provision for students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties alongside those with difficulties on the autistic spectrum on one site is likely to present problems of supervision in the future because of the challenging behaviour of some. The senior management team and the governors are well aware of the problems.
66. Policy and practice related to educational inclusion is exceptionally strong. The headteacher is very clear about his strategic role in developing opportunities for inclusion within the school, with other schools and within the community. He is part of a pilot group of headteachers and officials within the local education authority to address the inclusion of students with special educational needs. The school is currently piloting a Chartermark to enable schools to evaluate their effectiveness in inclusion practice. The headteacher's strategic planning has enabled the school to expand the range and quality of educational experiences for students. The assistant headteacher is very effective in managing and developing inclusion experiences. She monitors across the main site to ensure all students benefit to the fullest possible extent.
67. Performance management has been introduced and a high priority is given to the development of staff through training. The staff are relatively young and enthusiastic and energy levels are high; as a result, students enjoy their lessons. The supportive ethos is very effective in helping new staff to understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities. However, there is no clear and accessible handbook to which they can refer. Administrative systems and routines for the day to day supervision of the school are not sufficiently robust to support the needs of an inexperienced and often transient staff. Although the school development plan identifies appropriate priorities, there is insufficient detail about how to support a relatively inexperienced staff.
68. The school has had significant difficulties in recruiting staff. Two thirds of the teachers either did not qualify in England or they are unqualified or they are supply staff. Poor levels of literacy among the staff impact on students' progress. For example, information on displays and feedback to students contains incorrect spellings. There is a very good ratio of learning support assistants to students and this is enhanced by students from higher education and volunteers. They are well trained and provide valuable support and stability within lessons. The school make excellent use of the advisory teams that are based on the main site, for example, the Centre for Micro-assisted Communication.
69. Nevertheless, staff expertise in teaching students with complex needs is evident and the school is committed to spreading this good practice. For example, students who have difficulties on the autistic spectrum have an enabling environment. Classes are painted in calm colours, areas of work are clearly delineated, there are work stations and visual timetables. Teachers provide a high degree of structure and give constant visual reminders and prompts. The school provides ongoing training on teaching students on the autistic spectrum in order to reinforce good practice in all subjects.
70. Financial planning is astute and very effective. Resources have been very well focused on the use of technological aids to support students' communication. Information and communication technology is very well used to support students' learning. A very good range of resources is used in lessons to support students' learning. Significant resources have been put into the temporary accommodation to bring this up to standard. Overall, resources are good. Accommodation on one site is good, although some of the rooms are very small for a population of students with increasingly complex needs. Accommodation of the temporary site is inappropriate for many students, especially those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those with difficulties on the autistic spectrum. There are too many stairs and activities in the central halls, for example, physical education, are interrupted when people go to and from the classrooms.
71. Students' families live in some of the most deprived areas of London. The school is very effective in enabling students to communicate and they learn well. Students learn to become independent

insofar as they are able. The school's budget is broadly comparable with similar schools nationally. It gives, therefore, very good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to improve provision across the school the governors, head teacher and senior management team should:

(1) improve the leadership and management in the school by:

- developing the role of middle managers; and

*(paragraphs 25, 43, 64, 81, 92, 98, 103, 110, 114, 133, 141, 149, 157)*

- improving the administrative systems to better support teaching and learning;

*(paragraphs 67-68)*

in order to achieve better consistency in practice across the school.

(2) improve the curriculum by:

- reviewing and extending the taught time;
- monitoring the transport arrangements more closely;
- developing better planning for progression in relation to levels; and
- improving the management of curriculum areas to address inconsistencies.

*(paragraphs 16, 24-37, 40)*

(3) improve the partnership with parents by:

- strengthening the school's links with parents to support students' progress; and
- better communication of plans for smooth transition at post-16.

*(paragraphs 59-63, 173)*

(4) with the local education authority, address the transport problems to ensure that students do not arrive late to school and do not have excessively long journey times.

*(paragraphs 16, 40)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	105
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	57

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	5	29	48	23	0	0	0
Percentage	5	28	45	22	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 students

#### Students on the school's roll

	No of students
Number of students on the school's roll	166
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	98

#### English as an additional language

	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	26

#### Student mobility in the last school year

	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.7

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

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	104	21	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	9	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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: Y3 – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35
Number of students per qualified teacher	4.7
Average class size	7

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y14

Total number of education support staff	94
Total aggregate hours worked per week	2,632

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1,758,464
Total expenditure	1,624,296
Expenditure per student	11,049
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	134,969

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	38
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	4
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	166
Number of questionnaires returned	55

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	24	0	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	56	36	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	40	6	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	41	20	10	12
The teaching is good.	60	33	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	31	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	29	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	45	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	46	38	11	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	35	4	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	50	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	38	9	2	11

### **Other issues raised by parents**

None

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

73. Students achieve very well at the end of all key stages and at post 16. They make very good progress against their individual targets in speaking and listening as well as reading. Progress in writing is satisfactory. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to consolidate this progress.
74. Students enter the school with a range of communication needs. The effect of these needs could potentially inhibit their speaking and listening. However, as they move through the school, students are helped to develop a range of strategies and skills which enable them to increase their confidence and ability in speaking and listening. Students' progress is good in speaking and listening across all key stages and at Post 16 with examples of very good progress at Key Stages 3 and 4. At the end of Key Stage 2, students make decisions about whether a book is fiction or non-fiction and express their views through the use of symbols or signs in response to poetry. Speaking and listening skills are further enhanced by the opportunities provided to students to enter into discussion about the books they have chosen. By the end of Key Stage 3, students with a wide range of communication needs make very good progress. Teachers use of a variety of strategies, including the extremely effective use of technology, to enable the students to express their ideas about stories and to give appropriate responses to questions about the use of punctuation. Students are able to take part in dramatic presentations with external agencies as demonstrated by the work at the Globe Theatre in the production of Twelfth Night. At the end of Key Stage 4, students' progress is clearly demonstrated in speaking and listening when they confidently give presentations based on their course book to their peers and by the mature and positive verbal feedback they receive in return.
75. Progress in reading is good across all key stages. At the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of students use symbols or signs to gain access to information. By the end of Key Stage 3, these skills are refined through the advanced use of communication books to express more sophisticated responses concerned with issues such as the role of parents. Some more able Key Stage 3 and 4 students are becoming fluent and expressive readers and read on sight a range of familiar words. They have developed a number of spelling strategies such as the use of sounding out. Students are encouraged to discuss their reading with other members of the group and receive supportive comments on their performance from their peers. Writing provides particular challenges for some students. This is largely because of physical needs but many are able to use felt pens or pencils to make marks on paper and go on to use pens and pencils to copy letter shapes taking care to be as accurate as possible. Key Stage 2 students are beginning to group Widget or other symbols together. Key Stage 3 students combine symbols to write sentences through their mastery of technology. Key Stage 4 students use the alphabet to find specific books and know that factual books have an index which is in alphabetical order.
76. Behaviour in the classroom is very good across all key stages. The level of student response is often excellent. Students listen well, respond with interest to questioning and wait their turn to answer. They work very hard to articulate their thoughts through their preferred mode of communication. Students respond well to the many opportunities provided to evaluate their work and the work of others. Older students act as mentors for younger students by reading to them and helping them to express their thoughts during discussions in Circle Time. Relationships between staff and students are very good. This reinforces the high standards of behaviour and promotes positive attitudes and respect.
77. The quality of teaching is good across all key stages and post 16. There are examples of very good and excellent teaching in Key Stage 3. The high quality of teaching has a positive impact on student progress.
78. In Key Stage 2 lessons, teaching is good and teachers emphasise the importance of students

making choices. This enables students to develop early communication and independence. The use of artefacts during the telling of stories further enhances communication and reinforces active learning. For instance, students followed up a lesson based on a story about a birthday party by making party hats. Staff use signing and symbols well to support communication. Lessons are planned carefully to meet individual needs.

79. In Key Stage 3, teaching is good with some excellent features. Learning support assistants are well briefed and work closely with students to ensure that technology is used to best effect. There are careful explanations of each activity which are backed up through the use of students' preferred mode of communication thus enabling students to anticipate and prepare. Teachers use specific strategies, for example, the use of hand over hand to guide those students with sensory or physical needs in the exploration of objects. Classrooms are well equipped with ready access to a range of teaching resources, for example, interactive whiteboards. Teachers are confident in the use of technology as a teaching tool.
80. Teaching in Key Stage 4 and Post 16 is good. The range of reading is extended and students' use of communication books incorporates a greater range of symbols. Picture exchange cards are also used to promote both receptive and expressive communication. Creativity is encouraged. As a result, students are confident in reading aloud using a variety of accents they consider appropriate to the characters in the story. The pace of lessons is carefully judged to give time to those students using communication aids and also stimulation to those who find sitting still for even a short period of time difficult.
81. The curriculum draws together the National Curriculum 'Small Steps' with the Pre-National Curriculum levels and is appropriate for the needs of the students. A wide and commendable range of accreditation is available for older students including the Certificate of Achievement and other basic vocational courses. These courses focus on functional communication for real-life and independence. However, the policy for English does not currently reflect the diverse needs of the current school population. Management of the subject is sound, but co-ordination is not yet fully effective. Whilst some planning documentation is helpful it is not used consistently across the school and approaches vary without an obvious rationale. Late starts to lessons due to late arrival of buses reduces students' lesson time.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Students' achievement in mathematics is good. They make good progress because the overall provision and the quality of the teaching is good.
83. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a very good effect upon the teaching and learning in mathematics. The training and professional development of teaching and support staff, along with considerably improved resources, have had a significant effect upon learning outcomes. The teaching of the basic skills of number, shape, measurement and data handling has been emphasised with the consequent good effect on learning throughout the school. More able students are able to order numbers including tens and hundreds. They can sequence numbers like 130, 140, 150, recognise a variety of shapes and patterns, understand the basic concepts of time and set out simple block graphs. Less able students make good progress with basic number work, matching, sorting and recognising simple shapes.
84. By the end of Key Stage 2, students make very good progress because of the way the work is closely related to the individual needs of the students. They are able to order numbers 1-12 focusing upon the recognition of each number and counting reliably. Questions are framed so that each individual's needs are met. The learning is supported by a good range of resources including puppets, number lines, clothes lines and individual question cards. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are used effectively. More able students use cubes to take 2 from 6 and 1 from 8. They draw people on a bus and learn that there are 3 upstairs and 4 downstairs. They make simple money calculations and count squares, triangles and rectangles. They also develop their concepts of time by identifying the main events during the day. Students with more profound

difficulties use aids to communicate when learning.

85. Good teaching and use of relevant and effective resources ensures that by the end of Key Stage 3 most students have made good progress. More able students build on their number skills and are beginning to understand the concepts of time and make progress in learning about money. In one lesson observed students were counting up to 36. They recognised £1, 50p, 20p and 10p coins, they knew the days of the week and several students were able to write the names of weekdays accurately on the whiteboard. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to participate in the work and obtain good individual support from the support staff. On one occasion during the inspection they were learning about number in a Food Technology lesson. Making jam tarts they handled bowls, felt flour and counted the number of things they required to make the tarts. This multi-sensory approach is most effective with these students.
86. By the end of Key Stage 4, students continue to make good progress. Activities are well suited to the needs of the diverse range of students. More able students learn to use a calendar and become familiar with the 100 square. They recognise time on an analogue clock. They use the Espresso or Easytech Maths Program. Other students with autistic spectrum disorder use the 'I Love Maths' computer program with enthusiasm. Some students are able to answer complex questions about time and work out division sums to three figures.
87. Post 16 students make good progress in numeracy. They use their mathematical skills in a variety of situations. As part of their vocational and mini-enterprise work they visit a supermarket to survey prices, sizes and brands. They make charts and graphs to record the different prices. As part of their money handling experience they study the idea of a best buy for tea and coffee brands. They construct simple block and circle graphs to show the most popular brands. They extend their understanding of money when they visit a building society to learn about interest rates. They are set challenges, for example, to plan an excursion to take out five friends on a budget of £80. Teachers plans clearly identify opportunities for learning about numbers and students' numeracy skills are improved by practising them in everyday situations.
88. Numeracy is taught well throughout many other subjects. In swimming they learn about widths and lengths. In activities like rowing, they count the numbers of strokes up to thousands. In physical education staff use 'one, two, three' as a lead into other activities.
89. Overall teaching and learning are good. The planning of lessons and knowledge and understanding of the needs of students have a significant effect on progress in mathematics. Staff have been well trained in the National Numeracy Strategy. There is very good use of a wide range of resources and the increasing use of information and communications technology is due to the on-site training that is available for all staff. Many staff and students operate computer programs with confidence. Older students and more able younger students use programs independently. A number of students with autistic spectrum disorder are keen to use computer programs. Staff are aware of the need to regulate their use. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged by good questioning of students by teachers and teaching assistants. Students across the school have a very positive attitude towards numeracy and this results in good and sometimes very good behaviour in lessons.
90. Most lessons include plans to target the needs of individual students. The school is aware of the need to develop this process. There are some very good examples of how teachers and support staff use signing to communicate but this practice is not consistent across the school.
91. Assessment, both from individual students and for mathematics in the school as a whole is good. Most students have a target for numeracy written into their Individual Education Plans. The co-ordinator records students' progress regularly and there are termly reports available to parents and staff. In addition, the two co-ordinators in consultation with teaching staff are able to target the needs of specific groups of students in order to increase their progress.
92. The overall management of the subject is very good. There are improving links between the two sites and there is an awareness of the need to plan joint training for staff. The quality, range and

organisation of resources for numeracy is very good and all classrooms are well stocked with the necessary materials to support practical work. A number of classrooms make good use of the interactive whiteboard during numeracy lessons.

## SCIENCE

93. Students achieve well across all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, the more able students carry out simple investigations, for example, using heat to change solids into liquids. Students make predictions about the friction associated with different surfaces and they can say which car will travel fastest on a variety of surfaces. Students of average ability are able to differentiate between magnetic and non-magnetic and students with less ability predict which materials will keep them dry in the rain. The students' attitudes to science are good. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties show their interest, for example, during a lesson on forces, with glowing smiles and excitement. The resources for the teaching of the subject are good.
94. Key Stage 3 students make good progress. By the end of the key stage the more able students link the names of grown up animals with their young and know that the three forms of water are ice, water and steam. Students make observations of the changes, which occur to materials, like chocolate when they are heated. Students of average ability attempted many similar activities but were less accurate in their answers. They can decide between healthy and unhealthy foods by circling the correct answer. Students with less ability had participation records, showing their awareness and response in different scientific situations, for example, in pushing and pulling situations. Students work hard in lessons and remain on task when doing activities such as labelling diagrams of plant and animal cells. Some students are able to evaluate how much help they had with carrying out their work.
95. Higher attaining Key Stage 4 students do the Double Award Certificate of Achievement, in which they gain distinctions. They can say that limewater goes milky when carbon dioxide is bubbled through it and can determine the weight of salt dissolved in a solution when given the final weight of the solution, the initial weight of the beaker and the weight of the beaker and the water. Middle ability students carry out scientific investigations to predict the impact of the variance of the slope of a ramp on the speed of a toy car. Lower attaining students distinguish the causes of changes in materials, for example, that heat makes ice melt to liquid water and then evaporate to steam. They correctly identify the properties and uses of materials, for example, the fuels used for cars burn easily. The students show great persistence in their work and more able students can, independently dissect a flower, spread out the parts ready for pressing and label them correctly. Post 16 students continue to learn about science through their vocational modules. For example in a module on independent living, they learn about personal hygiene and the effects of heat on food.
96. The quality of teaching is good. Very good lessons are characterised by the secure subject knowledge of the teacher and good planning. The best planning takes into account the wide range of students' special educational needs and identifies appropriate strategies to meet those needs. This includes easily available and effective resources and the consistent deployment of the support staff. Occasionally, in those lessons where teaching and learning are only judged as satisfactory, students' individual learning needs are not so effectively addressed.
97. Information and communication technology is a strong feature of lessons. For example, the electronic microscope is used to transmit information on to the screen for all to see. The school makes good use of data logging equipment to record and compare the surface and deep temperatures of the pond at different times of the year. Students' literacy is not always well developed in science lessons. For example, there is little evidence of practising the pronunciation of scientific words, like nucleus or having key scientific vocabulary displayed around the room. The reinforcement and development of numeracy, too, in science is limited.
98. The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her subject and contributes to the development for the scheme of work on both sites. The management of science is sound, but there are important inconsistencies between the teaching on the two sites. Science is taught in dedicated teaching

rooms and although they do not have fume cupboards, they are adequate for the science being taught. Resources are good, well organised and clearly labelled.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good and students achieve well by the end of all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, students make large hand and footprints in bright colours to explore ideas about themselves as separate, independent young people. They choose colours and predict changes when two primary colours are mixed together. Bold painted animal masks show good progress from design to realisation. Students try to keep within the areas outlined for painting. By the end of Key Stage 3, very good progress is made. All have had experience of a broad range of art and craft activities in two and three dimensions. Students are involved in creating, constructing and colouring. When drawing the school, they communicate their intentions and many complete a series of detailed compositions. They describe how they arrive at their finished pictures, for example, the process for cutting out and printing a silhouette of an autumn cityscape.
100. By the end of Key Stage 4, students' progress continues to be very good. Students produce impressive paintings in the style of other artists, Gauguin, Monet and Modigliani. Pottery sketchbooks show the design process and beautifully patterned terracotta pots complete work on decorating and making. Last year, an accredited unit award scheme was introduced very successfully. In self-portraiture, 16 students entered and all gained a pass. In design, 14 students entered and all gained a pass. Of this cohort, 14 students achieved a double pass. The vocational course for Key Stage 4 and post-16 students consolidates previous good progress. The Creative Arts Module ensures students work through a structured programme which includes a written review and evaluation of their individual work. Students of all ages are enthusiastic and concentrate hard, enjoying what they create. They are proud of their work and can say which part they like the best. Some opportunities are missed to extend this dialogue further to develop more self-evaluation.
101. Teaching overall is very good with some excellent practice. Those leading the subject department have a depth of knowledge used to great effect in planning and teaching. Lessons are well sequenced and students are always reminded of the process involved. For example, a video showing a visitor exhibiting a collection of African art reminded the class where their current work started. Well-structured lessons offer many resources and capture the students' interest well. The good match of tasks to individual learning needs and the effective use of support assistants ensure all students are successful. Very interesting plaster casts of objects in clay display impressive three-dimensional work by younger students. There is a strong emphasis placed on the development of literacy skills. Speaking, listening and learning key art words form a core element of the curriculum. However, in a minority of lessons, the words displayed are not overtly included in the lesson activities. Comprehensive planning defines the content and learning aims well. Good daily planning uses evaluation to inform preparation for over-learning when appropriate. A series of autumn prints were much more successful the second time. However, discussion with students on how and why work improves is less well initiated. Expectations are high and all students either work independently or receive appropriate levels of support to ensure tasks are completed. Targets on individual education plans are carefully adapted so that each student receives focused teaching and support to meet their special educational needs. Sketchbooks are used well to show the development of ideas in drawing. Marking is constructive and dated noting where work is produced independently. Recording evaluative comments together with the students is less well developed.
102. The curriculum is carefully constructed to ensure optimum use of multi-sensory activities and the wide use of different media. Each year observational drawings are examined for progress in cognitive development. Assessment of how students employ mixed media coupled with an awareness of their increasing communication skills efficiently informs planning. Consequently target setting is relevant and differentiation is appropriate for each individual.

103. Thinking about how works of art are created encourages a spiritual awareness and plans to build a sculpture made of disability aids introduces moral issues for discussion. Students from a local primary school partnered Charlton students to work on a very successful "Pavement Art" competition and productive links with the London Institute have meant that Charlton artwork is displayed in Greenwich and London galleries. The art of different cultures and historical times are regularly used to encourage creativity. For example, African and Aboriginal art have been used as the starting point for painting and pottery projects. Inca designs serve as the inspiration for producing hammered copper earrings. Displays around the schools are well presented, colourful and enhance the environment. Delightful pictures of faces enliven the play area on one site and the reception area on the other site is made more welcoming by the butterfly handprints of all students. The department is well resourced especially in computer technology. Plans to establish a computer profile of each student's artwork are well underway. Homework is not well established and the involvement of parents in celebrating their children's achievements is disappointing. A lively after school club run by support assistants and volunteers is well attended.
104. Although very good planning and review means the work of the art department is successful, management roles are not clearly defined. Liaison between teachers on both the sites and between the two sites is informal. Consequently, temporary teachers experience isolation and lack of professional support. Formal meetings to share practice, review and evaluate the progress of students and their work, are not in place and this negatively affects the professional development and teaching of some staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Students' achievements are good. Many students are motivated by the subject, show interest in their practical activities and can make choices that affect the design of their finished product. The subject makes a good contribution to the overall teaching of literacy, communication and numeracy in the school. There were no lessons in the subject for Key Stage 2 students during the time of the inspection.
106. By the end of Key Stage 3, students know about levers and pneumatics. This involves students in planning, designing, cutting and assembling different materials. The more physically able students can manage much of this without physical intervention. The least physically able need a high degree of adult intervention, but are always able to make choices regarding the design and decoration of their product. More able students showed delight in exploring the properties of a syringe 'gun' and were able to make very good progress. Satisfactory progress was made by students with difficulties on the autistic spectrum. They benefited from a high degree of staff support to maintain interest in the activity and finish the product. Students with a range of physical and sensory needs make good progress in their production of an animal with a head made moveable by syringe and hinge. Work for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties is more sensory based. It focuses on food or on moulded materials such as dough or plaster or making musical instruments and sounds. This allows students to make progress in understanding and enables their engagement with the learning. All students make good progress in their ability to manipulate tools. In some classes their progress is carefully documented and used to inform future teaching targets. Students record their learning by circling symbols or words.
107. Key Stage 4 students are taught design and technology within a vocational module on one site. On the other site, the subject is not taught at Key Stage 4 because of lack of space due to sixth formers still being on site. There is not enough food technology on the curriculum. Although it was not possible to observe any Key Stage 4 lessons during the inspection, students' work was scrutinised and the co-ordinator interviewed. Students continue to make good progress. They learn the difference between wheels and cams when they make animals and compare different designs.
108. As part of the Life Skills module of their vocational course, Key Stage 4 students and post 16 students learn about food hygiene and healthy food and nutrition. They make choices about

sandwich design and home safety. They are also able to make a design, scan it into the computer and then transfer it onto a tee shirt. Folders of evidence and photographs show that students clearly enjoy and are proud of these achievements.

109. Teaching is good, overall, with some very good features. Where lessons are very good there is lively and engaging delivery. The lesson is well planned to meet the individual learning needs of the group. Students understand that the end product is within their grasp and that they are able to achieve it. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use effective teaching strategies. Their planning shows how support staff can be used to support individual learning needs. Staff ensure that, however difficult communication is, each child has the opportunity to say how their product should work and look. They do this by very good use of communication aids, by use of signing, by using symbols to offer choices and by patient waiting for eye pointing.
110. Where teaching is satisfactory, the lesson has been less well differentiated to meet the needs of the target group. The pace is slower and students are not so well managed. Some teachers use assessments and skills checklists effectively, but not all.
111. The subject is satisfactorily managed on each site, but practice is inconsistent. Subject specialists are aware that they need to co-ordinate the efforts of the two sites. They do not as yet have the opportunity to observe or monitor the teaching of others in the subject. Accommodation on one site is inadequate.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. Geography and history are taught as part of a humanities lesson on a six weekly cycle. At the time of the inspection, there was no geography being taught. Teachers' records indicate that students learn to use map skills and when finding out about their local environment, for example, the River Thames and countries such as Mexico. Management of the subject is sound. However, the co-ordinator on one site is about to leave and the other is on long-term compassionate leave. Although provision is, overall satisfactory, management of the subject should be strengthened to enable students' achievements in the subject to be reported. The senior management team has plans in place to develop this area further.

## **HISTORY**

113. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 2, there are examples of very good progress. Teachers recognise that the concept of time: past, present and future is difficult for some students to fully understand, so use creative methods to bring events to life. Still photographs and video are used extensively together with Records of Achievement and class photograph albums. Historical artefacts are used to provide a focus for lessons and students can identify concepts of old and new within the context of their daily experience. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining students are able to sequence events and have a clear understanding of the passage of time. This is reinforced by the use of technology. The school "promotes the idea of history as a living and ongoing phenomenon" by events such as the annual 'Living History Week'. Photographs from the successful 'Black History' month indicate an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for students. The emphasis is on activities that focus on the use of sensory experiences.
114. Teaching overall is satisfactory. One good lesson took the theme of the Second World War as a starting point and incorporated later key events such as the Coronation. The teacher employed a variety of strategies such as the use of gas masks and helmets. Role-play of the Coronation, together with the use of video, captured the interest and involvement of students. The lesson was well planned and students were thoroughly involved. Another teacher used photographs of old and new houses with Key Stage 3 students to consolidate concepts such as old and new. A craft activity where students worked in pairs to make a collage of either an old or a new house followed a discussion of the photographs.

115. History is taught for six-week blocks. The subject policy is insightful and imaginative. Schemes of work take account of the needs of students and activities are planned to maximise participation. However, the role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed. There is no moderation of assessment, no levels are indicated on planning documentation and there is no monitoring of overall students' progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

116. Information and communication technology makes a very good contribution to the progress of the students in the school. A technical team of the highest ability supports students and teachers in seeking the best programmes to support learning. Good levels of equipment on the temporary site together with excellent facilities and equipment on the permanent site mean that both students and teachers are exceptionally well supported and students achieve very well. There is a constant review of best practice for all aspects of the subject to support all areas of the curriculum.
117. Students make very good progress. In all lessons, students develop impressive keyboard skills. They have good control when using paint programmes. Students make very good progress because teachers plan thoroughly and choose appropriate teaching methods. Students are very well supported to succeed. Students use computers and various communication aids with surprising skill and confidence across the curriculum. Many students are able to open, save, transfer data and run many programs with growing confidence and proficiency. The more able students manipulate text and alter images and combine images with text. Students use communication aids such as touch screens, recording devices and switches that activate communication between students and staff. This enables the students to make good contributions to all their lessons. As a result, their personal and social development is enhanced because they have greater control over their environment.
118. Across the curriculum, students make very good use of information and communication technology. To support their numeracy, various counting, shaping and data handling programs are used. Students use software that supports their personal and social education when learning about family and friends and about home management. There is a wide range of word processing, text manipulation programs and logo designing programs for design and technology. Paint and drawing programs are used in art. All subjects have access to writing with symbols programs which convert text into symbols.
119. By the end of Key Stage 2, the most able students insert text within a prepared graphic set-up. They carry out basic word processing and know how to print out their finished work with minimal support from staff. A particularly able group programmed the routes for a robot. They made sensible suggestions as to why the device had failed to follow the programmed route and suggested ways of adjusting the program. Other less able students followed step by step instructions when supported by staff. They showed an understanding of basic routines such as opening files and programs. Students with complex learning needs show pleasure when experiencing the effects of paint programs when running simple storybook sequences.
120. By the end of Key Stage 3, more able students use digital cameras and transfer the pictures into documents and then add text. They are able to open, save, transfer data and run many programs with growing confidence and proficiency such as accessing the Internet. They are able to find specific sites and download information and images. Students with severe learning difficulties follow programs that manipulate images with growing independence. They write simple text with help and choose symbols to tell stories. They use communication aids to express their choices to staff who guide them through the programs. They continue to respond well to the images, colours and sounds of basic programs. Students compare the sensors in their bodies as they responded to light, feel and taste, with control sensors in refrigerators, automatic doors and automatic lighting.
121. At the end of Key Stage 4, students follow a vocational course. They use spreadsheets, for example, when entering data from the school's science project on pond life. With well-judged

support, they can make mixed media presentations and build simple sensor controlled devices. Students with complex learning needs continue to improve their skills when using communication aids that allow them to access interactive white boards. These students respond to simple prompts from the computer to follow a sequence of commands to save a file or change screen displays.

122. There is evidence that post-16 students continue their achievements and refine their skills. They use computers to present their work in an attractive manner. It was not possible, because of the constraints of the timetable, to observe a post-16 lesson, but very well kept files indicate that these students trouble-fix, use design programs and support other work using word processing. They are involved in making presentation programs, converting text to signing and they use spreadsheets appropriately. They access the Internet for specific searches.
123. The quality of the teaching of information and communication technology is very good. The very best lessons are meticulously planned and give consideration to the individual requirements of the students. Adults give a great deal of support to the students that ensures that they do things for themselves and are successful. Praise and encouragement is evident in all lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants are skilled in adjusting the levels of support given to the students during the lessons by good questioning. For example, in one lesson, more able Key Stage 4 students were planning a route for a programmable moving device; the teacher gave only the minimal support when the students tried to work out why the device had made a turn too late on its journey. In another instance, a Key Stage 3 student with a severe hearing loss was given instructions through the use of signing to support her efforts when using a paint and draw program.
124. Students' behaviour in lessons overall is very good. They work hard at their tasks and are delighted with their own efforts and the successes of others. Whilst a few students are distractible, they are easily returned to their tasks. Most work with a determination and enthusiasm. They are keen to show visitors what they can do and all lessons observed had a busy feel and good pace.
125. The subject is extremely well resourced on the main site with a high ratio of computers to students. A wide range of software is used. The highly qualified team of technicians support the teaching and learning in all subjects to an exemplary degree. Teachers are able to ask for support from basic levels up to running sophisticated set-ups. On the temporary site, recent purchases have improved the general level of information and communication technology support. Teachers are able to access a bank of programs for teaching and many sources of information are available to teachers from both sites.
126. The management of information and communication technology as a discrete subject is excellent and the co-ordinator has responsibility for both sites. The school is working towards a consistent approach to teaching on both sites. Long-term strategic planning for the subject and how it can support the wider curriculum is in place and developments are appropriately costed. For example, information and communication technology is being used to develop CD rom profiles of students' achievement. Weekly training enables staff to learn about new programmes and they receive high levels of support from technical staff.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French and Spanish**

127. Students learn either French or Spanish. Their achievement is good across Key Stages 3 and 4 and they make good progress in French and Spanish. They learn to read, recognise the symbols, translate and speak words and phrases related to familiar circumstances in everyday life. Modern foreign languages make a good contribution towards students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
128. By the end of Key Stage 3, students who do not learn Spanish have made very good progress in

French. They recognise symbols representing leisure activities. Some remember the word in French, others need verbal prompts, but all are willing to speak. Some are able to instigate a short conversation in the target language. Work folders show that students increase their vocabulary and their knowledge of France. Many students are able to respond to simple teacher instructions given in French. They feel confident in their abilities and are able to concentrate and apply themselves in lessons. Some of the more able students are achieving Level 2 of the National Curriculum.

129. By the end of Key Stage 3, students who do not learn French have made satisfactory progress in Spanish. They match colours, pictures and symbols. More able students know the Spanish names whilst the less able need support from staff. The most able students structure and say short phrases with support; others make choices between two photographs or symbols. In occasional lessons, the behaviour of some students with challenging behaviour impedes the learning of the others.
130. In Key Stage 4, lessons contribute to the students' accreditation of vocational modules. It was not possible to observe lessons during the inspection. Scrutiny of schemes of work and students' work folders shows they make sound progress. Students respond in the target language and remember basic vocabulary and information about France or Spain.
131. Teaching is good with some very good features. Where teaching is very good, teachers' subject knowledge has a marked effect on the pace, breadth and variety of subject content in the lesson. Excellent classroom management and organisation keeps students engaged and on task. Very clear planning enables support staff to work as a team with the teacher, helping the smooth running of the lesson and the equal engagement of all students. Students' work is assessed regularly and some students have been taped speaking the target language. Students' work is well organised and annotated to show how much support was needed for the completion of the task.
132. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure. In these lessons, behaviour management is less secure and all learners do not remain engaged throughout the entire lesson. Learning support assistants are not so well deployed in these lessons.
133. The subject offers frequent opportunities for the teaching of basic literacy, communication and numeracy skills. Students have good opportunities to rehearse basic literacy and numeracy information in the target language. There are frequent opportunities for reading, writing, listening and communicating. Information and communication technology is used to prepare high quality custom-made resources in some lessons.
134. The subject is competently led by both co-ordinators. However, the schemes of work over the two sites are not consistent. There is scope to extend the use of information and communication technology in both French and Spanish lessons. Subject specialists do not have the opportunity to monitor other teachers, nor is there yet the opportunity for team teaching in order to raise the standards of all who teach the subject.

## **MUSIC**

135. Provision for the subject is satisfactory and students' achievement is good. Although the school has been without a music teacher for some time, there is now a specialist teacher in post. Students' progress has, therefore, been limited.
136. Students are beginning to make good progress in consolidating their skills of listening and performing. At the end of Key Stage 2, students were able to compose a chant of each other's names within a clapping rhythm and then learnt to keep the clapping beat going without the chanting of the names. By the end of Key Stage 3, students have experience of controlling changes of tempo. Students with complex learning needs responded well to the visual stimuli of coloured parachute or sequined cloth when combined with various strongly accented songs sang

by staff. Teachers and students' records show that Key Stage 4 students consolidate and improve on these skills. In a very good post-16 lesson, less able students were able to recognise different kinds of music. They nodded to indicate acceleration or *rallentando*. Students in several classes enjoyed interpreting music by moving to the rhythms and moods of the music.

137. Overall the teaching is good and, during the inspection, some very good teaching was observed. The very good teaching was based on careful planning that challenged the students of all abilities. Appropriate levels of support were provided for individual needs. For example, the teacher imaginatively devised other methods for students for whom movement was significantly restricted. In the very good lessons, time was taken to refine and improve on the students' performances. In a satisfactory lesson, too many learning targets were set so that the lesson was rushed and students had little time to consolidate their learning. In all cases, lessons were planned to be enjoyable. Teachers encouraged students to be fully involved in the music. The teachers have good subject knowledge and musical skills so that students benefit from their confidence. Teachers varied the activities within lessons in order that all the students were fully involved.
138. Because students enjoy their lessons, their behaviour is very good. They all try very hard to take part in all of the activities of the lesson and greet the success of the other children with great delight. The enthusiasm of staff generates a good sense of involvement in activities.
139. Resources are now good. Very good use is made of computer programmes for composing and setting up musical experiences. This department has a sound beam and an advanced musical response system that allows students to get differing musical voices by interrupting coloured light beams. This system gives more able students opportunities to produce tunes by regular interruptions of the beam if the tempo is correct.
140. Despite the lack of a co-ordinator, the school has continued to arrange a number of activities that include music. In addition, a number of visiting musicians visited both school sites. For example, students have recently had the opportunity to listen to visiting folk groups, sampled various instruments from around the world, seen dance displays and been involved in recitals and a presentation of Japanese music and culture. Students have joined in various events such as the Drake Music project and have established links with Trinity College for music workshops. There is scope for developing the management of the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

141. Students' achievement and their progress are good overall. There were some lessons observed in Key Stages 3 and 4 and post 16 where the achievement and progress was very good. This was due to the very good teaching and the quality of the provision available. The contribution of the support staff was also significant in these lessons. In addition to the progress observed in lessons there are examples of very good achievement and progress in extra curricular activities in the subject, for example, the work related to rowing and dance. In rowing, students are working towards national standards in their work at the London Regatta Centre which is superbly equipped and has the benefit of coaches of the highest order. Students from across the year groups including profound and multiple learning difficulties and the more physically able join together in sessions led by representatives of the Greenwich Dance Agency. A feature of these sessions is the sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment as students learn to dance, move and turn to music working with mainstream peers.
142. From the earliest age it is obvious students enjoy physical activity. This enjoyment contributes to good achievement because they are all prepared to work hard. By the end of Key Stage 2, students are able to roll a ball independently and release it with some accuracy. Mobile students and those in wheelchairs respond to music and learn to freeze or stretch and use space effectively. Support staff are very effective. Students' trust in adults helps them to be more adventurous. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties work effectively with the physiotherapist to implement individual programmes of exercise. Physiotherapists also participate in hydrotherapy programmes where they gain confidence in the water. By the end of Key Stage 3,

students have extended their abilities to move in time and to music as they perform forward, backward and sideways movements. They learn the importance of warm up activities at the beginning of the lesson and cooling down at the end. They also learn to work co-operatively with parachutes and large and small balls. In these sessions students with difficulties on the autistic spectrum begin to develop their skills of working with others as they join together in parachute activities. The parachute is used very effectively to provide a varied and stimulating activity where students learn to anticipate movement and many grasp, stretch and lift their arms. In some lessons students move in time to music. For example in one lesson observed the Harry Potter theme music and a video was used effectively to stimulate students movements.

143. By the end of Key Stage 4 students perform different movements with different parts of the body. They think and develop their own original movements and work in a circle. Students using 'walkers' and wheelchairs are fully involved. Teamwork is developed by working in circles and a sense of co-operation is generated as some more able students help others to achieve their tasks.
144. Post 16 students experience lessons designed to increase their physical awareness. They learn about fitness and the benefits of raising the heart rate through exercise. They learn about circuits and activities to stretch their capabilities. For example, working individually and in pairs, students were stepping up, using stretchbands, weights, jump mats, and a small trampoline in rotation. They worked extremely hard. Students in wheelchairs were set appropriate but challenging tasks in their wheelchairs. A 'water break' in the lesson was necessary to help the students to replace lost fluids. The session was most productive in promoting activities and developing an understanding of a fitness regime.
145. Students' swimming skills and confidence improve in the warm water pool which is a very good resource. There is a hoist facility to assist non-ambulant students to get into the water and due regard is given to changing and health and safety issues. There is a good range of resources, for example floats and small frames to help the children in the water. The swimming programme ensures that all students have access to the pool. Some of the older and able students also have access to a public pool in a local leisure centre. About a dozen students are able to swim 25 metres or more. Good support is provided by the physiotherapy department for the non-ambulant students. The school employs a swimming instructor who makes an important contribution during some lessons.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is at its best, planning is detailed, ensuring the complex needs of all students are effectively met through the appropriate use of knowledgeable and committed staff. The accommodation and provision on the main site is very good and will be excellent when the new gym is fully operational. For example, there is equipment which trains the core of the body, an inclusive resistance machine including a swing away seat for wheelchair users, a rowing machine and other equipment. The provision at the other site is adequate but the use of the hall as a thoroughfare is unhelpful, particularly for lessons involving students with difficulties on the autistic spectrum. Teaching staff are enthusiastic and their expectations are high. This leads to improvements in confidence, independence and physical skill. Because of this, students' behaviour is good. They generally have faith in staff so that in all their activities they will be supported to achieve well within their capabilities.
147. The curriculum of the subject is broad and all students have opportunities to develop their skills and experiences of games, dance, swimming, gymnastics and athletics in some form. The school participates in a wide range of sporting events including football tournaments, Boccia, inter-borough athletics and swimming galas. Because the school is new there is no formal accreditation but there is every intention to institute Sports Chartermark as soon as possible.
148. The co-ordination is strong on the main site but development links with the other site are at an early stage. Both sites have procedures for assessment of individual progress but there is no clear, consistent policy across the school. There have been no opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor teaching in a systematic way, particularly when there is a group taken by a non-specialist teacher.

149. The teaching staff involved in the subject are enthusiastic and this has been instrumental in raising achievement in the subject. The work makes an important contribution to students and students' social and personal development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Students' achievement in religious education is good overall, with some very good features. The borough's agreed syllabus "Windows on Faith" is followed.
151. Students at Key Stages 2 and 3 both follow the Key Stage 3 section of the syllabus. Sufficient time is given for consolidation and over-learning. Students celebrate religious festivals from a variety of world faiths, using the local community to support this. By the end of Key Stage 2, students have learned about Buddhism. Some students with physical difficulties have been responsible for a display showing how to make a Mandala. By the end of Key Stage 3, students have studied the five pillars of Islam and learned about the lives of Muslims. Students demonstrate their learning through drawings and writing. For example, they describe their feelings, or a Shabbat meal.
152. Key Stage 4 students follow two research projects chosen from a choice of three on either places of worship, significant religious figures, or religious movements. The current Key Stage 4 group have chosen to work on Christianity and Sikhism. Some students have symbol sentences which they have illustrated, to show coverage. Others eloquently describe their feelings which are scribed by staff, for example, of their commitment to having a blood transfusion to save the life of someone else.
153. Students take part in making a Shabbat meal. They understand Hanukkah because they have taken part in a multi-sensory experience involving smells, touch, tastes and lights. Students have been part of a drama presentation relating to a major event in a world religion. Some students study religious education as part of a vocational module at Key Stage 4 and at post-16. By the end of post-16 they respond to the story of Joseph by using switches. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties have good multi-sensory experiences. Their responses vary from encounter for some students to the full involvement of others.
154. Teaching is good with some very good features. Where teaching was very good, the teacher's subject knowledge was evident and there was a high degree of sensory stimulation, Different learning outcomes were identified for the range of learning needs in the group. Learning support assistants were very well used to motivate students and keep them on task. A variety of teaching strategies was used to appeal to students. Resources were designed to allow students to communicate at their own level. The resources helped to make the subject come alive for students with limited understanding. Literacy and communication skills were particularly well supported in these lessons. Effective use of information and communication technology included its use both as a means of motivating students and as a tool to access learning. Assessment opportunities include annotation, observations, evaluations of targets on Individual Education Plans and end of unit assessments.
155. Where teaching was satisfactory, but no better, activities were presented in a way that allowed student access to learning. Students were supported to succeed. Relationships were friendly and students' contributions were valued. However, teachers' specialist knowledge was not so good so the pace was slower and learning support assistants were not used sufficiently well.
156. Very good assemblies and the involvement of external advisory staff support the students' achievement in this subject. They are offered vibrant, colourful and stimulating representations of various cultures and religions throughout the curriculum. The subject is well led by the subject co-ordinators. There is a vibrant programme of celebrations of festivals which contribute significantly to school life and to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a comprehensive scheme of work and a good range of resources and artefacts are available to all those who teach

the subject. Currently the subject co-ordinators do not have non-contact time for the monitoring of the subject across both sites. Some students at Key Stage 4 have more time for the subject than their peers.

## **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**

157. Students achieve very well in the development of their personal and social skills. Students enter the school with poorly developed personal and social skills. By the end of Key Stage 2, the more able students are beginning to respond appropriately to greetings. In some lessons, they are supported to do this by working with older students. For example, they are encouraged to respond in the Good Morning session and they discuss the weather and discuss how they spent their weekend. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties learn to enjoy stories together because adults use a very wide range of resources that help students to use all their senses to understand during circle time. They take turns, begin to share and learn to make choices, for example, with respect to food and clothing.
158. Key Stage 3 students continue to develop their individual personal and social skills very well. They also learn how to keep themselves safe, for example, when crossing the street. Their interactions with younger students enables higher attaining students in Key Stages 3 and 4 to develop very mature behaviour. They learn to act in a responsible way and they develop very good relationships with the younger students. They learn to express their feelings and to communicate them clearly to others. For example, they learn strategies for dealing with people who upset them. Their understanding of moral issues are extended through activities to help them understand the notion of fair play. A higher attaining student with profound and multiple learning difficulties was able to express her concerns about travelling on the bus to and from school with the effective use of visual and technological signs and symbols.
159. By the end of Key Stage 4, students continue to understand substances that are harmful, for example cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. They learn to show their appreciation to others and to discuss their concerns about relationships with their peers. In this way, students are helped to understand the perspective of others. They express their difficulties in having a range of powerful feelings that are difficult to deal with.
160. More able post-16 students have developed high levels of social skills. They are aware of the needs of others, for example, noticing that someone did not have a knife and fork at lunchtime. Students learn about the workings of the School Council by preparing for the meeting with younger, Key Stage 4 students. Students of all abilities readily take part in discussions and learn to work with others constructively. They learn about current affairs by reading and discussing events in newspapers. Students who attend college make independent decisions, listen well and contribute well to the discussions. Students who have difficulties on the autistic spectrum make very good progress in learning how to control their behaviour and they gain confidence from their successful social interactions. They learn about human rights, healthy eating and how to use money in shopping transactions. Increasingly, students on the autistic spectrum learn to generalise and reciprocate. Lower attaining students increasingly take responsibility for themselves, for example, putting their own coat on and placing their bag in the locker.
161. Teachers use a very good range of resources and strategies to enable students with a wide range of abilities to really understand. Very good use of communication aids helps students to take part in activities and to take responsibility for their own contributions and actions. Teachers are aware of individual targets and make very good use of situations to ensure that students work on them. Teachers give students lots of praise to encourage them to persevere and to improve. Questioning is rigorous and ensures that students are challenged and their growing confidence is developed. The relationships between adults and students are excellent. Students' individual learning needs are very well understood by adults; students are challenged and supported by them very well.
162. Personal and social education is very well co-ordinated. There are distinct but complementary aspects of the subject that relate to the pursuit of students' individual targets, an understanding of

health issues and an understanding of citizenship issues. The aims of the school are very clearly reflected in the high priority given to this aspect of students' education.

### **Provision for post 16 students**

163. Post 16 students achieve well because they have a wide range of relevant experiences and they are given responsibility. They all make good progress in lessons. In one lesson they grew visibly in confidence as they explained their findings from their own Internet research on famous people. In another, all students made very good progress in investigating current news items in newspapers. In a lesson at college, students developed their independence, by making choices within a work-based environment. The most able students speak clearly about recent national events. They read and write simple sentences. They use money when shopping and practical tools, for example, to make a bird box. Many students join in open discussions about an event or issue, as in Circle time or in the introductory self-evaluation sessions at college. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond appropriately to questions by using switches or by head or eye movements. They share in practical activities, for example, in feeling the texture of materials or the sensation of motion, or by being supported, for example, when using scissors to cut out a picture.
164. The teaching in post-16 lessons is usually good and sometimes it is very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Features of good teaching include clear aims in the lesson plans with individual targets for students. There are strategies for involving all students and questions are asked at the right level. There is very effective deployment of support staff so that students receive individual attention. Successful lessons made good use of symbols to enhance communication and there was a high degree of sensory stimulation to promote the learning of less able students. Assessment included recorded responses from students and good use of photographic evidence of the responses of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. In a few lessons, the lesson aims were over-ambitious, or there was insufficient use of support staff or the range of stimuli and artefacts to enhance learning was limited.
165. The post-16 curriculum at the school provides a very good range of opportunities that meet students' needs very well. Life skills and work-related activities are blended with lessons that enhance students' skills in a relevant broad range of subjects, including English, mathematics, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. For example, science topics are included in modules like "Independent Living". Lessons enable students to develop key skills like communication, application of number and information technology. Students are very well prepared for the transition to adult life. They show increased ability to interact with others, developing their social skills as they mature. However, the late arrival of transport in the mornings seriously eroded time for lessons.
166. The external accreditation opportunities that begin lower down the school are extended very effectively in the post-16 curriculum. Students study modules such as "Meal preparation and cooking", "Using a Computer" and "Self Advocacy". Students take part in mini-enterprise activities and work experience. The post-16 curriculum for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties follows the same pattern of work but uses different activities. These include a multi-sensory approach and wide use of communication aids to improve their communication skills, their mobility and awareness of the world. The use of learning support assistants is very effective in enabling students to access the daily curriculum. Accreditation of the achievements of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties is through the use of internal certificates but there are plans afoot to extend the use of external awards and Young Enterprise is now in place.
167. All students except those with profound and multiple learning difficulties have regular access to a very good range of college courses. Three college sites are used and much of this work provides extra evidence for students' externally accredited folders. At college, the more able students learn new vocational skills like woodwork, mosaic making or motor vehicle maintenance. Three students are completing nationally recognised foundation courses in Health and Social Care, information and communication technology and motor vehicle technology. Access for students

with profound and multiple learning difficulties is limited due to lack of appropriate facilities. However, there are plans in hand to remedy this.

168. Other beneficial outside links include regular local shopping trips and rowing sessions at the London Regatta Centre, where students train on top-class rowing machines, coached by professional coaches. Some students make very good progress in this environment.
169. The educational and personal support and guidance for students in the sixth form is very good. The staff know the students very well and support them sensitively without denying them their independence, whether in the classroom, the lunch canteen or elsewhere. Students are assessed regularly, according to their personal and academic targets and the external requirements of their courses. This gives a very clear focus and added structure to the assessment procedures making them very effective. The degree of help needed by the student is noted as part of the assessment process. As modules are completed, they are assessed by the teachers and moderated by the co-ordinator who acts as Internal Verifier. Their records of achievement, when they leave, can include a compact disk transition profile, showing clips of their best work, sometimes with a commentary by the student. This is very good practice.
170. Every student has a well thought out post-16 Transition Plan which covers the accreditation opportunities being offered to the student, any college link courses attended and his or her likely future destination. This is supported by good careers advice and guidance.
171. Reports to parents are comprehensive and informative. Parents and students are involved in the annual reviews and the pre-college student interviews. Concerns raised by parents regarding the imminent transfer of post 16 students to the sixth form centre have yet to be adequately addressed. The intended transfer date for those on the temporary site is, therefore, likely to be missed.
172. There is good oversight of the students, particularly on the main site, but uncertainty about transfer arrangements on the other site is unsettling for students. Resources are generally good. However, college staff have had no training to teach students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.