

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE LIVITY SCHOOL

Brixton, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 133440

Headteacher: Ms Geraldine Lee

Reporting inspector: Ms Sue Aldridge  
8810

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 January 2003

Inspection number: 249467

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | Special                            |
| School category:             | Community special                  |
| Age range of pupils:         | 2 to 11 years                      |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                              |
| School address:              | Mandrell Road<br>Brixton<br>London |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                 |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs Pamela Secrett                 |
| Date of previous inspection: | N/A                                |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                 |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 8810         | Ms Sue Aldridge | Registered inspector | Educational inclusion<br>Music<br>Personal, social and health education<br>Religious education | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards?<br>a) The school's results and achievements.<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>What should the school do to improve further? |
| 11041        | Marvyn Moore    | Lay inspector        |  | How high are standards?<br>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?                                    |
| 2044         | David Hughes    | Team inspector       | Special educational needs<br>Art and design<br>Mathematics<br>Physical education               | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 2746         | Roy Lund        | Team inspector       | Design and technology<br>Information and communication technology<br>Science                   | How well does the school care for its pupils?  |
| 21822        | Helen Maskew    | Team inspector       | English as an additional language<br>English<br>Geography<br>History                           | How well is the school led and managed?  |
| 15477        | John Messer     | Team inspector       | Foundation stage   |  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Livity was formed from the merger of three special schools in September 2001. It is situated in Brixton, on the site of one of the previous schools, and is able to take 75 pupils aged from two to eleven, with complex needs. At present it caters for 34 boys and 29 girls. All pupils have statements of special educational need or are being assessed for one; attainment on entry is very low. Almost all pupils have communication difficulties, often associated with autism, severe learning difficulties, or profound and multiple learning difficulties; a few pupils have physical disabilities. The school's population is culturally diverse; over half of the pupils are black, less than a quarter are white, and smaller proportions are Asian, Chinese or of other ethnic origins. There are 26 pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language, and all are at an early stage of language acquisition. Over half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and there is a small number of refugees. Since its start, the school has found it difficult to recruit permanent teaching staff, particularly members of the senior management team.

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

The Livity is an effective school. Teaching is good and pupils, who enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes to their work; as a result they achieve well. The school is very well led, although the development of management roles has been limited by staffing difficulties. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils make very good progress in developing communication skills.
- Very good teamwork between teachers and the skilled and effective support staff helps pupils to achieve well.
- Children in the nursery are given a very broad range of learning experiences; they have a good start to their education.
- Leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good; staff form a committed and hard working team.
- Very good relationships and pupils' good behaviour help to create a harmonious learning environment that reflects the school's aims well.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents, who regard the school highly.

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

- Staffing – there are not enough teachers, and this limits the time available for development work.
- Recording of assessment information – too much paperwork makes it difficult to track pupils' progress.
- The accommodation – there is not enough space for the recommended number of pupils, and the building is not adapted well enough for the increasingly complex needs of the pupils.
- Attendance.
- Information and training for new staff in child protection.

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

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

The school has not previously been inspected.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Although the school has not yet set whole school targets for raising achievement, challenging individual targets are set for pupils, and these promote achievement well. There has been a concerted effort to support all staff in developing the skills they need to teach pupils with complex needs, and this has been the key to ensuring pupils' success. Children in the nursery achieve well in all the areas of learning. Pupils in years 1 to 6 achieve very well in communication, including reading skills. Achievement is good overall in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology, physical education, personal, social and health education and religious education. In swimming, higher attainers are close to reaching national standards. Achievement in music is satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Children in the nursery soon settle, and they clearly feel happy and secure. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and take part enthusiastically in lunchtime activities. Those who need adult support co-operate well with the staff who provide this.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Good. Pupils behave well in classes, around the school and on visits to other schools. Although a few have challenging behaviour, this is managed well, and does not disrupt others' learning. There are no incidents of bullying. There has been one permanent exclusion in the last year. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, and they steadily develop their independence skills. They get on very well with one another and with staff.  |
| Attendance                             | Unsatisfactory. Unauthorised absence does not compare favourably with other special schools. A very small number of pupils are poor attenders and their parents do not encourage them to go to school; one pupil is on the school's roll but has never attended at all.                     |



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3– 6 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| 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.*

Teaching is good, with a number of very good features. Teaching of communication, including reading skills, is particularly good. Staff use signs and symbols extensively to help pupils understand in all lessons, assemblies, and at lunchtime. A system of exchanging pictures as a means of communicating is used most successfully to develop communication skills. Throughout lessons, pupils are fully engaged by the teachers and by skilled support staff, who make a strong contribution to teaching. Lessons are planned well to take account of the different needs and abilities of pupils. As a result, all achieve equally well. Teachers use suitable methods, such as stimulating pupils' senses of touch and smell, to enable pupils to experience and participate in activities; they also use a good variety of resources that appeal to pupils. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, personal, social and health education and religious education. It is satisfactory in music. Numeracy and literacy skills are reinforced well in all subjects; ICT is used well as a learning tool in the nursery, but in years 1 to 6 it has limited use across the curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment   |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | The curriculum for children in the nursery enables them to have a wide range of experiences. In years 1 to 6, the curriculum is good. The school's arrangements for teaching literacy skills are very good; the strategy for teaching numeracy is good. Personal, social and health education is good. Good relationships with other schools and organisations in the community enrich the curriculum and help to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' complex needs. The curriculum meets requirements, but weaknesses in the accommodation limit what teachers can provide, particularly in art and design and music. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Good. Most of these pupils have considerable communication difficulties. The school's high quality arrangements for promoting communication skills help to ensure that these pupils make as much progress as others.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. Arrangements for promoting spiritual, moral and cultural awareness are good. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop socially. Although there are good opportunities for children in the nursery to socialise with others of the same age, opportunities for pupils in years 1 to 6 are limited.   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Pupils are cared for well; there is strong pastoral support and good attention paid to health and safety matters. There are good arrangements for promoting acceptable behaviour, and the school does all that it can to encourage good attendance. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall, although the volume of information makes  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | monitoring of pupils' progress difficult, and this is unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in the accommodation affect pupils' welfare and compromise their dignity. Annual reviews are carried out well, but associated paperwork is not always completed fully. |
|--|---|

The school works very well in partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has worked hard to ensure that teaching and learning are of a high quality. The deputy headteacher has been very effective in developing and managing provision for pupils with autism. Members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators know what needs to be done to improve their designated areas of responsibility, and have suitable action plans to support development. However, staffing levels do not allow them the time to carry out all the tasks identified, and this is unsatisfactory. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities  | Good. Governors are a skilled and supportive group. They meet with sufficient frequency, have a suitable committee structure, and keep the work of the school under review well.  |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Satisfactory. There are very good arrangements for the evaluation of teaching, and performance management is now in place. The school is well prepared for establishing whole-school target setting, but needs to slim down recording procedures to enable it to use assessment information to evaluate its effectiveness in promoting pupils' progress.  |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Good. All available resources are used well to raise achievement. Strategic planning is limited by the uncertainty of the school's future accommodation arrangements. Whilst this is a source of frustration, it has not been allowed to get in the way of development. The development plan identifies priorities and suitable action to address these.  |

There are too few teachers, but very good levels of support staff. Learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily; it does not yet have sufficient information to compare itself with similar schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teaching is good.</li> <li>They are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>Children like coming to school.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amount of homework.</li> <li>Working closely with parents.</li> <li>The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>Help for children to mature and become responsible.</li> </ul> |

Inspectors agree strongly with parents' positive view of the school, but cannot agree with the small number of parents who are critical. They find that partnership with parents is well developed, that arrangements to help pupils develop personally are good, and arrangements for homework and lunchtime clubs are satisfactory.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children in the nursery class achieve well in all areas of learning; pupils in years 1 to 6 achieve well overall. This is no mean achievement; - the school has been open for only 14 months, has a new population with diverse and complex needs, most teachers have been recruited since the school opened, and a few have no training in teaching pupils with special educational needs. Good achievement is linked to the quality of teaching and learning, good levels of support staff, teamwork between staff and other professionals, and the quality and range of learning experiences provided.
2. The Livity is an inclusive school. Much has been done to ensure that pupils of all the different groups are catered for well, and have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils of all groups, irrespective of their gender, special need, ethnic origin or mother tongue achieve equally well.
3. Although the school is well prepared to identify whole-school targets to raise achievement, this has not yet started. However, individual objectives are set for pupils in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), and personal, social and health education, and pupils make good progress towards these.
4. Achievement in communication skills is particularly good. Staff are very well supported by the speech and language therapists, who advise on strategies for developing communication skills, and often work alongside teachers in the classroom. Several pupils who, although well over statutory school age, have not been to school before or have had long periods of non-attendance at previous schools, have made marked progress in acquiring communication skills since they started at The Livity. The majority of pupils have communication difficulties, either associated with autism or with pronounced learning difficulties, or both; few pupils have speech. In the space of a few months, pupils acquire a means of communicating with others, either through their use of symbols or signs, or by using pictures, which they exchange for items they want, such as toys, food or drink. As a result they make good progress in all areas of the curriculum.
5. By the time they leave the school, higher attainers greet visitors, and will answer the questions they ask, although they are not yet confident in initiating conversation. Lower attainers, when shown a symbol, will eye-point to the one that they prefer in order to make a choice. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties develop a means of showing a preference, such as pointing with their eyes at the object that they prefer.
6. Pupils whose families speak English as an additional language (EAL) are mostly non-verbal; in addition to their communication difficulties many have pronounced learning difficulties, and a few also have physical disabilities. As with other pupils, communication skills are promoted very well. Some understand and use signs, others use communication books and exchange pictures to communicate their needs, and a few use simple switches, or point with their eyes to make their preferences known. Funding to support pupils with EAL is being used well to provide each pupil with a Communication Passport; this shows their achievements through annotated photographs and symbols. It is taken home to share with their families. Speech and language therapists support these pupils very well, and this helps to promote their progress too.
7. Pupils make very good progress in reading. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to promote progress well. Letter sounds are carefully taught, and this helps pupils to read words that they do not immediately recognise. By Year 6, all pupils know that print has meaning, they handle books correctly and know that pages need to be turned. Higher attainers read and understand simple texts and identify stories or poems that they like best. They can insert words into gaps when given a line of familiar text, such as part of a poem.

8. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. As they progress through the school, most pupils begin to form letters correctly. Pupils with autism can assemble simple sentences in their communication books by selecting two symbol cards, such as 'I want...' and 'monkey', to show that they would like to play with a toy monkey. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils write in simple words or short phrases; letters are usually correctly formed and some punctuation is used. Lower attainers are able to make marks in wet substances.
9. All pupils achieve well in mathematics; this is linked to good teaching and learning, developed well by the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). By Year 6, most pupils count and recognise numbers up to 10, and recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attainers recognise coins, and can add simple sums of money.
10. In science, all pupils achieve equally well in developing their knowledge and understanding, and in acquiring investigative skills. This is associated with good teaching and learning, and the broad range of learning experiences provided. The use of practical approaches enables pupils to develop their investigative skills well. By Year 6, many pupils are able to make predictions. Higher attainers can construct a simple electrical circuit; lower attainers begin to realise that electrically powered appliances need to be switched on before they will work.
11. Pupils achieve well in PE, and achievement in swimming is particularly good for higher attainers, some of whom are approaching standards that are close to national expectations. Good teaching and learning, as well as access to the relatively large hydro-therapy pool helps to promote their progress well. They soon become confident in the water and develop good skills. The effectiveness of teaching is demonstrated clearly by the fact that standards in swimming are high even though the pool was out of action for some time whilst it was being refurbished.

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

12. Pupils have good attitudes to the school. They behave very well both in and out of lessons and display very positive attitudes to their work and enthusiasm for school. Pupils enjoy coming to school in the morning; they smile and are pleased to greet staff. Many parents commented that their children did not want to stay at home when they were unwell. Pupils enjoy all the opportunities offered by the school, and display confidence and enthusiasm in their work. Very good relationships between teachers, non-teaching staff and all members of the school community, reflect the school's caring atmosphere. The pupils' personal development is good because of the mutual respect and trust, and the very careful planning to promote independence, personal and interpersonal skills.
13. Pupils listen very carefully to instructions and to what staff are telling them. They are very willing to attempt to do what they are asked to, and join in activities with enthusiasm. Those who need adult encouragement to maintain their attention are co-operative, and respond well to reminders to do 'good sitting' or 'good listening'. This helps them to make progress during lessons.
14. In classrooms, pupils sit at tables at snack times and display appropriate table manners. They are taught to sign or say 'please' and 'thank you'. As they get older, most pupils become aware that their actions may well have an effect on others. Pupils with behaviour difficulties make progress and learn to conform. They learn to make choices. For example, in a very good physical education lesson, pupils chose whether to throw over-arm or underarm. Pupils who are not able to dress themselves help the staff who support them by relaxing, and using the movement that they do have to assist in the process.
15. Staff make every effort to ensure that the school rules are understood and implemented by pupils. They emphasise to pupils that they expect the basic school rules (good listening, good looking, good waiting and good sitting) to be obeyed at all times and these are constantly reinforced both in and out of lessons. The very good relationships between staff and pupils have a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make. The only permanent exclusion in the last year was that of a pupil who was a danger to others and to herself.

16. Attendance at 86.5 per cent is unsatisfactory. This is largely due to a small number of parents who persistently refuse to send their children to school, which has had an adverse affect upon the school attendance figures.

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

17. Since the school's inception, good training, rigorous monitoring and well-targeted support have enabled the school to develop consistently good practice in most aspects of teaching. Although the school has not been able to recruit permanent staff, those it has recruited have worked hard to improve their skills, and all staff have accepted the need to constantly adapt methods and approaches to the increasingly complex needs of pupils.
18. Support staff make an invaluable contribution to teaching. They often take the lead when group and individual work is being carried out, having been well briefed by the teacher. Teamwork is very well developed, and on occasions, such as in the nursery class, a member of support staff will lead a whole-class session. In many classes, support staff take responsibility for engaging pupils, ensuring they are attending to the teacher, and this helps lessons to proceed at a brisk pace. Support staff are sensitive to pupils' feelings, prompting discreetly on occasions, when pupils are struggling to answer a question. They also show initiative, such as in a music lesson when one volunteered to sing the song that pupils had listened to, in her own African dialect. On another occasion, when the teacher had signalled that a noisy, new pupil should be taken from the room, the member of support staff waited a short time until the pupil was quiet, so as not to reward his noisy behaviour.
19. The teaching of communication skills is particularly good. Training for all staff in the use of signing has equipped them well for teaching pupils with communication difficulties. Similarly, training in the use of a system of picture exchange to help pupils communicate has been effective. Staff consistently use their skills to good effect, and this supports pupils' understanding well. For example, they sign well, and use symbols, in classes, assemblies and at lunchtime. Pupils who have communication books, take these to lunch, so that they can ask for 'more', for example. Others make choices, by pointing to a picture of the meal they would prefer. In a particularly successful lesson, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were working in groups on their communication skills. One group worked with the teacher on exchanging pictures for favourite objects. One pupil made very good progress; within 10 minutes she was getting up unprompted, picking up the card from the desk, walking over to the teacher and giving her the card. In this session, good teamwork contributed well to the progress that pupils made. A speech therapist worked with one group, unpacking African clothes from a case, and encouraged pupils to talk about them. A third group of pupils worked individually with members of support staff, who offered them choices, and recorded their responses, such as eye-pointing to one of three objects held in transparent plastic pouches.
20. By planning whole-class work, followed by a session where pupils are grouped by ability, teachers ensure that they include all pupils in the class in key activities, such as reading a big book, but also set tasks that are well matched to the different abilities of pupils.
21. Resources are always well prepared, accessible and chosen well for their appeal. Very good use is made of real resources, to support pupils' understanding. This is effective for all pupils, but particularly those with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. For example, a story about a wobbly tooth was supplemented well by a model mouth, from which 'teeth' could be 'extracted' using 'pliers'. In religious education, pupils' understanding is supported well by letting them explore artefacts, taste foods, and dress up in items of clothing associated with different religious groups. Staff stimulate as many senses as possible in order to support pupils' understanding or to evoke a response from those with the most profound disabilities. Music is used well to create a mood or atmosphere. For example, it was effectively used at the end of a dance lesson, so that pupils could relax and stretch their limbs. Several lively individuals became quite still during the relaxation period.

22. Teaching of pupils with autism is good. Staff have an effective range of strategies at their disposal, having been trained in several different approaches. They select the approaches that work best for individual pupils. For example, where a pupil is unable to work calmly, a member of the support staff will take the pupil to a booth within the class that has little in the way of distraction in it, and engage the pupil in a series of familiar tasks from a tray. This is usually successful in settling pupils. Routines are well established, so pupils know what to expect. As a result they feel secure, and ready to learn. Changes of activity are clearly signalled, and visual timetables used well throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the instruction 'finished' accompanied by a sign, and once introduced to the next activity they will go on to this without becoming distressed.
23. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. The school has a clear policy on this and it is implemented well. Parents are asked to support homework by checking children's bags each evening and spending some quality time with their child on the work that is sent home – this forms part of the home-school agreement that most parents have signed. Teachers set relevant tasks, such as cutting pictures of electrical appliances out of magazines and bringing them into school, as part of their study of electricity in science. However, there is no arrangement for pupils whose parents cannot or will not help children with tasks at home, such as a homework club.
24. Basic skills are taught well across the subjects of the curriculum. For example, numeracy skills are reinforced well when pupils order the events of a story, identifying who the main character met *first*, *second*, and so on. Information and communication technology is used well in the nursery class. A small number of pupils have electronic communication aids, such as switches that when pressed, play a short, recorded response. This enabled one pupil with a physical disability, to interject during the reading of a familiar story, with the words, 'No, No, No', a phrase often repeated by the central character. However, there is limited use of ICT as a learning tool in other subjects.
25. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In one class, a higher attaining pupil was shown how to work on a piece of maths software, then left to work independently on the task. This he did well. Very good relationships between staff and pupils help to create a positive learning environment; pupils know what is expected of them in class, and they are pleased to co-operate with staff.
26. Some very effective sessions towards the end of lessons help pupils to become aware of their learning by reminding them of their achievements. These sessions also serve as opportunities for teachers to monitor how well pupils have progressed during lessons; they are best developed in English and mathematics.

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

27. The curriculum for children in the nursery class is very good. It provides a very broad range of relevant learning experiences, and includes good opportunities for children to learn in the local environment as well as suitable experiences of socialising with mainstream children of a similar age. Flexible organisation enables children to build up their attendance from part-time sessions to full-time attendance.
28. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good. Statutory requirements are met fully. Although taught time in lessons is below national recommendations throughout the school, the school uses lunchtime well for working on pupils' personal targets, such as those for eating, drinking and making choices. Inadequacies within the school's accommodation cause some loss of teaching time when pupils have to be moved to suitable locations for example in order to change for PE or swimming, or when pupils are extracted from lessons, for physiotherapy. The school further augments the National Curriculum

by the provision of individual learning targets for pupils that meet and match their most important and individual needs.

29. Religious education is taught throughout the school, and a good programme of personal, social and health education includes sex and relationships education for older pupils. Personal, social and health education is taught as a discrete subject, although such teaching pervades the whole school curriculum. All staff reinforce personal and social skills and there is a strong emphasis on helping the pupils develop an awareness of their own personal value. Pupils are encouraged to make choices and to take responsibility for their own actions.
30. The school has a very effective strategy for promoting the development of literacy skills, particularly communication and reading. Numeracy skills are developed well too.
31. The school has a full range of curriculum policies but many of these are in need of modification in the light of the school's complex mix of pupils. There are suitable plans to revise the guidance to teachers about what they teach so that it better suits the needs of the current population. Although curriculum planning is of satisfactory quality, it does not take into account recent guidance on planning the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. This guidance eliminates the need to set large numbers of individual objectives, and enables a clear link to be established between planning and assessment.
32. The school provides satisfactory enrichment of the curriculum through a range of extra curricular activities, mainly at lunchtime. For example, there are computer, dance and music clubs. Visits to the school have also been made by outside groups such as the drama companies, visiting authors and story-tellers. Opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning by taking part in educational visits linked to the curriculum are satisfactory, but there are few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to get out into the local community and mix with mainstream peers.
33. The school ensures that all pupils are able to access and benefit from the full curriculum by the extensive use of suitable communication systems, sensory approaches and very good levels of support. The current accommodation in the school, however, does not yet provide fully to meet the needs of pupils with autism or those with challenging behaviour. For example, there are no quiet rooms for pupils to withdraw to, so if staff need to take pupils out of class for a period of time, they have to take them into the corridors.
34. There are constructive links with partner institutions such as local primary and nursery schools and with the secondary school to which most pupils will progress. The school provides further enhancement to pupils' learning through its links with local health service provision. For example, there is good liaison with providers of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy services.
35. The school has good links with the community which contribute well to pupils' learning. In general these links are with local businesses and industries and this enhances the pupils' learning environment. For example, a link with a local company has helped the school develop its logo, and a link with a local college is helping with the design of school uniform and a bag suitable for carrying homework, as well as items of personal care.
36. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. The school has a clear policy of including all pupils in its activities and all pupils have good opportunities to develop personally.
37. Opportunities for the development of spiritual awareness are good. School assemblies are appropriately themed to have an element of awareness of others within them. Prayers give thanks, for the things that pupils enjoy in the playground, for example. Pupils sing enthusiastically about Jack Frost and learn that each season of the year can be enjoyed for its particular features. Music is well used throughout the school and makes a significant contribution to the calm atmosphere, particularly at the end of each day when pupils assemble in the hall prior



to their departure. Good use is also made of the sensory room to give pupils opportunities to experience calm and periods of reflection.

38. Many teachers plan for a spiritual dimension in their lessons and the skill and sensitivity of their teaching results in pupils being more aware of themselves and what they can do. The extremely strong ethos of care within the school and the mutual respect makes a positive contribution to the spiritual climate in which pupils are able to learn.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The simple but effective code of conduct is well understood by pupils and the school takes every opportunity to provide role models. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them both in lessons and during play and lunchtimes.
40. Staff use every opportunity to explain to pupils the difference between right and wrong and stress the need to take turns, to be aware of other people's needs and feelings and know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
41. Displays within the school emphasise the moral values that pupils are expected to learn. For example, a suitable display of recycling waste is shown in reception, and pupils are encouraged by the display to dispose of litter in an environmentally friendly manner and not dump rubbish. In a Year 2 story-time lesson, pupils were learning to treat animals with care and respect. In a PSHE lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils learned that although they are all individuals, everybody should be treated with love and respect. The school well uses assemblies to celebrate birthdays, good news and individual successes. Pupils are delighted to receive stars and stickers for good work and behaviour, which are presented both in class and at 'Well Done' Assemblies.
42. Provision for social development is satisfactory. Snack and lunchtimes are treated by staff as an important social activity; pupils are expected to display good manners, which they do. The PSHE programme enables all pupils to develop their social skills both through circle time and through formal lessons. The school has formed strong links with the local authority cultural centre, and during the inspection week a very successful visit was made by nursery children to a centre where children integrated with mainstream peers in a programme of story, music and play activities. The children greatly enjoyed this experience.
43. The school has very effective links with the mainstream primary school where a few pupils regularly attend and integrate extremely well in a planned programme of lessons and activities. The school has plans to extend this sort of experience to a larger number of its pupils in future. At present, a weakness of social development is the small number of opportunities that pupils in years 1 to 6 have for getting out into the local community. This is partly because the school has no minibus, but is also due to the increased requirements for risk assessment, and the staffing difficulties that the school has experienced.
44. Opportunities for pupils to develop cultural awareness are good. The wide variety of multi-cultural groups within the school, including Spanish, South American, Portuguese, Turkish, Albanian, Afro-Caribbean, French and travelling people, integrate well and give pupils a rich, multi-cultural environment to experience, and staff draw well on this resource. Assemblies are themed during the year to explore Chinese New Year, Chanukah, Diwali, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism. Through lessons, pupils become aware of their own traditions from their work in subjects such as history and geography. Visits to places of worship are limited, but staff successfully introduce other religions through the religious education and PSHE syllabus. For example, in a good Year 2 religious education lesson, pupils were taught the differences between churches, temples and mosques, and something of the cultures of differing religions.
45. The school has developed strong links with a drama theatre group that produces performances at the school involving pupils. The school plans for each class to have educational visits linked to the curriculum. For example, a Year 4 and 5 class has visited the aquarium as part of their science project on water, a Year 5 class is to visit the Tate Gallery to examine modern paintings, and a Year 4 class is to go to the Horniman Gallery to explore African culture. At every

opportunity, music from other countries is played and paintings, pottery and sculptures from a variety of styles and countries are displayed around the school.

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

46. Overall, the school cares well for its pupils. It is clear that there are very good relationships between the staff, and between the pupils and the staff, and that the pupils feel valued and secure. The staff provide very good role models for the pupils. Parents and carers very much appreciate this aspect of the school's work.
47. Staff and the governors have a good understanding of health and safety issues; governors monitor this aspect effectively and the staff have good guidance in their staff handbook. Fire drills and checks of fire equipment are carried out regularly, as are checks of electrical appliances. Risk assessments are carried out before hazardous activities are undertaken, and the ones carried out before school visits are particularly thorough. Health and safety regulations are well adhered to in practical subjects like science and physical education.
48. The school is supported very well by a range of visiting health professionals, including the school's two part-time nurses. The nurses offer a very valuable support to school but it is difficult for them to offer sufficient support in the total two and a half days a week between them that they work in the school because of the increasingly complex needs of the pupils being admitted. Inevitably, support staff, who have been trained in aspects of medical care, are called upon to provide medical support.
49. Accidents and incidents are well recorded but they are not numbered and logged in a bound book with numbered pages in accordance with DfEE (Department for Education and Skills) guidelines. The condition of pupils with epilepsy and asthma is monitored well. There are good procedures for transferring medication between home and school, and medicines are kept securely. The school nurses monitor the medication log book well.
50. Pupils are well supervised out of lessons, including play times and dinner times and to and from the school transport. The transport arrangements are good overall with modern vehicles, equipped with seat belts and tail lifts. There is an escort with a mobile telephone on every vehicle. However, although most escorts or drivers have a knowledge of first aid, they are not trained in first aid procedures when they are appointed, or in what to do in the event of individual pupils being unwell. Risk assessment carried out by the school and the local authority contract monitoring officer showed that each bus should have two escorts, but this has not been implemented on all vehicles.
51. The buildings are well maintained and kept very clean and bright clean by the premises manager and his staff, but they are very cramped for the pupils who are being admitted to the school. The pool, bordered by corridors and separated from them by clear glass, denies privacy to pupils and to the staff supervising them in the water. The changing facilities are cramped and poorly equipped for pupils in frames or wheelchairs. The playground is uneven, with depressions and projecting flagstones, and inadequate ramps at doors. Part of the school grounds has had to be closed to pupils because of very steep grassy slopes with hard paths at the bottom of them. The headteacher and her staff have done everything they can to make the building safe but it still gives cause for concern. The school's medical room is unsatisfactory. It is poorly situated for access by wheelchairs, cramped, and provides limited privacy for visiting professionals, parents and carers and pupils.
52. The school's policy on child protection is good and it is in line with the Area Child Protection Committee's guidelines. The deputy headteacher is the designated person for child protection and is well trained and experienced. However, the staff do not currently undertake regular training in child protection and this is unsatisfactory. There is no mention of child protection procedures in the staff handbook either.

53. One member of staff has undertaken substantial training in the management of challenging behaviour, including restraint, however there has not been time for her to cascade this training to other staff.
54. The school's policies and procedures for promoting acceptable behaviour are good overall. The staff constantly ensure appropriate behaviour in lessons through good routines for teaching and learning, reminders of the school's rules, the use of signing and time out. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Staff value and respect each pupil, and pupils grow to respect one another.
55. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils well enough to provide suitable learning programmes. The school is researching different ways of assessing pupils when they start school and plans to introduce this soon. In general, staff know pupils' needs and abilities well. Individual education plans are maintained where the school feels that a pupil's additional needs cannot be met through the curriculum provided. For example, pupils with physical difficulties will have physiotherapy targets. At present, individual learning objectives are set in English, mathematics, ICT and personal, social and health education. These objectives are appropriate for pupils' particular needs, and they help to promote progress in academic and personal development, but the number of these is large, and staff have a great deal of recording to do. This generates a large amount of unnecessary paper-work, and the whole system needs to be slimmed down in order to provide a recording system that gives a summary of where each pupil is at in each subject, as well as ongoing records that show progress over time. The paperwork makes the monitoring of progress very time consuming, and subject co-ordinators' time is very precious because of staffing difficulties. In effect, teachers have insufficient means of monitoring pupils' progress in many subjects, and this is unsatisfactory.
56. A start has been made in English, mathematics, PSHE, science and ICT, in the use of a national system of 'P' levels (pre-national Curriculum Level 1), that describes pupils' attainments. The school has made a start at setting targets for individual pupils, using the P levels, but has not had time to analyse the results. None the less, this has given staff greater expertise in predicting levels that pupils might reach in a period of six months.
57. Annual reviews are carried out as required, and are well attended by parents. A thorough review of each pupils' progress is carried out. Although broad targets are set on these occasions, these are not always closely linked to either IEP targets or individual objectives. They serve, therefore, as yet another set of targets to be assessed, recorded and monitored.
58. The annual review summary sheet, sent to the local authority, is not always completed, to show whether key questions about the appropriateness of each pupil's statement have been asked and answered. The legitimacy of statements themselves are in doubt as none sampled were found to be dated or signed, and none named The Livity School as the pupil's placement. The school has taken this matter up with the local authority.
59. The school has good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of attendance. The school clerk monitors attendance on a regular basis, and telephones parents immediately to query unexplained absences. The Education Welfare Officer, (EWO) does not visit the school at regular intervals and the school does not receive timely feedback from the education welfare service or Social Services Department on referrals. This is a matter of concern.

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

60. Parents have very positive views of the school and relationships and links with them are of a very high standard. The overwhelming majority of parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, stated that they were kept well informed about how their children were getting on, they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem and the school works closely with them. These views are confirmed by the inspection findings.

61. There are very good means of communication. The school has produced a brochure of high quality and standard. It is well presented and contains a good deal of helpful information regarding the school. The Governors' Annual Report is similarly well presented, and contains all statutory information presented in as 'parent friendly' fashion. In addition, the school regularly produces newsletters giving interesting information on events, pupils' achievements, staff appointments and progress being made by different groups of pupils. These are supplemented by notes and letters in the home-school diary, which is well used by parents and staff at the school. This diary provides an extremely effective link between the school and parents and is used by parents to inform staff of progress or difficulties of their children at the weekend and after school. As a result staff have a broad and detailed knowledge of children's life outside school and are able to make adjustments accordingly.
  
62. Annual reports on pupils' progress provide parents with good information on their children's achievements on a subject by subject basis. Parents are able to contribute to a target setting process for their children at annual reviews and are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on progress that they perceive as being made.

63. The school holds a number of Parent Evenings each year. One in October is for parents to meet new teachers and staff as well as representatives from other agencies. In the autumn term, separate meetings are held for the parents of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, on the subject of transition. Parents attend annual review meetings, held from January to July, and parents of Year 6 pupils are invited to the leavers' assembly at the end of the summer term, when lunch is prepared by their children.
64. The school has very good induction procedures for new parents. Parents are invited to visit the school prior to selection, and are given a specially prepared brochure to inform them about all the facilities that the school offers. When a pupil is admitted to the school, parents are invited to stay with them to settle them into school routines. In the nursery, new parents may join their children for swimming sessions; this way parents get to know one another and the staff at the school.
65. The school and parents benefit from the work of a Parent Liaison Officer whose time has recently been increased from ten hours per week to two and a half days per week. She arranges a large number of events for parents at the school. These include a workshop to enable parents to help their children with eating and drinking, a series of coffee mornings about the use of ICT, and regular meetings between support staff and parents to enable parents to interact further with the school, and to support their children. During the inspection, an extremely successful workshop for parents was observed, which was well attended and provided excellent training for parents in the use of sign language.
66. Parents are actively encouraged to come into school, and the special Parents' Room provided by the school, which has a large number of interesting brochures and information, is well used by them. A notice board in the reception area displays a very good range of information pertinent to parents of children with special educational needs.
67. The headteacher and senior management team are currently in the process of making plans to start an association for parents and teachers. A small number of parents come into school and help with swimming, or to accompany pupils on school outings. This allows pupils to have individual support, and parents' help is much appreciated by the school.

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

68. The head teacher provides very good leadership. She has aims that are appropriate to the needs of the pupils, and a clear vision of how the school might best serve pupils with complex needs in a more inclusive setting. This vision is shared by the senior management team and governing body. Although future accommodation arrangements are uncertain, this has not deflected the school from achieving its aims and of striving to meet the needs of all its pupils. The head teacher has made a priority of monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school to identify areas of strength and those for further development. This has been central to ensuring that all pupils achieve equally well. Staff show a very high commitment to the continuing improvement of the school.
69. The school's aims are met very well, particularly the aims to promote pupils' communication and personal skills, and to give all pupils access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
70. The head teacher has successfully encouraged and developed the management skills of the relatively new senior management team. They have clear responsibilities, which they fulfil well and with confidence. However, because of staff shortages, the deputy head teacher is currently acting as a full-time class teacher. This is affecting her ability to develop her management role to the full. Nonetheless, she has ensured that staff are now skilled in teaching pupils with autism, who achieve well as a result.
71. The roles of subject co-ordinators are developing well. This is particularly true in the area of literacy and communication. Co-ordinators know exactly what needs to be done to further improve provision, and many have managed to effect improvement without regular non-contact

- time. However, staffing difficulties mean that co-ordinators do not have enough time to extend their roles further.
72. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors are strong supporters of the school and provide effective monitoring of its work. They have many relevant skills useful to their role. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas where more could be done to raise the quality of the pupils' education even higher. Individual governors have been linked to areas of the curriculum and a few have started to undertake monitoring visits to the classrooms. This direct contact with staff and pupils is mutually beneficial. Governors have a better knowledge and understanding of the practical workings of the school, and staff feel valued and supported.
  73. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the processes required to manage the performance of the head teacher and the performance management cycle is now in place. They are also aware of their need for continuing training, in the area of school self-evaluation, for example. They have a full committee structure, meetings are held regularly and have been minuted effectively. However, at present there is no clerk to governors to take minutes and advise them on specific issues. This is affecting their efficiency.
  74. Overall staffing is satisfactory. In line with national trends, the school has had difficulties recruiting qualified teachers. There are also difficulties as far as absence of a few non-teaching staff is concerned. The school is doing all it can to resolve these difficulties. Staff absence and recruitment problems mean there is no extra time available for staff to carry out additional management responsibilities. The school has had to recruit staff on temporary contracts of one year, which does not provide the long-term stability needed in a new school. However, the recruitment of temporary teachers from overseas has enabled the school to maintain a good standard of teaching.
  75. Support staff work well with the teachers and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. They are used very effectively to work with individual pupils, following up on whole class sessions with activities that reinforce the teachers' learning objectives. They take a full part in training and their professional development has been well monitored by the head teacher. They are skilful in managing challenging behaviour, and have very good relationships with the pupils.
  76. The induction of staff new to the school is satisfactory overall. There is a strong emphasis on professional development for all staff, linked to school priorities and the changing profile of pupils admitted to the school. For example, the programme of training in the Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS) is being developed throughout the school and is very effectively used in raising standards of communication. Behaviour management training has been established to support the needs of the most challenging pupils. Many support staff are now trained in gastric feeding which decreases the amount of time pupils have to be removed from lessons.
  77. The senior management team has made very good progress in establishing effective links with a variety of agencies. They are beginning to work well together as a multi-disciplinary team. The school receives support from a range of specialist staff including very good speech and language provision, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.
  78. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is an impressive building plan drawn up by the local education authority, but no indication of whether or when this will be started. The school does not provide sufficient space for the recommended number of pupils. It does not have the facilities needed by its new population. Areas of the building are inadequate for the needs of the pupils. For example, the music room and the dining area are too small. Changing rooms for PE, for pupils and staff, and those for pupils who need assistance in changing or toileting, are all too small. Ceilings will not support the installation of tracking to enable the efficient movement of those pupils who need hoists. Pupils in one class need to move between a de-mountable classroom and the main building, and are exposed to inclement weather. These weaknesses adversely affect the quality of teaching and learning and the well being of the pupils. There is a lack of discrete rooms for visiting professionals. Structural work to the leaking roof, the purchase

of a new boiler and maintenance of the exterior of the building will all need to be undertaken in the near future.

79. In spite of the unsatisfactory nature of the accommodation, the premises supervisor and cleaning staff keep the school in an excellent condition, and staff do their utmost to ensure that weaknesses affect pupils' welfare and achievements as little as possible.
80. The range of resources to support learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. Resources to support the development of literacy and numeracy skills are very good. The use of PECS symbols as a communication strategy in all areas of the school is also very good. The ICT suite and library are good resources, so is the school's large soft-play area and its sensory room. The school makes good use of the mobile library service. The quality of displays around the school is good and there is evidence in all classrooms of pupils' work and the celebration of their achievements.
81. The software used for financial management is linked to the local authority, who provides day-to-day financial administration and advice for accounting. Additional grants and private funds are well administered by the school. The school makes good use of grants and resources and receives good support from the local education authority for payroll advice, INSET, transport, meals and cleaning.

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

82. The headteacher, governors and staff should:
  - (1) Increase the number of teaching staff so that managers can be given time to develop their roles. \*  
(Paragraphs 70, 71, 74, 106)
  - (2) Streamline the recording of assessment information so that \*
    - it is simple to retrieve information on what pupils know, understand and can do in each subject;
    - monitoring of pupils' progress by subject co-ordinators can be carried out more easily, and;
    - whole-school targets for raising achievement can be set.(Paragraph 55)
  - (3) Liaise with the Local education authority to improve the accommodation so that weaknesses identified in this report are addressed. \*  
(Paragraphs 78, 85, 129, 145, 148)
  - (4) Liaise with the Local education authority to improve the school's attendance statistics.  
(Paragraph 16)
  - (5) Ensure that information about child protection appears in the staff handbook, and that all staff are given suitable training.  
(Paragraph 52)

\* *These issues are addressed in the current school development plan or appendices*

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

- Extending the use of ICT as a learning tool in all subjects.
- Increasing the opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to socialise in the local community, especially with mainstream peers.
- Ensuring that paperwork associated with annual reviews is completed fully.  
(Paragraphs 24, 43, 58)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 82 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 36 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 3         | 21        | 44   | 14           | 0              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 3.7       | 25.6      | 53.7 | 17.0         | 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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll   | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll                                 | 63           |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 39           |

| English as an additional language                       | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 26           |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year                                       | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 61           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 5            |

### Attendance

| Authorised absence | %    | Unauthorised absence | %   |
|--------------------|------|----------------------|-----|
| School data        | 10.7 | School data          | 2.7 |



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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year2)**

The number of pupils eligible for assessment was less than 11 so results are not reported here.

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

The number of pupils eligible for assessment was less than 11 so results are not reported here.

### **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                                     | 8                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| White – Irish                                       | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| White – any other White background                  | 6                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean                   | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Black African                     | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – White and Asian                             | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Mixed – any other mixed background                  | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian                     | 1                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani                  | 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi                | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean                  | 14                          | 6  | 1                                     |
| Black or Black British – African                    | 23                          | 0  | 0                                     |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Chinese   | 1                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| Any other ethnic group                              | 2                           | 0  | 0                                     |
| No ethnic group recorded                            | 0                           | 0  | 0                                     |

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

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Y6

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.45 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 8.5  |
| Average class size                       | 7    |

### Education support staff: YN – Y6

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 28  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 894 |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Financial year                             | 2001/02    |
|  | £          |
| Total income                               | 796,118.81 |
| Total expenditure                          | 756,760.17 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 12.612     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -          |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 39,358.64  |

## Recruitment of teachers

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 4.6  |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 13.9 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)  | 1.4 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)                           | 1.4 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0   |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 63 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 29 |

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

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 76             | 21            | 0                | 0                 | 3          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 55             | 38            | 0                | 0                 | 7          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 62             | 31            | 0                | 0                 | 7          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 62             | 28            | 7                | 0                 | 3          |
| The teaching is good.  | 86             | 7             | 0                | 0                 | 7          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 79             | 17            | 4                | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 83             | 17            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 83             | 10            | 0                | 0                 | 7          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 76             | 17            | 7                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 72             | 28            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 79             | 17            | 0                | 4                 | 0          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 55             | 31            | 0                | 4                 | 10         |

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

83. There are eight children in the foundation class between three and five years old. Provision is good and the quality of teaching in each area of learning is good. This helps children to learn effectively and achieve well. The class is led effectively by an experienced teacher who is well supported by two skilled nursery nurses and a classroom assistant. The staff work closely together as a team. They are all sensitive to the children's learning needs and plan each day's activities carefully. The planning is good, and is designed to meet the widely varying learning needs of each child in the class. The good start to their schooling that the youngest children receive represents one of the strengths of the school.
84. One particularly strong feature of the provision is the rich and varied curriculum provided. This includes regular excursions each week to a mainstream nursery school, weekly visits to a local activity centre and regular swimming activities. Careful records are kept of children's attainment and progress although these are over complex. The school has plans to refine assessment systems to give a clearer picture of what children know, understand and can do, so information to guide planning is easier to retrieve. One particularly strong feature of the assessment procedures is the good 'Record of Achievement and Experiences' booklet created for each child. Each page has a photograph, taken with the school's digital camera, that records significant features of each child's development. Brief notes describe the learning outcomes shown in the photograph, and these are closely linked to the targets set in children's individual education plans. For example, one shows a child's first success at pushing the small tricycle independently, and another illustrates a child's ability to make marks independently.
85. Overall the accommodation is barely adequate. There is sufficient space for the number of children currently attending the class. However, the facilities for changing children are poor. There is a satisfactory outside activity area but this is small and is shared by several classes. It has been imaginatively developed with the provision of a range of sensory activities, such as wind chimes and textured surfaces. There is little room for wheeled vehicles but the children use the well developed play area at the mainstream nursery, and this supplements provision satisfactorily. The range of learning resources is adequate but many of the plastic toys lack lustre. There is a need to provide greater colour and brightness and to define each learning area in the classroom more boldly and clearly. The staff use resources well and have created an imaginative ice palace in one corner of the classroom. This is full of glitter and sparkle, with old compact discs, fairy lights and mirrors creating a magical scene where the children enjoy a full range of sensory experiences.

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

86. The good provision to support this area of learning helps to promote effective learning and children achieve well. The staff treat children with respect and offer appropriate praise and encouragement. This helps children to develop confidence and to feel good about themselves. The very good relationships that are quickly developed between children and staff encourages children to feel secure and happy. The weekly journey to the nearby nursery school provides excellent opportunities for social development. Here the children work alongside others in the same age group and they mix well. The children from the foundation class enjoy visiting the nursery school and relate well to the other children, as shown by their smiles and often close observation of the activities going on around them. A good deal of interaction takes place; for example, one nursery school pupil enthusiastically pedalled a two-seater tricycle around the playground with a happy passenger from the foundation class on board. Good routines have been established that help the children to interact one with another. During the morning 'Circle Time' activity, for example, children are encouraged to greet each other, and at the end of the day they

assemble with the whole school as the headteacher wishes them farewell. This helps them to feel very much a part of the school family. During the morning registration session staff often greet children in their home languages, such as Portuguese, and this helps to develop a sense of acceptance and inclusion in the group. Many demonstrate fragile emotional

development and several become distressed. Staff handle anxieties well; when the teacher intuitively recognised that a child who was displaying challenging behaviour really needed, and received, a comforting hug.

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

87. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Communication is developed well through signing. Staff sign clearly and consistently. They are acutely aware of the children's attempts to sign in response and, even where the response is weak, they seize the opportunity to give praise in order to consolidate and encourage further development. In this way they encourage the children to understand that they are interested in what they have to communicate. Opportunities are grasped to signal and point out interesting aspects of the environment to the children. For example, on the walk to the nursery school, the teacher pointed out the red man light followed by the green man light on the road crossing, and signed 'man'. Pictures and symbols are used effectively to develop communication. Fastening tape is used well to stick symbols to various pieces of equipment and symbols are used well to encourage children to choose and make decisions. When it is time for morning drinks, appropriate symbols are used to indicate the activity. This helps the children to develop an increasing understanding that symbols relate to specific objects and activities. However, there is scope to make symbols and pictures clearer, brighter, bolder and more clearly defined. Listening skills are promoted effectively and children are increasingly attentive, as their attention spans are developed progressively. Good strategies are used, such as placing a table in front of a seated though restless child, to aid concentration. Children's interest in books is encouraged through the use of colourful, often textured, pictures that staff have made to supplement the illustrations in the books they read to the children. The lower attaining children take an interest in the pages turning, and several higher attaining children turn pages independently. Lower attaining children make good progress in extending their eye contact and the range of non-verbal signals they give. Higher attaining children make steady progress in their use and recognition of symbols. One boy shouts 'Goal!' as he scores against the wall and another strings several words together, although it is not easy to interpret meaning. Most are able to signal preferences. A good range of songs and action rhymes helps to develop communication skills well. Good links are made with other areas of learning, as for example, the social development implicit when children are encouraged to sign 'Thank-you' and 'Goodbye' when leaving the nursery school.

### **Mathematical development**

88. Children's achievement in this area of learning is good. Songs and action rhymes such as 'Five Fat Sausages Sizzling in the Pan' are used with appropriate apparatus, 'sausages' and a 'frying pan', to promote counting skills. Sensory methods are used well to support learning; for example, when singing 'Five Speckled Frogs', a support assistant sprays water onto the children each time a speckled frog jumps off his log into the water. Higher attaining children make a fist to sign 'zero' when all the frogs have disappeared. During registration the number of children present is signalled by clapping. Children are encouraged to beat the drum *two times* and finger puppets are used well to consolidate an understanding of number. Lower attaining children are supported well by computer programs that are used in conjunction with real objects; these require them to discriminate between two objects, such as a teddy and a ball. Printing with paint is used well to develop an understanding of pattern as children are helped to create repeating patterns, using first red, then blue paint in a sequence. At the mainstream nursery school, children enjoyed filling pots of different sizes with water as they were helped to develop an understanding of *full* and *empty*. Staff constantly model vocabulary that refers to direction and position, such as *under* and *over*, and on their walk to the nursery school they stopped at the kerb on their journey to look *left* and *right* before crossing the road. Many are developing a good understanding of the meaning of

*more*, and several made it very clear that they wanted more swimming time when they were required to leave the pool. The well structured nature of the school day helps children to begin to gain an appreciation of time passing, and of fixed points during the day, such as lunchtime and home time, that are associated with a sequence of time. Overall the children's mathematical development is fostered well.

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

89. There are many strengths in how the school provides for this area of learning; these help the children to learn effectively and achieve well. One particularly strong feature is the number and range of visits that children make to places of interest outside the school. For example, the walk to the nursery school is in itself an exciting adventure. The children feel changing weather patterns, such as the wind on their faces, and smile in response. One girl was pleased when asked to press the button at the crossing to activate the lights, and began to understand that her action resulted in something happening. A higher attaining boy was fascinated by the number, type and colours of the vehicles passing by. He was particularly interested in watching the hydraulic tailgate of a lorry that was lowering a stack of boxes. On the walk, a loud noise from inside a stationary truck caused a little distress, but the experience helped the children to learn that such sudden surprises are all part of the wider environment. The walk helps children to gain a sense of travelling from one place to another, and several recognised that they had arrived back at school after the excursion. Twice a day, the children are encouraged to eat fruit at snack time. This is used as a good learning experience, as the nursery nurse talks about each piece of fruit, and names them clearly, before inviting the children to note the colour, to feel the textures, to smell and taste the fruit. The theme around which many of the activities are built this term is 'The Weather and Colours'. Each week a different colour is selected, and a good range of objects of this colour is collected; during the inspection the colour was red. The children are invited to touch and investigate the different textures and shapes in the collection, and they paint red pictures and print red patterns. This helps them to appreciate the differences between colours, and higher attaining children discriminate between one colour and another. The weekly excursion to a local activity centre for children, provides good opportunities for children to learn effectively. Here they work alongside other children on themes, such as 'The Weather', that are introduced through music and drama. Several children enjoyed feeling the soil as they filled pots and planted bulbs. The computer is used well to support learning. It is in almost constant use and many children use a switch, or modified mouse, effectively to change patterns of sound and colour on the screen.

## **Physical development**

90. Children make good progress in this area. Lessons in the swimming pool are a favourite activity for many, and several were most reluctant to leave the water after their session has finished. Parents assist with changing and in the pool, and this helps to ensure a good pace to lessons. Activities are well structured. For example, a game of 'Ring a Ring of Roses' serves as a warm up activity, and spraying jets of water across the pool, by squeezing plastic containers, adds a further stimulus. Children learn to relax and maintain set body positions in the water. Several are fearless and enjoy plunging under water. A ball pool is also used well to extend children's physical experiences, and they learn to adopt a good range of body positions, such as lying flat out in an extended position. The soft apparatus in the sensory room is also used well to stimulate activity. In the outdoor area several children climb on the small climbing frame and propel themselves on tricycles. Several show good co-ordination as they kick footballs in the direction intended. In the mainstream nursery, one child spent a long time throwing and receiving a ball. Those who can walk enjoy the exercise associated with their excursions outside school, and those who are pushed enjoy the fresh air. Staff provide a good range of activities in the pursuit of learning objectives. For example, one child's target was to grasp a handle. To promote such development, paintbrushes, drum beaters and spoons were used to stimulate interest in gripping. Staff challenge lower attaining children to stretch and reach for objects, to press switches and to push against large rubber balls. Activities are closely linked to children's particular needs. One child, who used to show an aversion to sticky things, enjoyed experiencing shaving foam spread over her hands and face and, in the nursery school, enjoyed stretching her arms out into the specially prepared sloppy sand. Another lower attaining child loved being immersed in bubbles produced by the bubble machine, and giggled happily when massaged with a vibrating machine. Staff challenge children to develop self-help skills such as dealing with fastenings when dressing and undressing. A good range of stimuli promotes effective learning.



## **Creative development**

91. Children particularly enjoy musical activities, especially on visits to the local arts centre where music, dance and drama are used particularly well to promote effective learning. They have favourite songs, such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star' and the more mobile children sway in time to the rhythm of the music. Higher attaining children move well to the accompaniment of the sounds made by staff beating a drum and shaking a tambourine. Children are helped to make collages of red materials by sticking metallic foil, wool, crepe paper, felt and shiny paper in random arrangements. More control is required from higher attaining children who are challenged to paint a series of dots here and another series over there, on the other side of the paper. One higher attaining child grasped a thick brush in a firm fist grip as he painted wide red stripes across his paper saying, 'Bye bye,' to signal that he had finished and was satisfied with the result. Children print with a wide range of objects, including their hands and feet. Calming music is often played to create a soothing atmosphere, and special songs are sung to signal particular activities, such as story time. The children learn about texture and colour from the good range of materials that are put out for them to investigate. In the outside area they have many opportunities to distinguish between hard and soft, shiny and dull, as well as reflective and non-reflective materials. One especially dramatic activity features fluorescent paints that shine under an ultra violet light. The paint glows brightly and, when wet, moves sinuously across the paper. This provides a particularly interesting experience. The computer is used extensively to support learning. In one activity a large photograph of a child is used well in association with a 'concept keyboard' that allows a child to project his or her face on the computer screen if the photograph is selected. This helps children to discriminate between one image and another, as well as helping them to recognise facial characteristics. Children achieve well in this area of learning.

## **ENGLISH**

92. The provision for English is good overall and pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening, very well in reading and satisfactorily in writing. This reflects the good quality of teaching and learning. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a very positive impact on standards. The teaching of communications skills is a strength of the school. Good use has been made of the partnership between the speech and language therapist and the English co-ordinator.
93. The youngest pupils make very good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills. The majority of pupils pay attention and respond to the teacher and each other. Pupils in Year 1 begin to make simple responses to questions. When one higher attaining pupil is asked 'What do you want?' he can select PECS cards to make a sentence 'I want green pen and paper'. Lower attaining pupils can express their needs by nodding their heads to produce an action from the teacher, such as banging a drum. They are beginning to learn a range of relevant signs. By the end of Year 2, pupils are encouraged to speak more complex words such as 'avocado', 'seashells' and 'order'. One lower attaining pupil listens and follows simple instructions while dressing herself in an African tunic. Pupils take great pleasure in all aspects of reading. They enjoy the 'Big Book' stories read to them by the teacher. They take pleasure in handling books and the opportunity to choose books from the school and mobile library. Younger pupils make very good progress in reading. The youngest higher attaining pupils can hold a book correctly and turn the pages. They read simple text from the page with prompting by the teacher. They recognise single words from a familiar story and begin to predict what will happen next. They begin to order pictures to make short phrases. By the end of Year 2, lower attaining pupils have taken part in making 'feely' books to give to the nursery. Pupils make satisfactory progress with their writing. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 can make marks on a variety of surfaces and understand that marks and symbols convey meaning. Pupils begin to make shapes in wet and dry substances, such as jelly and hand cream, and they use board markers to improve their writing skills. Higher attaining pupils grip a felt tip and lower attaining pupils use large chalks on a blackboard. They select, sequence and match cards to form short phrases and sentences. By the end of Year 2, a few pupils form letters with hand-over-hand help from the staff.

94. Older pupils are building up a good repertoire of signs and increasing their understanding of language. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 develop their language skills further and increase their vocabulary. They say 'hello' spontaneously and at the appropriate time. They repeat some of the more complex words in the story as the teacher reads it. Pupils with complex difficulties clearly enjoy stories told with the help of props that stimulate their senses. For example, in a story about the 'Three Little Pigs', their body language indicates that they have remembered the story, and they become excited as it progresses, showing anticipation of events. One higher attaining pupil in Year 6 seizes the correct hat to wear in the story at the right time. One lower attaining pupil, with practice, successfully makes the sound for the letter 'B' after blowing soap bubbles. The support staff coax the word 'barbeque' from another pupil. Older pupils' achievement and progress in reading is very good. In a lesson focussing on the letter 'B', Year 4 pupils are provided with individual books to follow. Most understand the conventions of reading, such as holding the book correctly, turning the pages one by one, and following text from top to bottom. Year 4 pupils trace the letter W in a variety of media including hand cream and board markers, hand over hand with the teacher. A high attaining girl in Year 5 is able to draw correctly the letter 'b' on the board unaided. In one session of individual learning activities, pupils coloured in shapes and pictures. Pupils progress from sticking shapes on a Velcro board to manipulating felt tip pens on paper.
95. The teaching of communication and literacy skills is a strength. All staff have been trained in the literacy strategy, and the school has a large stock of very imaginative, relevant and stimulating resources. Pupils are encouraged to use their communication skills in all lessons. Staff reinforce the knowledge and understanding of objects, signs, pictures and symbols. PECS is used very well throughout the school in and outside the classrooms.
96. Teaching is highly organised; resources are of a high quality and very imaginatively used. Learning is continuously reinforced. Pupils take an active part in the lessons and all are included and engaged in the activities. In two excellent lessons both teachers used a wide range of stimulating and appropriate resources to encourage speaking, listening and reading. In a literacy lesson with a birthday party theme, pupils played party games, danced, and sang 'happy birthday'. As a result of this continual stimulation and the very good relationships they have with the staff, pupils showed real pleasure in their learning, with chuckles, smiles and gestures. In all lessons, teachers plan very well and clearly identify what they expect the pupils to learn. They select work to suit individual needs and use the very good resources in an imaginative way. This stimulates interest and they respond by showing high levels of enjoyment. Staff manage pupils very well. Their use of praise, encouragement and reinforcement of language and vocabulary is very effective in keeping pupils interested and keen to learn.
97. The partnership of teachers and support assistants promote effective teaching and learning. Relationships in the classroom are very good and the atmosphere is purposeful and also fun. Staff work as a team. In all individual work, pupils are well supported by staff skilled in carrying out strategies to improve speaking and listening, reading and writing. A good example was seen in a lesson where, after some effort, a pupil was able to distinguish between two objects on a card and match them correctly to others. The pupil's success was due to the very good input of the support assistant.
98. Assessment of progress and target setting for achievement is satisfactory. Although staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils' strengths and areas needing development, the process by which this is recorded and reported is unwieldy, making it difficult to retrieve information on attainment easily. The difficulties the school faces of staff recruitment and absence means there has been a turnover of staff. Clearer procedures would enable new staff joining the school to know immediately at what level the pupils are operating.
99. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastically promoting the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. She has formed a very effective partnership with the speech and language therapist to improve communication skills across all subjects. The school's library provision is satisfactory and has an adequate range of suitable books. The mobile

library visits every three weeks, and all pupils have access to a wide range of books and videos which they can borrow and take home. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the subject is satisfactory. Although pupils are withdrawn to the ICT suite for individual work, there is limited opportunity for them to reinforce their skills in the classroom. The use of numeracy skills in English lessons is good. Pupils count out words, such as 'The Three Little Pigs' and order symbols to show their daily routine. The strategy used to improve the acquisition of English as an additional language is good.

## MATHEMATICS

100. Boys and girls achieve equally well in mathematics and the achievements of different groups of pupils are similarly consistent. The good achievements of pupils are the result of good and often very good teaching, and the skilled help given to pupils by support staff in lessons. Pupils are taught mathematics individually, or in groups, according to their attainment levels, and this carefully structured arrangement is most effective in promoting progress.
101. The adoption of a common framework based on the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) in all lessons has provided teachers with a structure that enables them to give a clear introduction to the lesson objectives. It also reminds pupils of previous work they have encountered and reinforces learning in a period at the end of lessons. These measures ensure that pupils respond well to mathematics lessons and enjoy their work in the subject.
102. By Year 2, many pupils are able to count and recognise numbers and their symbols up to five. They understand ordinal numbers *first, second, third* and so on, add *one more*. Most recognise simple shapes such as squares and triangles. Pupils are able to understand the concept of time and all recognise the sequence of the school day.
103. By Year 6, many pupils recognise both two and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares and cubes, and can make comparisons in terms of size, length and weight. Pupils sequence the day themselves, and less able pupils can repeat a series of actions. Higher attainers recognise the main coins, and add simple sums such as one pence and two pence.
104. The good quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is having a clear and positive impact on pupils' achievements in the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the principles of the NNS. This, coupled with their deep understanding of the individual needs of pupils and of individual strategies to promote learning, enables pupils to achieve well. When dealing with a pupil with cerebral palsy, for example, the support assistant placed the two items the pupils had to choose from to the more mobile side of the pupil. Major features of the good teaching are careful lesson planning, the good relationships between teachers and pupils and the high quality of the work of support staff. The good teamwork between teachers and support staff and the good cross-curricular work where maths is incorporated into other subjects are particular strengths. Good use of mathematical language, and signs to support pupils' understanding, promote literacy skills well.
105. There is a strong emphasis on number work, other aspects of the subject such as shape and measurement are not left out. For example, pupils in Year 1 were asked to make a choice from two alternatives as to which object was *longer* or *heavier*. Good use is made of materials such as beads or counters to aid pupils' thinking. The use of information technology is not yet fully developed in mathematics. In mathematics lessons, pupils are encouraged to think and act independently and understand the consequences of their actions.
106. Responsibility for co-ordinating the subject rests with the headteacher, and although she provides good leadership, this adds to her already considerable management responsibilities. The policy document for mathematics has been imported from another school, and the co-ordinator recognises the need to update this and develop the maths programme further in the light of the more complex needs of pupils now at the school. Planning within the subject follows a consistent pattern across the school, but the system for monitoring the progress and attainments of

individual pupils is cumbersome and overcomplicated. The co-ordinator has clear plans for the future of the subject, linking the teaching of mathematics to P levels and to a published recording system that facilitates the monitoring of pupils' progress. Resources for the subject are satisfactory both in quality and quantity to meet the demands of the existing curriculum, but there is room for extending the range of materials used.

## SCIENCE

107. The achievement of the pupils is good for all ages and special needs and the pupils make good progress in acquiring scientific knowledge and in developing their investigative skills throughout the school. There is no apparent difference between the achievement of boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, or those with different mother tongues.
108. By Year 2, high attaining pupils know the main body parts; they know that different materials have different textures; they know that some materials reflect light and others do not and some pupils are beginning to ask "why?". Lower attaining pupils feel different materials and track different reflections. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, higher attaining pupils test different materials to see which were picked up by magnets and demonstrated joy when they first observed the effects of the magnet. In the same lesson, lower attaining pupils watch and feel the magnets, and to experience the attraction of magnets for iron and steel objects.
109. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils are refining their knowledge of materials and know that some are hard, soft, rough, smooth, shiny or dull. They know that plants grow in certain conditions, and set up simple experiments to test what happens if a seedling is deprived of light or water. They understand that light comes from different sources. Some pupils are able to predict "What might happen if ---?". Lower attaining pupils feel different materials and experience their textures and express preferences, and they can watch different light sources and respond to them. In a Year 6 lesson, higher attaining pupils make a simple circuit, which lit a bulb. Lower attaining pupils were well supported in exploring a range of sensory electrical equipment, and they began to realise that items needed to be switched on to work.
110. The teaching of science is good overall, with some very good features. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan work well, with clear objectives for pupils of different abilities. Most teachers plan lessons carefully in order to provide activities that fit each pupil's needs.
111. Members of the support staff and the teachers work very effectively together as a team and there are very good relationships between them and the pupils. Pupils find the activities stimulating and interesting and consequently, they remain on task and behave well. The pupils' interest and involvement is also promoted by good routines for teaching and learning. For example, there are effective sessions where pupils' learning and achievements are reviewed, the use of probing questions, the use of signing, and suitable group work. Within the group activities, teachers and support staff work effectively with pupils of different attainment levels and special needs. Pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties are all involved at a suitable level and all are making good progress. This demonstrates that there are high expectations of all pupils being included.
112. The activities on offer are appropriate and stimulating and the support given is very good. Because of this, the pupils behave well. They take turns and share resources well. One of the most outstanding features of the teaching is the high quality support given by the support staff. Apart from learning support, there is very effective support for behaviour. On the few occasions when pupils become restless or distressed, staff deal with this sensitively and effectively, using time out and signing. Expectations of work and behaviour are very high, and good use is made of praise and encouragement.
113. The promotion of numeracy and literacy in science is good. The teachers and support staff continually use language, signing and symbols to reinforce the pupils' communication skills. Numeracy skills are reinforced by the use of key words, such as *bigger* and *smaller*. However,

the use of information and communications technology (ICT) is limited and it is not being used consistently to enable the pupils to access the curriculum.

114. The curriculum is good overall. Whilst the staff know the pupils well and are therefore able to plan work effectively, recording systems need to be simplified so that progress can be monitored more effectively. Some progress has already been made in assessing the pupils' scientific attainment using "P" levels.
115. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, with good planning, good management of the resources and support to colleagues, including ongoing training. However, there is no time allocated for her to observe colleagues' lessons. Several classrooms are already cramped, and there is little scope for carrying out practical investigations; storage space is extremely limited too. Resources are good but need to be audited and updated in the light of the planned curriculum revision. The co-ordinator has identified these development points in the subject's action plan.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

116. Pupils achieve well in art and design. There is no specialist art room, and this inhibits the development of a full curriculum in the subject. For example, there is little three dimensional art work in the school and there are few opportunities for pupils to undertake large joint works, as there is nowhere that such work could be kept out whilst it was ongoing.
117. The teaching of art and design is good overall. Teachers plan their work well and provide work and materials suitable for the wide range of abilities in the classes. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils were asked to create pictures in the style of the impressionists, and were given hand-made dyes to simulate the "watery" nature of the work of painters such as Turner. In Years 1 and 2, pupils were making masks and beads during a lesson on the theme of carnivals, and were able to choose the materials they needed to decorate their masks, or to make beads from clay or rolled paper. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not always consider the suitability of the materials or of the tools pupils need. Teachers and support staff pay considerable attention to meeting individual needs of pupils and this promotes learning well.
118. Art and design are well incorporated into the whole curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils have produced pictures using computer programmes, and pupils in Year 2 have made textured paintings in the shape of letters of the alphabet.
119. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator, who has produced clear plans for future development. These take account of the need for more clarity with regard to the role of art and design in the development of pupils' manipulative skills, and the need to streamline the system for recording pupils' individual development and progress. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the present curriculum but the accommodation and learning resources will need to be improved as the curriculum is enhanced.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

120. The pupils' achievement in developing their knowledge and skills in designing and making is good for all age groups and special needs. There is no apparent difference between the achievement of boys and girls or other different groups in the school.
121. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils choose card and paint to make a hat. They use scissors to cut out the shape of the hat and assemble it, with help. Lower attaining pupils can touch and feel the materials for making a hat, and respond when the hat is tried on. In the one lesson observed, higher attaining pupils washed and cut vegetables, with help. Lower attaining pupils touched, felt and tasted the vegetables.

122. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils choose the materials for a carnival hat. They make papier-mâché and mould it round a balloon. With some help, they score, fold and join with glue or staples, using simple hand tools, like scissors, staplers and glue sticks. They can evaluate the making process and the design. They mix dough. Low attaining pupils touch and feel materials, and respond to colours and shapes. They can feel dough and taste it. In the one lesson observed, high attaining pupils were using papier-mâché and paper plates to make Chinese masks for use in a special assembly - a good opportunity for development of cultural awareness. Low attaining pupils could touch and feel the papier-mâché.
123. The teaching of design and technology (DT) is good overall. Teachers demonstrate a satisfactory subject knowledge in Years 1 and 2, and good subject knowledge in Years 3 to 6. They plan their lessons well, with clear objectives for pupils of different abilities.
124. Teachers and support staff work well together and there are good relationships between them and the pupils. The activities in lessons are stimulating and interesting and as a result of this, the pupils stay on task and behave well. There are clear routines for teaching and learning and good use is made of questioning, signing and the use of symbols to make it clear to the pupils what they are to do. All pupils, of differing attainment levels and special needs: severe learning difficulties, autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties, are involved well and able to make good progress.
125. The teamwork between the support staff and the teachers is very good, ensuring that each child gets the maximum support, and there is a good use of praise and encouragement. Because of this, the pupils enjoy their DT lessons and behave well. The one or two instances of restless or distressed behaviour were dealt with very effectively through the use of signing or by short periods of time out. The support staff forms an effective and high quality team.
126. Numeracy and literacy are promoted well in DT, particularly through questioning and the use of signing and symbols, to promote communication, and through the use of estimating and weighing materials and ingredients. However, there is insufficient use of information and communications technology (ICT) as a learning tool.
127. Although making is covered well, the design and evaluation components of the subject are less well represented. The activities that the pupils undertake are appropriate to their needs and are based on the staff's very good knowledge of the pupils. However, records showing pupils' attainments in design and technology need to be simplified, to enable staff to readily identify pupils' attainments, and thus monitor progress.
128. The leadership of the co-ordinator is good; she offers good support to her colleagues, and knows what needs to be done to further improve the subject. Management is satisfactory, as the monitoring of the pupils' progress and of the teaching of DT is not carried out because of time constraints that arise from staffing difficulties.
129. The accommodation is unsatisfactory as it is very cramped, and storage facilities are limited. Resources are satisfactory but will need to be upgraded as the curriculum is revised.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

130. Pupils achieve well in geography. The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that pupils learn well. Some use is made of the local physical environment, but constraints on visits outside school is impacting on opportunities for extending their learning. By Year 2, pupils explore their playground, identifying symbols and words for familiar objects. They begin to recognise people and places and what they are there for. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 experience the clothes and music of Africa. One lower attaining pupil with complex difficulties can dress herself in African costume with minimal prompting from the teacher. By Year 6, pupils look at pictures of the wider environment outside school and begin to understand some of the differences between cities and

the countryside. A higher attaining pupil can identify mountains in the picture; another higher attainer recognises a river. Many pupils are beginning to orientate themselves around the school. For example, they take the register back to the office independently and recognise their own classrooms.

131. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils may do and understand. The planning of lessons is very good. Teachers use questions and answers to good effect to judge how much their pupils know and understand. In all lessons seen there was an element of fun. When the teacher built a bridge of blocks and planks for pupils to cross a pretend river, they were all very enthusiastic to join in. A lower attaining pupil, although nervous at first, succeeded with help and then had several more turns.
132. The subject is well led. The subject policy provides good guidance, and curriculum plans are relevant to the needs of the pupils. Resources are good and imaginatively used. There is a need to streamline recording to facilitate monitoring of pupils' progress and easy retrieval of information about what pupils know, understand and do. There is relevance for many pupils in the current topic on Africa. This makes a very good contribution to the appreciation of other lands and cultures.

## **HISTORY**

133. Pupils achieve well. All develop an understanding of the passing of time, and become familiar with how people lived long ago. By Year 2, lower attaining pupils respond with pleasure to the Ragtime music of the 1920s. Higher attaining pupils take pleasure in looking at clothes and artefacts from the period 1900-1950. In a topic on London in the seventeenth century, one Year 5 higher attaining pupil with language difficulties was able to converse about the pictures in the text book. He remembered from a previous lesson that the Great Fire of London started in Pudding Lane, 'but no-one knows exactly how'. Lower attaining pupils in the same lesson sneeze to show the effect of the Great Plague. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils in a topic on London and the Victorians recognise differences in old photographs, money and domestic equipment compared with modern equivalents. They touch and explore artefacts from the period. The frequently used technique of encouraging pupils to demonstrate the order of the timetable using visual symbols reinforces their understanding of chronology.
134. Teaching of history is good. In all lessons seen, the teachers used a very good selection of resources including artefacts, pictures, photographs. Their knowledge and understanding of the subject is good. The relationships in the classroom are very good, and pupils are stimulated and very attentive as a result. Much use is made of sensory experiences. For example, in a lesson on the seventeenth century, Year 4 and 5 pupils enjoyed a typical meal of bread and vegetable soup, as might have been served in those days. In another lesson, based on project on China, Year 6 pupils were introduced to the Chinese New Year and the animals that can represent different years. The teacher allocated an animal to each pupil, using symbol cards. Pupils identified the sounds each animal makes, and a higher attaining pupil requested some real fire to demonstrate his dragon! The atmosphere in the classrooms is purposeful and fun. Lessons are well prepared, showing the staff's very good knowledge and understanding of pupils' abilities. Good reinforcement of language and communication skills is a strong feature of history lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils use their numeracy skills to gain a knowledge of chronology, by placing lessons in order of the timetable, for example. All pupils are included in activities at a level appropriate to their needs.
135. The subject is well led. Resources are good and are used imaginatively. Most are made or organised by the staff and a good stock of artefacts, pictures and photographs has been built up in a short space of time. However, no use of information and communication technology was seen in lessons, and opportunities for pupils to explore places of local historical interest are limited.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. The achievement of the pupils is good for all ages and special needs and the pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and in developing their ICT skills throughout the school. There is no difference between the achievements of boys and girls, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, mother tongues or special needs.
137. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils can use a variety of switches to control lights and other equipment. They activate sequences on the computer screen by using a concept keyboard or mouse. Lower attaining pupils use different switches to control lights, with help, and respond to light and sound. Some can use simple switches that activate a recorded message.



138. By Year 6, high attaining pupils switch on a computer, log on and enter a program, with help. They type in their name and find characters in their reading scheme, using a mouse. They type in words and symbols. With help, they program a Roamer to move in different directions. A few pupils can find information on the Internet, about the World Cup for instance. Lower attaining pupils are supported to use a variety of switches to control light and sound equipment. They respond with eye contact or expressions of pleasure.
139. The teaching of ICT is good overall, with some very good features. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan work well, with clear planning and objectives for pupils of different abilities. There are good targets for each pupil for ICT. Software is well matched to the needs of each pupil.
140. There is very effective team work between the teachers and the support staff, founded on good relationships between them and with the pupils. The activities provided are stimulating and challenging, indicating high expectations, and linked to each pupil's targets. As a result of this, the pupils are stimulated and interested, remain on task and behave well. There are good routines for teaching and learning; tasks are clearly explained to the pupils, and questioning is effective in assessing pupils' understanding. Group activities are well organised, ensuring that all pupils, of differing attainment levels and special needs, such as severe learning difficulties, autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties, are involved and making progress.
141. There is effective teamwork between the teachers and support staff, ensuring that the activities are well presented and there is a good use of praise and encouragement. Because of this, the pupils behave well. In the lessons observed, the behaviour was either good or very good. The few instances of restless or distressed behaviour were dealt with very effectively through the use of signing or by short periods of time out. High standards of behaviour are expected and achieved and the pupils respect the equipment and resources and work well in the ICT room. The support staff form an effective and high quality team.
142. Numeracy and literacy is promoted well in ICT as many of the skills are taught through software relating directly to them. In addition, the teachers and support staff continually use language, signing and symbols to reinforce the pupils' communication skills
143. The curriculum is good overall and is currently being audited against the increasingly complex needs of the pupils. Assessment is good. The staff know the pupils well and are therefore able to plan work effectively, "P" levels are being used to plan the pupils' individual work and this is ensuring that they all undertake appropriate activities. The co-ordinator has set up a useful checklist of ICT skills so that the teachers can monitor pupils' progress in acquiring them.
144. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, with good planning and good management of the resources and support to colleagues, including lesson observations. The ICT technician and support assistant is very effective and keeps all the resources in first class order and provides very valuable ongoing support and training for the staff. Most teachers have undertaken the New Opportunities Fund ICT training.
145. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall as the ICT room is too small to take whole class groups; this means that pupils need to be scattered around the school, in three separate locations, for ICT lessons; this makes it difficult for teachers to monitor activities. The classrooms are very cramped and it is hard to fit pupils round the one computer in each. However, the sensory room is well equipped with control devices, which are being effectively incorporated into ICT lessons. The resources are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of peripherals and control devices, appropriate to the pupils' increasingly complex needs, but several computers need upgrading. There is only one computer in each room (and no space to put another). There is no networking, so Internet access is only available in part of the school building.
146. Very little use of the classroom computers was observed during the inspection and ICT is not being used systematically enough in other curriculum areas.

147. The school is in a difficult position with regard to equipping the building with permanent networking because of an uncertainty over the building's future.

## **MUSIC**

148. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Teaching varies from good to satisfactory, and is satisfactory overall. There is a music room in the school, but this is far too small for whole classes, all the accompanying staff, pupils' walking frames and other equipment, and the resources. It offers very little flexibility because of its shape, and is not sound-proof. The curriculum is enriched by visits from professional musicians and a lunchtime club, but needs to be adapted to cater better for the complex needs of pupils. For example, there needs to be less emphasis on singing in groups where there are no verbal pupils, and more thought needs to be given to the potential use of music as a therapeutic medium. The co-ordinator, who is a music specialist, is aware of the need to review the curriculum, and has a suitable action plan to address the areas for development. A strength of the provision is the part-time employment of a music specialist who accompanies on the piano during lessons and in assemblies.
149. Children become familiar with, and learn from, a wide range of songs sung in the nursery. Pupils enjoy music, which is used well in other lessons, such as religious education and dance. The school song, 'Something inside so strong', is played at the end of each day, and all pupils are familiar with this. By the time they reach Year 2 all pupils are able to produce sounds from instruments; lower attaining pupils drop pasta shells on to a drum to produce sounds, for example. Higher attaining pupils can tell the difference between loud and soft sounds, and match certain instruments to the sounds they produce, such as a cabasa and castanets. By Year 6, lower attaining pupils will tap a tambourine with their hand or a stick, but they need prompting, such as a nudge, to do this. They operate a switch to turn a tape recorder on and off; higher attaining pupils can identify high and low sounds, as well as fast and slow music; they use symbols to make a simple score too.
150. A few teachers lack expertise in the subject, and the co-ordinator does not have the time to support individuals. However, good teamwork between the teachers and the pianist in lessons ensures that learning does not suffer. Staff make effective use of signs and symbols to help pupils understand, and reinforce numeracy skills as opportunities arise; for example, counting the number of beats. Good use is made of real objects, that pupils explore with their senses, to help them understand the meanings of musical terms. For example, pupils were helped to explore soft materials, such as cotton wool, in a lesson where *loud* and *soft* sounds were being played. New technology is used satisfactorily; the school has a soundbeam, keyboards and an omnichord. Support staff keep pupils engaged well throughout lessons, prompting them well, and making sure they are attending to the teacher. The subject promotes pupils' cultural development well, as there is a good range of recordings of different types of music from a number of countries and cultures. In one lesson, a joyous note was struck when a support assistant offered to sing and African song in her own African dialect. This was greatly appreciated by the pupils, and other staff initiated the applause once the song was over. Records are not kept up to date by all teachers and recording needs to be streamlined.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

151. The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good, and pupils achieve well. They make good progress towards the individual targets set for them; these are challenging and most appropriate. For example, they deal with the development of independence skills, such as feeding, dressing, and mobility.
152. Teaching and learning are good. The taught programme is well supplemented by the use of lunchtime for working on individual objectives. Pupils learn to take responsibility, and the school is beginning to involve them effectively in making decisions about the learning environment. Part of the school's improvement plan involves refurbishing the playground, and all are to have a say in

what the new one will look like. The headteacher has set the scene well in a whole school assembly, which introduced the idea of *special* activities and *friends* that pupils enjoy at playtime. This was followed up well in PSHE lessons during the inspection week, when pupils in each class were to make a pictorial representation of what they like to do in the playground. These preferences are to be analysed and taken into account in planning the project.

153. Teachers make good use of signs, symbols and real objects to help pupils understand the meaning of words or concepts. They use methods that appeal to pupils too, such as dressing up, and role play. These hold pupils' interest well. Support staff make an invaluable contribution by managing pupils effectively, ensuring that they attend, and supporting them so that they can participate.
154. The taught programme is well thought out, and includes sex and relationships education, as well as an element of work-related education and planning for transition to secondary schooling. By Year 6, all pupils have had experience of different jobs, by dressing up and engaging in role-play, for example. All understand that their bodies change as they grow, and higher attainers understand the basic differences between men and women. There are good links with the secondary schools that pupils move to, and pupils have opportunities to visit these before they leave The Livity. Overall, the PSHE programme prepares pupils well for the next step.
155. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject action plan identifies all the necessary areas for development, and the co-ordinator has audited the curriculum to identify what gaps need to be filled so that the school will be able to teach citizenship as required from September. Resources have also been audited and they are well organised and stored. Management of the subject is satisfactory; the co-ordinator does not have time to develop her management role further.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. Teaching is good and pupils achieve well. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory for the teaching of physical education. The school has an adequately sized hall for PE and games and a large hydro-therapy pool. However, the hall has to be used for storage, and houses a semi-permanent display area for assemblies. There is little space in the school grounds, and insufficient flat, grassed areas to provide for suitable outdoor activities. The changing areas are inadequate to provide for the needs of the complex school population and the single shower is not sufficient to meet the demands made upon it. The inadequacies of the building limit what the school can reasonably offer its pupils. Too much time is lost getting ready for lessons. Limited changing facilities necessitate support staff transporting pupils around the school to other suitable accommodation before and after lessons.
157. By Year 2, pupils are developing throwing and catching skills. They are able to understand that their physical actions and movements have a consequence and that they can influence their environment. Teachers plan lessons well and use support staff to enhance individual learning. Lessons have three parts, a 'warm up', a main activity and a 'warm-down' period at the end. In the less successful lessons teachers do not make the objectives of the lessons clear and do not allow sufficient time for warming down.
158. By Year 6, pupils have gained some confidence in their skills and are able to participate in simple games involving the passing and movement of balls and games such as skittles or "net ball". They are beginning to understand the need and value of co-operative work within the subject and react to the actions of each other. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good with a high proportion of the lessons seen being very good. Teachers make good use of equipment, such as movement sensors that give a sound when the ball passes. Support staff understand the individual needs and difficulties of the pupils and support them in such a way as to ensure sustained progress. Pupils are taught well to swim, and the higher attainers are approaching national standards
159. Although there are links between the school and the physiotherapists from the local health authority, the use of PE as a therapeutic tool is under developed. However, the provision of a

part-time dance teacher enhances the PE curriculum and provides a positive contribution to pupils' development of controlled movement. Activities for pupils with physical disability need further thought as these pupils, although included well in activities, have little opportunity to influence their actions. For example, when the class is warming up, or moving fast or slow, pupils in wheelchairs move in the way their support assistant dictates, and do not control the

activity themselves. Pupils have little opportunity to develop their skills in competition with others or with other schools. Assessment in PE is under developed, as there is insufficient detail in the recording of pupils' progress.

160. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time and has not had time to monitor teaching or developments in the subject. However, there is a suitable action plan showing how development priorities are to be addressed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

161. Pupils achieve well in religious education (RE). Achievement is promoted well by the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the broad range of learning opportunities that pupils are given. Younger pupils soon become familiar with stories from a variety of religions. By Year 2, lower attaining pupils will try on clothing, such as the orange robes of a Buddhist, and listen attentively to stories. Higher attainers show their understanding by entering into role play, taking 'food and water' to a 'poor, sick, man' in a 'cell', for example. By Year 6, many pupils have a clear understanding and acceptance of values such as being kind, sharing, and helping others. Higher attainers know that Jesus had friends and helped others, and they know some of the leading figures who founded other religions.
162. Teachers develop pupils' values well by encouraging them to share, be kind to others, think of others, and even to develop a social conscience by recycling waste. Pupils' progress against targets to develop their values is clearly documented in teachers' records. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed well by the use of first hand methods. For example, when learning about Hinduism, pupils were able to listen to Indian music, handle artefacts associated with the religion, dress up in Indian clothes and taste items of Indian food. This brought the religion to life for them. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. In one lesson, the teacher valued diversity by commenting on the 'beautiful Hindu temple'. Literacy skills are developed well by the consistent use of signs and symbols, and numeracy skills are reinforced well, by sequencing numerals in the creation story, for example. Video clips, tape recordings and CD-ROMS are available, although not all were seen used during the inspection.
163. Leadership is good. The subject co-ordinator, who has attended suitable training courses, has drawn up a suitable development plan that identifies areas for development, but she does not have sufficient time to carry out her management role. She has made a good start in monitoring pupils' work, by collecting samples of work and other evidence of attainment, some of which is dated and annotated. She has also monitored collective worship, but not RE lessons. At present, the subject plans are not in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, and this is recognised as a priority on the action plan.