

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCES SCHOOL

Toxteth, Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104750

Headteacher: Mrs. V. Healy

Reporting inspector: Mr. I. Naylor
20906

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th December 2002

Inspection number: 250168

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Selbourne Street Toxteth Liverpool
Postcode:	L8 1YQ
Telephone number:	0151 7092602
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. P. Hurst
Date of previous inspection:	24 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Foundation stage History Geography Music	How good are the Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
10781	Robert Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and Technology Personal Social and Health Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
14563	Graham Pirt	Team Inspector	Science Art Physical Education	
31914	Colette Gribble	Team Inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Religious Education	Special Educational Needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Princes School is special primary school in an Education Action Zone. There are currently 60 boys and girls on roll aged between two and 11. There are 35 pupils with severe learning difficulties, ten with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and 15 with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Three pupils also have additional sensory impairments. Fifty-two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, but the rest are still in the process of undergoing statutory assessment. Two pupils do not speak English as a first language. There is one refugee and five pupils of non-white ethnic origin. Six pupils are in the care of social services. Attainment on admission to the school is low. There are only three pupils below five years old (Year R), and it is not therefore appropriate to make judgements about their achievements in the areas of learning of the Foundation Stage. There is a separate class for pupils in Year R to Year 6 with profound and multiple learning difficulties (Additional Needs Unit), and another for autistic pupils in Years 3 to 6. A few pupils with additional needs or autism are also placed in age appropriate classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school in which there is satisfactory leadership and management that ensures good staff teamwork and a willingness and capacity to embrace new ideas and initiatives. This is helping to build support for teaching and the achievement of pupils, which are both satisfactory overall. Staff realise that there is still much work to be done and are beginning to identify the best way forward. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' responses and personal development are good.
- There are very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Teaching is good in English, mathematics, personal and social education, design and technology, and physical education.
- Pupils make good progress overall in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good
- Staff create good communications with parents.
- The school's accommodation and resources for learning are now very good.

What could be improved

- The curriculum for pupils who are more able.
- The teaching of pupils with challenging behaviours.
- The quality of individual behaviour plans.
- The amount and use of teaching time available in the school day.
- The financial basis of the school development plan and longer term planning.

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 was last inspected in February 1997. Shortly after that inspection the school was re-designated from an all age school to a primary special school. A new headteacher was also appointed. This means that it is inappropriate to compare the academic progress or personal development of pupils or their achievements in the subjects as the age range as well as the type of pupil admitted has changed significantly. Neither is it appropriate to compare the curriculum provision. Teaching remains variable, although there is much that is of good quality and the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) has improved. The support and guidance offered to pupils has improved although assessment remains a continuing area of development. Good relationships with parents have been sustained. There has been a substantial improvement made to the accommodation,

facilities and resources of the school. The leadership and management of the school are growing in strength, but there are still areas that need further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Achievement is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education and personal and social education. It is satisfactory overall in science and information and communication technology and the remaining subjects. There are no marked differences in achievement between boys and girls. More able pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6 make less progress than they could. Progress for most pupils in their personal development is good, but for those with challenging behaviour it is satisfactory. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, and sensory impairment, make good progress. Those whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress over time. Whole school targets previously set in social skills have been partially met and targets set for the current year in literacy and numeracy are relevant and achievable. The school is making good use of a commercial scheme to record pupils' progress over time. The data collected over the previous two years shows that there has been an incremental increase in achievement by most pupils over the last two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most have a very positive response to their lessons and other activities in school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils behave very well, both in school and when on visits in the local community or to other schools. A few pupils with challenging behaviours do at times cause distraction to others in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are good. Most pupils make good progress in their personal confidence and self esteem. They learn to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and to understand the needs of other.
Attendance	Good. Most pupils attend regularly and arrive on time for lessons.

There is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of activities both in school and on trips to the local and wider community. A few make good gains in

personal development through attending suitable lessons in mainstream schools. All pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary education.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years R– 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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 satisfactory overall. During the inspection in many lessons teaching was good or very good. In most of the rest it was satisfactory, but in a small number unsatisfactory. Teaching has a good impact upon pupils’ progress in English, mathematics, personal and social education, design and technology, and physical education, but this is only satisfactory in the remaining subjects. Teachers’ subject knowledge is generally good. In most lessons teachers provide a good range of activities that help to stimulate pupils’ interest. Teachers delegate effectively to educational support assistants and they work together well. Planning for the wide range of pupils’ needs in each class and understanding their abilities and aptitudes is satisfactory. Learning is usually at least satisfactory. Managing the behaviour of those pupils with challenging behaviour is unsatisfactory in a few lessons. Teachers consistently use a commercial scheme when they plan lessons but these curriculum materials do not help teachers plan work that is relevant for pupils who are capable of higher attainment. Teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties(PMLD) is good. For those whose first language is not English, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work well in conjunction with other professionals to support pupils’ learning. The use of signing is consistent from one class to the next.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Although there is a wide range of suitable opportunities provided for the majority of pupils, the curriculum does not sufficiently reflect the needs of more able pupils. Provision of personal, social and health education is good. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to work alongside their mainstream peers. Although there are separate classes for ASD and PMLD pupils, there are many lessons where pupils can mix with others in their age group. The amount of teaching time available during the day is short of that recommended for primary age pupils and teachers do not use the time they have effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Both pupils are offered appropriate help and support.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school promotes many aspects of personal development well. Pupils are involved in many activities in school and the community that broaden their experiences. In particular there is good support for pupils’ social, moral and cultural development through the personal and social education lessons, visits by pupils to places of interest out of school and by visitors to school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school takes effective steps to ensure pupils are well looked after. Arrangements for child protection are good and the school promotes a safe and healthy environment. The procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Systems to measure pupils’ progress are satisfactory but need to be made more consistent across all classes. The recording of inappropriate behaviour is satisfactory, but

	staff do not always identify the right steps to improve pupils' responses. The school caters equally for all pupils regardless of ability or cultural background.
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Parents have good views of the school. They are welcomed into school by staff and encouraged to get involved in the daily life of the school and in their child's learning at home. Information they receive is satisfactory overall.

The school uses the community well to enhance the learning opportunities offered to pupils. For example, a small number of pupils make good progress in integrating into local primary mainstream schools. The school day is short and this reduces the learning opportunities available in many subjects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. A great deal has been achieved by the headteacher and senior staff working together and giving encouragement to the rest of the staff team. Together they have weathered the disruption caused to teaching and learning by the new building developments. Many new initiatives have been embraced successfully.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Despite difficulties in recruitment and retention of governors, there are a few with good experience and new governors who are keen to do what they can for the school. All legal requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is very aware of the need to assess how it is doing and has a few arrangements for doing so. These are still in the early stages of development and implementation.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school development plan has been improved and is now a sound basis for moving the school forward. There remains a need to link spending to priorities in the school developments so that they have the greatest impact upon teaching and learning. There are good financial controls and office administration.

The number of teachers and support staff is adequate to teach the curriculum planned for the pupils. A large majority of the accommodation is very good, but a small area of the original building is unsatisfactory for teaching pupils with autism. The range and quality of educational resources are good overall.

The headteacher works industriously to secure the best management of the school. There remain, however, a number of areas such as the teaching of pupils with challenging behaviour, that need a clear focus and firm direction in order to secure improvements.

The school has satisfactory systems for ensuring the best value when purchasing goods and services. This has been seen in the recent improvement to facilities and resources. This is less clear in regard to recognising key areas for improvement in the curriculum and teaching.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of care That their child enjoys school That the school works closely with them and involves them in decisions about their child That their child makes progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small number are not sure homework is suitable A few disagree about activities after school.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvements to the buildings and security • Transport arrangements | |
|--|--|

The inspectors agree with the many positive views of parents. Homework is given that is suitable to pupils' age and abilities, and transport arrangements reduce opportunities activities after school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. For the majority of pupils, achievement and progress over time in the subjects are satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, physical education and personal and social education. It is satisfactory in science and information and communication technology. Overall, by Year 2 and by Year 6 pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory in the remaining subjects. Progress in pupils' personal development and social skills is good across the school.
2. Most pupils are working at a pre-National Curriculum level in all subjects. Teachers measure their progress against the P-Scales (measurement of attainment under Level 1 of the National Curriculum). Teachers' records indicate that over each of the last two academic year that each pupil makes discernible progress, and some make significant improvements across areas such as literacy, mathematics and personal and social education.
3. The school is setting whole school targets. In December 2000 targets included basic social skills such as toilet training and ability to be independent at meal times; these were partially met. Appropriate targets have been set for this year in English and mathematics using the P-Scales.
4. A small number of pupils make good progress in integrating into local primary mainstream schools. They succeed in adjusting their social interactions to match the different environment and usually also make good progress in their social skills and personal development.
5. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) make good progress in lessons. Pupils with sensory impairment also make good progress. Those whose first language is not English make satisfactory progress in their communication skills.
6. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are making satisfactory progress overall. There are still areas to develop in the planning and effectiveness of individual educational and behavioural plans for the separate class group. There is also insufficient use of appropriate communication systems such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication handicapped Children) with those autistic pupils in the other classes so that the behaviour of a few pupils is causing more disruption than is necessary.
7. For a few pupils who are more able and who should be achieving at higher levels of the National Curriculum, progress over time is potentially restricted. This is mainly

due to the restrictions of a commercial scheme teachers use for their planning. However, the school has recently managed to secure a permanent place in another special school for one pupil who has made very good progress.

8. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has supported at least satisfactory and frequently good progress in communication and numeracy skills. There has been an increased emphasis by teachers on pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy although further work is required in the subjects other than English, mathematics, and personal and social education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The relationships between adults and pupils are good, as are the relationships between the pupils themselves. Because of this, the school provides a friendly, caring and supportive environment in which pupils enjoy attending, and trying their best for teachers and support staff. In lessons, pupils approach their work with enthusiasm and a determination to do well. Their attitudes to their learning are good in most lessons. Generally, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They realise that school is a place where they are expected to work hard, and in most lessons they do.
10. For a small number of pupils, who did not behave well in lessons, this was as a direct result of unsatisfactory management of their behaviour by staff.
11. Pupils are keen to come to school and usually arrive punctually. Upon arrival they greet members of staff and their friends with pleasure. They quickly become involved in well established routines. One such routine is where pupils '*sign in*' to show that they are in school. This is good practice, pupils enjoy this and it also acts as a pre-registration activity. They take a full interest in all aspects of school and respond well to activities provided. For example, they participate fully in school productions, such as when the school choir sang along with other Liverpool schools in St George's Hall; they enjoy a dance project, where they take part in joint productions with other local schools. Pupils also participate enthusiastically in residential visits to an outdoor activity centre.
12. Lunch times are enjoyable social occasions. Those pupils who eat in the hall make choices of main course and sweets. They show good social skills. They fetch their dinners, sit with friends, and after they have eaten, help clear away the plates, cutlery and crockery.
13. There is no evidence of bullying or any sort of oppressive behaviour. There have been no exclusions of pupils in the last two years. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and respectful of school property and that of others. For example, pupils work individually or in pairs using computers with little supervision, and treat the equipment with great respect. Displays around the school are treated respectfully and there is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism of any kind.
14. Pupils treat visitors with a degree of confidence and well mannered respect. When offered the opportunity, they are willing to show initiative and take responsibility. For example, pupils act as monitors to help teachers, such as returning the register to the secretary, or counting how many cartons of milk they need and bringing them into the classroom.

15. The progress of pupils with challenging or difficult behaviour is satisfactory. Some pupils modify or reduce their unacceptable behaviour and learn to how to control their feelings and emotions better. Others need continuing close adult support in order to be able to manage their behaviour.
16. The majority of pupils have a very good rate of attendance. Figures for this term, however, are not quite so impressive and a small minority of mainly younger pupils are not attending quite as much as they should be. The school and parents report that transport is reliable and arrangements work well with minibuses and taxis arriving when expected for the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects and often it is good or very good. But in a small number of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory mainly because teachers do not have sufficient skills to manage pupils with challenging behaviour. Therefore teaching overall is satisfactory. Teaching is consistently good in English, mathematics, science, personal and social education, design and technology, and physical education. It is satisfactory overall in the remaining subjects. However, in just over half of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was of high quality and had a strong impact upon learning. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching for pupils in Years 4 and 5. The quality of learning reflects the level of teaching in lessons and is also satisfactory overall.
18. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. Teachers carefully adapt the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to the needs of the individual. Teachers in most lessons provide a good range of challenging activities that stimulate pupils' interest and responses. Planning for the wide range of pupils' needs in each class and understanding their abilities and aptitudes is satisfactory. For example, in a literacy session with pupils in Year 5, teaching is well planned to include 'Circle Time', which gives all pupils the chance to settle down in the classroom, greet one another and answer questions about themselves and their families. The lesson moves neatly on to reading activities which are well organised to meet each pupil's needs and provide a challenge. The staff provide a range of resources such as puzzles, computer programs, and pictures, and work effectively as a team to keep pupils on task.
19. Good use is made of all available information including individual education plans, behaviour management plans and annual reviews. However, for a few more able pupils planning is not appropriate to their level of ability, and is sometimes not challenging enough and this affects their learning and progress. The planning for pupils with PMLD and for those with sensory difficulties is good.
20. The majority of teachers are able to use effective techniques to control the behaviour of those few pupils with distracting or challenging behaviours. For example, in a numeracy lesson, in Year 6, the teacher had very clear expectations of behaviour with simple but effective strategies to keep control. Pupils understand that they must respond to the teacher's request by the count of three. If not, then they must sit in the 'thinking corner' for a count of 20. Pupils respond well and this routine enables them to return to activities positively. However, one or two teachers do not have effective ways of managing disruptive behaviour and this detracts from the quality of lessons which otherwise have been well prepared and organised. The work of other pupils is affected and the quality of learning overall is reduced for all. An example of this was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 1. The

lesson changed in quality because time was lost trying ineffectively to control the inappropriate behaviour of two pupils. There was a lack of a structured behaviour management approach and too little direction to education support assistants (ESAs).

21. The teaching and learning of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is good. Staff use different techniques successfully to involve these pupils. For example, in a drama lesson about 'The Three Little Pigs', there is very good collaboration between staff to bring the story alive as they perform the play with the pupils, wearing costumes and utilising a very good range of props, including pre-recorded tapes. This delights the pupils who enjoy this session.
22. Most teachers have received training in TEACCH. A few teachers are still developing their skills for teaching pupils with autism, however, and the use of this method of teaching autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) pupils is not yet consistently developed across the school. Teaching needs to ensure that these strategies are used effectively and pupils are provided with support to improve and learn how to control their behaviour so that they can be more effective learners.
23. Teachers delegate duties well to ESAs. Often this is for the welfare needs of pupils, or to assist with behaviour. However, ESAs are also used effectively for individual and group teaching. For example, many lessons make use of their skills and involve them in working with groups of pupils in the sensory room or library. There is a strong spirit of co-operation between staff and this creates very good teamwork. ESAs are very skilful at anticipating the needs of pupils, consequently they are most effective and contribute significantly to their learning and achievement.
24. Teaching makes satisfactory use of various forms of communication, symbols and PECS. However, there is an inconsistent use of signing across the school. The use of day to day recording systems to measure progress is good. A particular success is the use of P-Scales (measurement of attainment under Level 1 of the National Curriculum) to record pupils' progress over time. Teaching of those pupils whose first language is not English, is satisfactory.
25. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills across the other subjects is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teaching of information and communication technology across the subjects is less well developed, but, through their recent training and with the introduction of an ICT technician, teachers are gaining in skills and confidence.
26. Teachers work closely with other professionals such as physiotherapists, and those from the sensory service. There is very good collaboration which gives support to pupils' learning. A senior teacher with specific training provides good support to pupils' speech and language development.

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

27. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has managed to continue providing appropriate learning opportunities since the last inspection even though it has implemented a different curriculum to meet the changed needs of its pupil population. Statutory requirements are met. All the subjects of the National

Curriculum are taught and there is a satisfactory programme for sex, drugs education and personal, social and health education. The learning planned for pupils in religious education appropriately reflects the local education authority's agreed syllabus. The learning opportunities provided for children under five are satisfactory.

28. The National Literacy Strategy has been suitably adapted and has been implemented appropriately. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well, particularly for older primary age pupils, because the school has recently focused on this area and is beginning to have a beneficial effect on standards. Both Strategies provide good support for teachers when they plan learning.
29. Teachers consistently use the Equals Curriculum, which is a commercial scheme, when they plan work. These curriculum materials are appropriate for the majority of pupils with severe learning difficulties, but do not help teachers plan work that is relevant for pupils who are capable of higher attainment. The school has already identified this as a concern and is beginning to develop the curriculum further.
30. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practice their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects, but these need to be planned more consistently so that pupils' skills can be promoted better and achievement improved. Teachers provide a few opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects, but these could be extended further. Insufficient thought has been given to developing the use of information and communication technology as an aid for pupils with communication difficulties. The curriculum for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory and these pupils are well supported.
31. The amount of taught time available during the day is short of that recommended for primary age pupils. Teachers could use the time they have more effectively. Lessons are too long and at times teachers struggle to sustain pupils' interest and concentration and as a result the behaviour of some pupils deteriorates.
32. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities for pupils outside lessons although opportunities after school are severely restricted because of transport arrangements. The school could make much better use of the lunchtime to provide clubs for pupils. Even though the school day is short the school has managed to allocate enough time to each subject because subjects such as history and geography are not taught each week. There is an appropriate emphasis of time to English and mathematics.
33. The school makes alternative curriculum arrangements for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and a small number of those who have autism, by teaching them in separate classes. The curriculum is appropriately planned to reflect their needs. The quality of education for pupils with autism although satisfactory, needs considerable development.
34. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Pupils have good opportunities to visit place of local interest such as the Pier Master's House to support their learning in history and there are walks in the local parks for science and geography. Visitors to the school also make a significant contribution to pupils learning in subjects such as art and music. The school has good relationships with other institutions and there are effective links with the schools that pupils transfer to

when they are eleven. There is no evidence that pupils' opportunities to learn are affected by any issues of race or gender.

35. The school continues to be very welcoming and friendly and relationships are consistently good and these positive features enhance provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is good overall. Visits into the local and wider community opportunities are planned that promote in particular social and cultural development of all pupils.
36. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Planning for whole school assemblies indicates that a range of positive values and religious stories and festivals are explored. Classes join together daily and have a quiet moment of reflection and opportunity for good spiritual experiences as when pupils hold hands and sing Shalom in a calm and reflective atmosphere lit by candles. In lessons, the school gives pupils further opportunities to explore other beliefs including religious beliefs; they write their own short prayers and they learn about bible stories such as Jonah and the Whale. Older pupils respond well to experiences of different cultures, traditions and religions.
37. Pupils' social development is good and the school fosters a real sense of community and belonging in which pupils are encouraged to work and play together. The recent harvest breakfast, attended by many families is a good example of an opportunity planned to promote personal and social skills. Residential experiences are a well established feature of the curriculum and many other adventurous activities both in and out of school are organised for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to participate and join in fully.
38. The many displays of pupils' work around the school identify the good contribution the community makes to many aspects of social development, for example, in photographs and pictures of pupils on a recent visits to shops and the post office. Pupils enter competitions organised by local charities and organisations. Recently they raised money for a national charity through a sponsored activity. Pupils are treated and valued equally by staff and their many strengths and achievements are celebrated. For example, the headteacher rewards individuals for special achievements during a Friday achievement assembly.
39. Moral development is good overall. Pupils usually know what is wrong and when they hurt or upset each other. The school's moral code is consistently followed in the majority of lessons, although because a few pupils' understanding of the consequences of their actions is limited and teachers' management of behaviour is a little variable this is not always as successful as it might be. Pupils develop respect for each other and for their school.
40. The school, through its links with the community and through teaching in a number of subjects successfully promotes pupils' understanding of other cultures, values and beliefs. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in and enjoy literature, music, drama and art. They celebrated Divali and this year also had a "Chinese Day" when the kitchen staff provided special Chinese food.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. Many of the positive features reported on at the time of the previous inspection are still effective. In particular relationships are still good and all staff know pupils'

abilities and medical conditions very well. There have been good improvements made to health and safety and the school now has clear policies and practices for many areas, which are regularly reviewed and which help to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, which confirms the school has been effective in promoting standards in many areas of school life; for example, safety of pupils on the playground. Staff give carefully considered attention to the well being of pupils, whether they are in school or out on visits. The new school buildings mean that pupils now have more space for work, therapy and play and this alone has enabled aspects of care to improve and therefore enhanced pupils' well being. Many visiting professionals, who work at the school, talk of the very good team spirit and the openness of working relationships that are promoted by staff.

42. The school has satisfactory policy for child protection, which follows local authority guidelines and is overseen by a senior member of staff who has recently undergone specific training. The headteacher takes overall responsibility for a group of pupils across the school that are looked after by the local authority and she too has recently had training for this role. Care plans for pupils are kept up to date. All education support assistants and some teachers are qualified in First Aid and procedures are satisfactory. Minor accidents and incidents are recorded. Parents are properly informed by letter or phone call about any serious incidents or accidents that involve their child.
43. Physiotherapists work on a regular basis in the school and they too know the pupils well. Programmes they follow are shared whenever possible with families at home. The school also receives good support from the local education authority behaviour support service. The school employs a music therapist which is of particular benefit to a number of pupils. The school works very well with social services and health professionals, including the school nurse and the doctor. School staff are trained in the safe lifting and handling of pupils.
44. The school's procedures to record and monitor attendance are good. The school is beginning to set targets for those few pupils who are not attending school quite as often as they should. Contact is made with families and support received from the education welfare service.
45. Systems for assessing pupils' achievement and for monitoring their progress are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has implemented a range of suitable recording formats to support assessment and provide information about pupils' personal development, their academic achievement and their behaviour. The assessment system is directly linked to the curriculum and to the needs of individual pupils. It is used consistently across the school. Therefore, teachers have information that helps them check if pupils have learned what they set out to teach them.
46. However, there is a need for the range of recording systems to be reviewed and to identify and retain only the ones that teachers find most helpful. The school is not yet using the information provided by the assessment systems to monitor the effectiveness of teaching; for example, by comparing the progress of pupils in different year groups.
47. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour for the majority of pupils are effective, but those for monitoring and managing the behaviour of pupils who have challenging behaviour or who are autistic are unsatisfactory. The

school has an effective certificate system that is used to reward behaviour and attitudes. Procedures for recording any incidents involving pupils are satisfactory.

48. The individual behaviour plans do not show how teachers expect pupils to improve over time or how they will teach them to manage their own behaviour. The plans clearly indicate the behaviour problem and the cause. They identify how staff will handle a situation. However, they do not set targets for improvement or identify what improvement will be judged successful. The school currently has no effective way of demonstrating how successful it is in improving behaviour. The Behaviour Policy although adequate, has not been reviewed for some time and needs to be updated.
49. The school provides positive inclusion opportunities to meet the needs of pupils. Within the school 15 pupils with additional special needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder are taught full time in classes across the school. Pupils with additional needs in Class 7, (profound and multiple learning difficulties), are included in classes across the school when appropriate.
50. Three pupils are successfully integrated into local primary schools, mainly for social integration. This is generally for one hour per week. A further three pupils are successfully integrated into local primary schools for three days, and continue their education in Princes School for the other two days. Four pupils from Years 5 and 6, are included in a design and technology project in a local primary school planned by the local education authority.
51. Pupils from local primary schools are invited into Princes School for special assemblies and special days, such as mathematics or science day. Pupils from Princes School and main stream primaries have joined together for performances, such as singing in St George's Hall, and joint dance projects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school continues to work closely with many parents and carers and several are involved in the life of the school either as governors or as voluntary helpers during the day. Many good features exist in the way the school informs and involves parents in partnership and in the open communication held with them to ensure that all decisions made are in their child's best interest. The school is currently reviewing the written information that parents and carers receive, including its prospectus, so that this more fully celebrates the school's achievements. Overall partnership is good and this is partly because of the school's efforts to seek the views of all.
53. Parents' and carers' views of the school are good and the school is well regarded. They are particularly pleased and appreciative of the ways the school helps their children to improve in communication, social and personal skills at home. Parents think that the school is a caring place and that the staff work as a team. They feel that their children are happy at the school. Parents like the improvements to the buildings. They believe that the staff make them welcome and they can approach them easily to help sort out any concerns. A few parents are unhappy with low provision of occupational therapy and speech therapy, but understand that these are not under the direct control of the school, and that the school has tried to help by having a teacher who is trained as a speech and language therapy assistant. A few parents would welcome a little more information and help with the language and physiotherapy programmes they follow at home.

54. The school communicates with parents and carers well on a day to day basis. Newsletters give news of recent events in the school and are detailed and helpful. Staff make time to listen to parents and to keep them informed. Home/school books and are used, some very imaginatively, giving parents and carers the names of other friends in the class, the names of the education support assistants assigned to work with them, as well as what their children have done that day. The annual report from the governors to parents is very brief and does not inform parents in the best way it could. The school sends one written report home at the time of annual review meetings, which includes a very extensive range of targets. Parents and carers nearly always attend these meetings. A weakness is that a significant number of parents are not getting sufficient support from school or the local education authority to complete the formal Statement of Special Educational Need for their child.
55. A few parents would welcome more access to contact with other therapists who work in school and the school is planning further coffee mornings to which many will be invited. Last term the headteacher sought views of parents through a questionnaire and clearly conveyed to parents and carers the full results and the action taken as a result of the analysis. Overall the quality of information given to parents, including that about pupils' progress, is satisfactory.
56. There is no tradition of a parent teacher association in the school but, nevertheless, parents are very supportive when events such as the Christmas concert and a leavers' assembly are held. Many parents are keen to become parent governors. Several help voluntarily in the school or on educational visits into the city or the swimming pool and parents and carers know that they are welcome to get involved if they can. The school never keeps parents at arm's length and always tries to work out problems openly and constructively. Interpreters and translation facilities are sought and found when necessary.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher has brought the school through a difficult period well. The extensive building work has put a severe strain on all areas of the school's work. A huge amount of effort and management time has been necessary to ensure that not only the building development proceeded at a suitable rate, but the effect of this work caused minimal disruption to teaching and the learning of pupils. Throughout this time the headteacher has worked conscientiously and diligently to keep the day to day management of the school operating. She has sustained the morale of staff and has been ably supported in this by the deputy headteacher and senior teacher to whom she has given clearly identified roles and responsibilities. Together they have united the staff into a team and it is this teamwork that is evident in all that the school now achieves. There is a distinct commitment to moving the school forward in all areas and staff have shown a willingness to succeed.
58. All the initiatives from central government, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, have been implemented successfully. Many other improvements have been made to enhance the curriculum, ensure the quality of care and to involve parents in the work of the school, for example, the Healthy School Award. Despite all this there remains a lack of overall direction and focus about the future role of the school and how to achieve this. These relative areas of strengths and weaknesses mean that overall leadership and management of the school is satisfactory.

59. The school development plan (SDP) has been improved and now guides the day to day management of the school satisfactorily. For example, subject leaders make detailed action plans for their subjects and these help to guide the allocation of learning resources. They have some time to evaluate the teaching and curriculum plans for their subject, but do not make best use of this. Nevertheless, the SDP does not set out a clear picture of the main priorities for the school to address or relate these to its stated aims. There is a better focus on teaching and pupils' achievements than previously reported, but as yet there is no evaluation of the effect of these. There are estimates given of what each section of the plan may cost, but there is no summary of how these costs will be met within the school's overall spending plan. This has led over several years to a large build up of money that has not been spent. The headteacher and governors recently allocated part of this money to particular projects and the remainder, with the approval of the LEA, is being reserved as a contingency fund. This is a reasonable course of action.
60. The school is making satisfactory progress in the self-review of its own performance. A success has been the way the headteacher has introduced pupil performance targets and encouraged the development of the P-Scales (measurement of attainment under Level 1 of the National Curriculum) which is building a profile of pupils' progress and achievement over several years. The work on this is not yet complete and as yet the school is unable to make accurate comparisons year on year of rates of improvement by pupils. However, whole school targets for pupil achievement have been set and many of these have been met.
61. The governors support the school well. All legal requirements are met. The chairman of governors is very experienced and is very helpful to the headteacher and staff in providing general support and advice as well as helping staff with supervision for trips and residential visits. He is very knowledgeable about the school and this has been particularly useful recently during many changes to the composition of the governing body. Recruitment of new governors has not always been easy, in particular parent governors, and there have been a number of changes to governors; but there is currently a full committee. Governors are very committed and take an active interest in the life of the school. They have recently established a satisfactory structure of committees to help cope with the ever widening scope of governors' responsibilities. Governors have given good support to staff during the building developments. They are beginning to develop ways of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, the curriculum, and of pupils' learning and achievements. They do this mainly by receiving verbal and written reports from subject leaders and from the headteacher and senior staff. This helps them make informed decisions. Governors also make visits to classrooms, but there are as yet no formal arrangements for them to be able to check the standards of what they see. They make sure that the best value is obtained when purchasing good and services, but are less effective in determining best value in terms of curriculum and teaching.
62. There are good day to day financial controls. The school administrative assistant runs a well organised school office. There are detailed records kept of expenditure using an information technology program. The most recent audit by the local education authority finance department found that overall the school manages its finances satisfactorily, but expressed concern at the high level of money unspent at the end of each year. Plans for contingencies or large scale projects have not been as clearly defined as they could be. The school has satisfactorily addressed the

recommendations of the audit report. Money in the school budget from central government grants is put to good use in helping to build up the curriculum, staff training and management systems. The school has worked successfully with the Education Action Zone (EAZ) which has provided some funding to the school and has been used appropriately to support pupils' achievements. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

63. There is an adequate number of teachers and support staff providing class sizes similar to other schools of this type. The staff have suitable expertise to provide for the needs of most of the pupils in the school. However, there is a need to increase expertise further in order to address the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour and autism. Training opportunities for staff are good and are available to all staff. Many of the training courses are identified in the school's development planning. Induction procedures for staff are good. Arrangements for appraisal of teachers are in place although at present the headteacher undertakes observations and other members of the senior management team are not used as team leaders. This places a greater strain on the management of time by the headteacher, leaving less time for overall strategic planning. Many of these duties could be securely left to other senior staff.
64. The school provides a very good level of accommodation that is well used by staff for the benefit of the pupils' learning and personal development. The area used for the separate class of autistic pupils is not conducive to the specific teaching required as there are too many doors and corridors and this detracts from the best management of pupils. The substantial new building additions and modifications to some of the original buildings are a very good improvement since the previous inspection.
65. The cleaning staff keep the school clean and well maintained. The caretaker takes great pride in the school undertaking many small repairs and decorating tasks. Catering staff provide meals of a good quality cooked on the premises and take an interest in the welfare of pupils. The school grounds provide pupils with access to good sized outside playgrounds and grassed areas. Current building work to provide new activity hall and hydrotherapy pool is securely separated from access by pupils.
66. Overall the range and quality of educational resources are never less than satisfactory and are appropriately used by staff to support the delivery of the school curriculum and have a good impact on learning. A priority for development should be the increase in the amount and range of information and communication technology resources, including further aids to communication.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In their Action Plan, governors and staff should address the following to promote standards further:
 - Promote better quality teaching by:
 - (1) Providing further training opportunities for all staff in the management of pupils displaying challenging behaviour. (Paragraphs 20, 22)
 - (2) Seeking models of good practice amongst other similar special schools in behaviour management strategies. (Paragraph 22)

- Improve the quality of individual behaviour management plans so that they include strategies to show how teachers expect pupils to improve over time or how they will be taught to manage their own behaviour. (Paragraph 48)
- Make adjustments to the curriculum for more able pupils so that they have relevant and challenging opportunities that will promote their achievement above Level 1 of the National Curriculum.* (Paragraph 29)
- Ensure the school development plan has a clear focus on supporting and improving the good the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. (Paragraph 59)
- Review and adjust the length of the school day and amend the timetable to create more teaching time, with shorter lessons but a better balance of time between subjects. (Paragraph 31)
- The headteacher and governors should plan within the school budget more accurately for contingencies and any large-scale projects. (Paragraph 59)

The headteacher and governors may wish to take the following into account when preparing their Action Plan:

- Signing- establish a more consistent approach to signing amongst all staff. (Paragraphs 24, 69)
- Assessment- reduce the number and types of assessment that are made and support teachers to make greater use of the information gained from them. (Paragraph 46)

* This activity is included in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	14	14	4	0	0
Percentage	0	15	37	37	10	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	
Number of pupils on the school's roll	60
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.25	School data	0.9

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	55
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	495

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	586305
Total expenditure	548760
Expenditure per pupil	9627
Balance brought forward from previous year	83517
Balance carried forward to next year	25000

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	60
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	18	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	11	3	3
The teaching is good.	77	23	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	24	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	11	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	51	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	30	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	26	3	0	15

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

68. Currently there are only three children in the Foundation Stage. They are of reception age and two learn alongside pupils who are in Year 1. The third has complex learning difficulties and is taught in the separate class for pupils with profound and multiple learning needs. Teaching is satisfactory and includes opportunities for two of them to learn alongside children from a local mainstream nursery school. The curriculum materials used by the school sufficiently reflect the recommendations of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the teacher ensures that experiences are organised in a way that supports young children to learn. Assessment is satisfactory. The early learning goals from the Foundation Stage Curriculum provide a suitable focus for the achievement of the three children because they are reflected in the teachers' lesson plans and they are appropriately considered by the teachers' when they assess the achievement of all the children and pupils in their classes. There is daily monitoring of each child's responses to activities and suitable evaluation of how effective lessons have been. The teacher uses the information she has about children's achievement appropriately to plan the experiences they are given. This promotes satisfactory learning, supporting children to acquire knowledge and skills.

ENGLISH

69. Achievement in English is good. There are now strengths overall in reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are developing at a slightly slower rate, which is recognised by staff and considered a priority area for development in the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been suitably adapted to meet pupils' needs. Literacy skills are taught well across the school although there is a weakness in the use of signing which is inconsistently used from one class to the next.
70. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. There are examples of good practice. For example, when the teacher reads to pupils in Years 1 and 2, they join in the story of "Shhh... Don't Wake Santa", by J. Sykes. A few pupils vocalise their responses and others use a switch to say their name. Lower attaining pupils listened avidly in this session. Most pupils spontaneously reached out to each other in response to cues in the song following the story, indicating they had understood the words and joined in without prompts. When younger pupils listened to the story of 'The Sheep at Christmas' in the school library, their attention was focused on the teacher as she read expressively to the group. When questioned, they remembered the name of the Baby Jesus. At other times pupils responded to high expectations by teachers and as a result, showed better speaking, signing and listening skills. Where there were lower demands made by teachers, pupils were easily distracted and did not attempt to take part in lessons, causing some disruption as their attention wandered.
71. During a regular weekly visit to the local library, pupils in Years 5 and 6 listened to a story read by the teacher about 'Laura's Golden Star' by Klaus Baumberg. The atmosphere in the hushed library corner was poignant as pupils listened quietly and with anticipation. The trip out enhanced pupils' understanding as they knew they

had to be attentive and listen carefully to the teachers' instructions particularly when they were crossing the road.

72. Pupils' progress in reading is good overall. It is best in Years 3 to 6. Older pupils by the end of Year 2, gain pleasure from reading using interactive approaches such as acting out their stories. Pupils hold their books the right way and improve their knowledge of left to right by hitting a switch attached to the computer, which starts objects entering and leaving the screen area. They show their delight as they recognise symbols. Teachers' support of reading helps pupils to develop their understanding of prepositions such as 'in, on and under.' Consequently pupils enjoy books and this is further helped by a plentiful supply of good quality fiction and non-fiction available to them in their classrooms.
73. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils have developed a small sight vocabulary of key words, which helps them to read their books from the Oxford Reading Tree. Pupils who visit the library can share out the books in the story sacks and enjoy the contents, which have been put together with the help of parents. Pupils take reading books home as homework. Teachers record pupils' progress in reading satisfactorily, although there some inconsistency between classes. Teachers use appropriate computer software to assist in pupils' reading. For example, a program is used to encourage pupils to match their names with their photographs and read them out to a partner.
74. Pupils' progress in writing is good. By Year 2, pupils can trace and join dot to dot pictures and letter shapes and can colour in shapes and pictures. Pupils with more complex needs are helped to feel shapes of letters on soft and textured materials as a story is read to them. They make marks on cards, boards and paper with support. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils can write simple sentences unaided. A few lower attaining pupils can write their names unaided and produce letters that are neat and legible. They copy and trace letters accurately, paying careful attention to size and shape. In a few lessons, teaching does not give enough attention to specific writing targets and work is not challenging so that pupils can disrupt the lessons as their attention wanders from their writing tasks.
75. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PLMD) make good progress and are helped to achieve well as a result of the good resources available and the commitment, enthusiasm and expertise of staff. PMLD pupils are benefiting from precise aims set by teachers and show good levels of awareness and response in drama and literacy activities.
76. Teaching is good overall. In the best lessons, teaching is effective because it is very well planned with a range of appropriate resources that are used well and there is good management of pupils' behaviour. There is very good teamwork with educational support assistants and together they ensure that pupils go on to more challenging activities which support pupils' achievements. However, not all teachers have strong strategies for managing the challenging behaviour of some pupils and this weakens the impact of learning, both for those pupils and often for others in the class, because of the distractions caused.
77. Teaching in reading and writing is satisfactory across other subjects. Adult support is well directed and helps to improve individual reading, writing and oracy skills. For a few pupils with more complex needs or autism, the restricted use of Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) is limiting their progress in literacy work as they become agitated and frustrated too easily. When they are focused on relevant activities and understand what they have to do, these pupils make better

progress and are more relaxed. Teachers are becoming more confident as they increase their range of expertise of different communications systems. Teachers make good use of the local environment to improve pupils' reading and communication skills. For example, as pupils walk to the local library, teachers encourage them to read street and other signs.

78. Assessment is satisfactory and has been improved by the teachers' use of the National Literacy Strategy materials. Individual language work is also being seen as a priority area for improvement. Specialised support is now available from the subject leader, to supplement the assessments provided by the Speech and Language Therapy Service.
79. The co-ordinator is very experienced and has worked hard to raise standards of English. She is well aware of the areas which need to be improved and is committed to developing the subject throughout the school. She recognises that pupils make better progress in classes where their behaviour is managed well. The school's long term action plan for English is satisfactory. Teaching resources are good.

MATHEMATICS

80. Overall, progress and achievement for pupils of all ages in mathematics is good. This include pupils with autism and those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This is good progress since the school was newly established. This improvement is mainly due to the high quality teaching and learning, especially the practical nature of lessons, which engage and interest pupils. The school has established the use of P-Scales (measurement of attainment under Level 1 of the National Curriculum) to assess the progress of pupils. This is good practice, works well and has helped to improve learning. Other improvements include an increased range and quality of learning resources and the implementation of a comprehensive plan of what pupils are to learn. The establishment of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) across the school and the support and involvement of the Educational Action Zone (EAZ), have all had a positive effect on the quality of teaching in mathematics and consequently for pupils' achievements.
81. By Year 2, pupils recognise numbers up to five, sing and sign songs up to five, such as 'Five little specked frogs' and 'Five mince pies in a bakers shop' and actively join in with the actions as they sing. When taking away, teachers ensure that there are practical aids and resources to use, which help the pupils to establish the concept. PMLD pupils explore the numbers one to five through a tactile experience. The numerals are made up of different materials. Pupils are introduced to a variety of shapes and the idea of some being 'big' and some being 'little'. Pupils use 'stampers', such as stars, presents, holly, to create repeating patterns and create their own Christmas wrapping paper. Teachers use registration time in the morning well, and ensure that pupils count how many children there are in the class.
82. By Year 6, pupils increase their understanding of addition and subtraction of number up to ten. Many pupils rote count further but do not have a full understanding of place value. In a Year 3 class, pupils worked hard to establish 'heavy and light'. Learning resources were well organised in advance, and used well to establish which bags and parcels were heavy or light. Pupils estimated first, then lifted the bags to see if they were correct. They the used balance beams (scales) to see that the heavy bags weighed down the beam and the lighter bags went up, establishing the concept of light and heavy. In a Year 6 class, pupils appreciated the

numbers of a clock face went up to 12. More able pupils put the numbers onto a blank clock face in the correct order. Less able pupils required support to complete the task. Much work was done to establish events of the day on a time scale, such as breakfast, lunch and what time do we go to bed. Good use is made of information and communication technology to complement the practical work done in classrooms. More able pupils successfully work independently on 'time' programs.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently high. Teachers plan mathematics lessons well to provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about number and shapes and to use their knowledge to solve simple number problems. There is good assessment of what pupils are learning and this helps the planning of further work. Teachers have high expectations for pupils in their work and behaviour, and set realistic targets for them to achieve. They try hard to increase what they know and understand. As a result, pupils are interested in what they do and concentrate well in lessons, persevering when work gets difficult, and asking for help in a polite way. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good as a result of the high quality teaching and relationships.
84. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well established across the school. The structure is being appreciated by both staff and pupils. The EAZ has been very supportive of the school, providing 'number sacks' for pupils, a numeracy week in school for all pupils, a parents' workshop for numeracy, and generally increasing the quality and quantity of mathematical resources. Pupils also had the benefit of an open day at a local department store where the staff organised for toys and games to be arranged in such a way to help pupils count; for example, the number of teddies on the shelf, and which ones were big and which were small. This went well and was appreciated by both staff and pupils. The school ensured work was recorded and that there was ample photographic evidence of the visit.
85. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader monitors planning and outcomes of lessons, as well as monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Mathematics has been a priority in the school development plan. This has paid dividends ensuring that pupils' progress and achievement have improved. Mathematics has a positive influence on pupils' social and moral development. Pupils take turns, help and support each other in lessons and are quick to celebrate each other's successes, often breaking into spontaneous applause.

SCIENCE

86. Achievement and progress in science is satisfactory throughout the school over time. Pupils make good and often very good progress in lessons. Pupils learn about light and dark as well as smells and taste that they experience in life. Teachers plan effectively to provide a good range of materials for pupils to explore, to help them to recognise differences. Pupils experience looking at different animals and discuss their investigation later in class.
87. By Year 2, pupils understand some of the living processes as they examine how bulbs that they have planted grow and develop. They have visited Chester Zoo where they observed flamingos as part of a looking at animals project. They make investigations and know which objects can float and which will sink, and make predictions about the characteristics of different materials.

88. Pupils receive good opportunities to experiment and investigate. Pupils in Year 5 understand they will see different colours when they shine light through a crystal necklace to observe the reflections projected on the wall in a darkened room and investigate the rainbow effect. They sing the song "Colours of the rainbow" to learn the names of colours. More able pupils in the group can name some of the colours without help.
89. By Year 6, pupils can investigate properties of materials. During a very good lesson to explore magnetism, they confidently experiment to find which objects are attracted to the magnets. The teacher has high expectations for pupils to learn and encourages them to test other objects in the classroom. This has a positive effect upon the way that pupils talk about their work. More able pupils could have been given the opportunity to predict the outcomes of these experiments. The pupils then recall what they have discovered as they complete worksheets to record their findings.
90. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is most successful when there is effective planning, as in a very effective lesson on magnetism for Year 6 pupils. The teacher recognises the progress that pupils are making and this is discussed with education support assistants who provide good support for pupils, asking carefully chosen questions to encourage pupils to find answers for themselves. Pupils with behavioural problems are managed well. For example, a pupil who at first refuses to participate in some activities, usually participates better when staff follow the targets set in her behaviour plan.
91. The content for the subject is drawn from the 'Equals Curriculum' which is designed for pupils with severe learning difficulties and therefore does not support more able pupils as well as it should because they are restricted in their learning opportunities. Assessment is undertaken well in lessons when teachers gain information from pupils' answers as well as how they complete worksheets. The more able pupils could have made more progress in most lessons. For instance: in most lessons teachers miss the opportunity to allow pupils to undertake simple written evaluations or opportunities to record in their own way to show how much they have learned.
92. The subject leader manages the subject well, ensuring that good information is provided to help teachers plan lessons. However, the subject leader has insufficient involvement in checking what other teachers are doing in order to pass on good practice in planning, assessment or teaching pupils according to their need. The subject action plan provides a useful direction for developments in the subject. However, it is not based on strengths and weaknesses of the subject gained from a view of how well pupils are achieving. The accommodation for science is satisfactory for the work being undertaken. There has been considerable investment in new resources of good quality.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory over time, although there are a few examples of good and very good work in displays in the school. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons well based on the planned content for the work. It ensures that small group work effectively enables pupils to create art using different materials, such as collage, printing, and three dimensional work as well as different ways of drawing and painting.

94. By Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress as they learn basic drawing and painting skills. They start to explore pattern and texture as they create collages and simple prints. By Year 6, pupils are given opportunities, through the planned units, to develop their skills further as they learn more about colour, tone and line. Pupils have undertaken three-dimensional work, for example in dough and clay. There is limited work by pupils relating to the work of known artists. There is work that is inspired by different cultural settings, for instance when Indian fabric patterns are used as a source for pupils' pattern making. This makes a good contribution to multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum.
95. Good planning by teachers introduces pupils to a range of techniques. In a good lesson in printing, pupils were given the opportunity to undertake both sponge printing and screen printing. Pupils successfully produced Christmas wrapping paper and images for Christmas cards. The teacher retains pupils' interest through the good pace of the lesson and the provision of opportunities for them to take part in a variety of activities. Where teaching does not manage the poor behaviour of a few pupils learning is affected. Teachers do not always record pupils' achievements accurately. This can affect the level of work being set for pupils.
96. The planning for art ensures a broad coverage of techniques and skills. However, pupils could be given more opportunity to explore different types of materials, particularly in relation to three-dimensional work. There is a small amount of computer use in art but this could be developed.
97. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The subject leader provides advice and support for other staff, including running and organising training events. However, there is limited evaluation of how the subject is taught across the school. Resources for the subject are good and the very good overall. Accommodation is used appropriately with the subject being taught in class bases.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school. This represents good progress since the school was newly established as a primary school. The significant improvements in pupils' progress and achievement are because of developments in the way in which the subject is planned and the quality of teaching. Design and technology is now taught well. The designing and making activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning to communicate and to developing numeracy, physical, personal and social skills.
99. The youngest pupils, in Years 1 and 2, explore materials and their textures. For example, when making biscuits in food technology, they compare the mixture before and after cooking. They mix the ingredients, roll out the mixture and using biscuit cutters cut out shapes to make stars and Christmas trees. After putting them into the microwave they set the timer and timed them cooking. They were able to watch through the glass panel in the front of the cooker as the biscuits turned round as they cooked. Pupils wore protective aprons and safety and hygiene was stressed at all times. They evaluated the results by tasting them! Pupils enhanced their mathematical skills when weighing and measuring ingredients.
100. Pupils in the autistic class designed and made Christmas snowmen and calendars. Pupils selected pictures and used their cutting skills to cut out the profiles they needed and used glue to arrange their calendars. They cut out and stuck on the snowman's body, hat, scarf and eyes. Communication between pupils and staff

ensured pupils understood what they were doing. At times staff use the picture exchange system (PECS) and signing very effectively to enhance communication and check pupils' understanding.

101. By Year 6, pupils make fridge magnets. Using a type of dough, they roll out and cut out the required shapes. Using rough and smooth rollers they select the tactile finish they want. As they work, they discuss the type of materials they want to work with, the textures, colours, size and shapes, generally increasing their technology vocabulary. At the end of the lesson, pupils voluntarily cleared away the resources they had used, indicating a positive attitude to the subject. They were keen to discuss their work with visitors, and showed great enjoyment and pride in their work.
102. Pupils, from Years 5 and 6, integrate half a day per week with mainstream pupils from other local schools in a local education authority scheme called 'Level 3'. They take advantage of the highly trained design and technology skills offered by their staff. As a result pupils gain good skills, knowledge, and also grow in self-esteem and confidence.
103. The quality of teaching and learning of design and technology for all pupils is good. Lessons are well planned and linked to other subject work to help pupils learn more effectively. Teachers and support staff work well together and encourage each pupil to complete their tasks as independently as possible. Consequently, pupils rise to this challenge, try hard to do their best and are pleased with the results of their efforts.
104. The leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory. Although learning resources are satisfactory, the school lacks a traditional cooker and has to modify cooking to suit microwave recipes. In the reception class, the sink and benches are too high to allow pupils to wash up and tidy away after themselves, therefore this has to be done by staff reducing the progress pupils make. Design and technology provides good support to pupils' social development.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

105. The planning for history and geography is satisfactory. Due to timetable arrangements only one lesson of geography or history was observed. Teaching was unsatisfactory, as was pupils' achievement, mainly because there was weak management of the behaviour of a few pupils. Discussions with the subject leader for both subjects, analysis of teachers' plans and of pupils' work, indicate that teachers provide an appropriate range of learning opportunities for pupils, which enable them to acquire knowledge and understanding. Pupils' progress and achievement over time are satisfactory.
106. Topics such as 'old and new toys' are studied in history and 'the weather' and 'the natural environment' in geography. The school has selected suitable units of work from the 'Equals Curriculum' materials. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subjects is further enhanced by many visits that are organised by teachers to places of historical or geographical interest locally, such as museums. Displays of pupils' work show that they have understood the difference between old and new, and know about changes in the weather.
107. Leadership and management of both subjects are satisfactory. Subject development plans have been established and appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified. These include the further development of

resources in both subjects, which are currently satisfactory. The subject leader monitors teachers' plans but this does not result in feedback to help them improve the learning and work they prepare for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in information and communication technology (ICT). Although the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and often good in lessons, ICT is not always used as well as it could be as a tool to improve pupils' learning in all classes.
109. By Year 2, progress and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils use switches and control programs on the computer screen. In one lesson, pupils record sounds and others operate a touch switch to locate pupils' names with their faces using a computer program. Younger pupils use control toys effectively to knock down skittles and there is keen interest shown as pupils listen to what they have recorded using a program called 'Card Master'. Work is well thought out and ensures that pupils' individual plans are followed. There is excitement as the teacher rewards the group for their achievements.
110. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are thrilled and excited when using a range of Big Macks to produce the voices in the story 'Three Little Pigs'. All pupils are helped to produce the sound effects to link to the story either by guiding or hand covering. The high quality of planning and support make this a very successful lesson and pupils make good progress, showing improvements in eye tracking and appropriate responses.
111. By Year 6, progress and achievement is satisfactory. Older, higher achieving pupils are well motivated and work on the computer in a mathematics lesson, their learning is extended by the use of a jigsaw puzzle program. They show good understanding of the game's purpose and use it independently. At the end of this lesson, pupils can discuss their learning and the events of the day well.
112. When ICT is used effectively in lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are still large gaps in pupils' use of ICT, but teachers are establishing a more regular pattern for the use of computers. There is a small amount of evidence in pupils' records of achievement of their use of ICT, but very little evidence around the school in displays or other work, to show how much they use ICT in the wider sense. Touch switches, however, are used extensively around the school to enable pupils to communicate with the teachers and support staff and used by older pupils to operate electrical devices.
113. The subject is managed well by an enthusiastic subject leader who has been instrumental in making the subject a high priority. This is being achieved through staff training and ensuring that every class has access to a computer. Maintenance of the computers and the marshalling of resources is very efficient, due to the regular services provided by a technician. Staff are now more confident about using ICT. However, as yet there is no whole-school approach, although this is planned. Assessment is satisfactory. Further staff training is planned for the next school year. Improvements in checking how teachers currently use ICT in the classroom are to be implemented during this time. There is some time allocated to this at present, but insufficient opportunity to do this on a regular basis.

MUSIC

114. Pupils of all ages and abilities make satisfactory progress. Teachers' subject knowledge although satisfactory needs further development. Teachers provide an appropriate range of experiences, which enable pupils to listen to music, compose and perform and to learn skills.
115. Pupils in Years 2, 4 and 5 are able to maintain a beat. When they concentrate and listen to instructions pupils accurately copy clapping patterns and pupils in Year 4 shake bells to a given beat when they sing 'The Grand Old Duke of York.' In a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, pupils make satisfactory progress but activities are not as well planned to support their learning. For example, the activities for pupils in Year 4 are not age appropriate. The choice of a nursery rhyme such as 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' is inappropriate. The activities planned for pupils in Year 5 make them over excited and contribute to their inappropriate behaviour. Because activities are not well matched to their needs pupils of all abilities are not able to participate effectively and they do not make as much progress as they could.
116. Pupils make satisfactory progress when adults give them appropriate support by reinforcing the teachers' instructions and by giving them verbal encouragement. For example, pupils in Year 2 make music by scratching materials and banging oven gloves together. Adults help them to be successful by copying the teacher's instructions and praising pupils for their efforts.
117. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but is sometimes less effective than it could be. Pupils with more complex needs, who join classes for music, are not always included effectively because teachers do not adapt the activities to help them participate or achieve. Teachers do not provide enough activities that interest and challenge pupils. Good activities are planned; for example making sounds with cloth amplified through a Karaoke machine, but these activities are not sustained throughout the lesson. Pupils frequently lose interest and their behaviour deteriorates.
118. Pupils' achievement is enhanced by the good opportunities to participate in activities provided by visiting musicians such as a steel band and by musicians from other cultures such as Chinese drummers. Teachers use music appropriately across the curriculum for example, songs in literacy and numeracy. There is a good range of music used during the school assemblies. These opportunities make an effective contribution to teaching and learning and they support pupils to make satisfactory progress. There are also good opportunities for pupils to have time with a music therapist. Teachers use music regularly in many other lessons to support pupils' progress. For example, number and word songs are sung to support literacy and numeracy. Circle time often includes songs and music. Music from different faiths is played in religious education.
119. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A suitable development plan has been established. The school has created a music room that ensures that resources are all in one place and instruments such as electronic keyboards can be left set up so they are readily available. This facility was not used during the inspection. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Pupils throughout the school achieve well. By Year 2 pupils make good progress in gymnastics. They take turns very well as they move around a circuit of low level tables and benches. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions accurately to climb onto and jump off apparatus on to mats, improving their speed of completing the tasks as they try them again. There is a good emphasis on correct landings and monitoring of safe practice. Relationships are very good as they encourage each other during their lesson. By Year 6, pupils participate well in a good range of activities, such as games, athletics and gymnastics, making good progress over time. Pupils enjoy the activities and have a good attitude to learning.
121. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and education support assistants work effectively to support pupils' participation and help them make progress. There is usually good lesson planning that clearly identifies the activities, how they will be taught and what pupils will learn. This enables the education support assistants to effectively support teaching and learning because they are clear what their roles and responsibilities are. For example, they encourage lower attaining pupils to join in, praising them for their efforts, enabling them to make the same levels of progress. However, assessment is not always accurate and therefore a few targets set for pupils do not always sufficiently challenge more able pupils.
122. There is a good emphasis by staff on encouraging pupils' personal development when pupils change clothing for activities. Younger pupils are expected to change independently but they are given enough support to enable them to be successful. Teachers make sure there is an appropriate emphasis on warm up and cool down activities and pupils demonstrate a good response to the change of pace as they relax at the end of lessons. Pupils enjoy lessons and work hard.
123. Physiotherapists contribute effectively to promoting pupils' physical development through individual work with pupils. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to join with other special school pupils for sporting activities such as the 'Panathlon' organised in the area.
124. The subject leader manages the subject well. The monitoring of planning is effective, leading to changes to improve lessons and hence pupils' progress, but there is no evaluation by the subject leader of the quality of teaching by other teachers. The accommodation is just satisfactory for the activities, although the hall is rather small. A new sports hall provision and hydrotherapy -swimming pool is under construction and this will improve accommodation significantly. Resources have been recently upgraded and there is now a good range of equipment of a very high quality. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Teachers' planning appropriately follows the local authority's agreed syllabus. All pupils receive religious education lessons and are given many good opportunities to learn about world faiths. During the inspection only two lessons was available to be seen, but analysis of teachers' planning, records and pupils' work shows that they make satisfactory achievement and progress at all ages
126. In a lesson for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties of all ages, pupils celebrate the Jewish festival of light, Hanukkah, with the lighting of two candles. They are mesmerised by the spectacle of twinkling lights around their room and the teacher's poetic build up to the final candles being lit. Staff work to increase pupils' eye contact with the artefacts and hold objects of reference so that

pupils can touch, feel and smell them during the teachers telling of the story of Hanukah. The teacher's careful planning assists pupils' awareness and helps them to concentrate and they make satisfactory progress in signing or indicating their choice of preference.

127. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, listen to the story of the Nativity and then watch a video of the previous year's school Nativity Concert. During the story, a number of pupils do not listen well or make good eye contact when asked questions about the sequence of events. However, when the video is shown, they become more focused and pay good attention as they anticipate the parts they played a year earlier. They show good recall and knowledge of the Nativity. Higher achieving pupils can name pupils and staff and recall the events of the story as they unfold on film. They recall the story of the birth of Jesus.
128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well prepared and resources are exciting and enticing. There is a good range of artefacts and foods prepared for younger pupils. Art materials are used to make the symbolic candelabra for Hanukah. These are displayed around a central array of lights to good effect. Staff encourage all pupils to take part and offer sensitive support and gentle coaxing to include every pupil when listening, watching and making representations of festivals. Most pupils listen and respond well. When some lose concentration, there is flexibility within the planning to change the task and refocus the group.
129. Teachers make the most of local resources. The area is rich in buildings from world faiths and a number of visits have been made to local churches and cathedrals, a temple, mosque and synagogue. Different faith ceremonies are celebrated in the school. For example, evidence from photographs on display in the classroom shows the staff preparations for the recent Hindu festival of Divali with an array of special food and sweetmeats. The photographs show the delight on pupils' faces, as they were entertained. Pupils recalled the special day as they talked to inspectors about the display and photographs.
130. The subject leader manages the subject well and has attended a number of training courses to improve her knowledge. She has worked hard to improve the range of resources, which are now satisfactory. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

131. Pupils' achievements in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the progress they make during their time in the school, are good. This is as a result of good teaching in lessons and in the wide range of opportunities provided. All staff promote personal development both in PSHE lessons and in most experiences provided by the school. This ensures that the children are given many opportunities to develop their social skills; for example, whilst sharing toys at playtime, eating at lunchtime, or social communication at snack times. Pupils' social and personal development is a central aim of the work of the school and one that it meets well.
132. As well as being taught as a separate subject, PSHE is successfully taught across a wide range of other subjects and activities. Additional time is given to PSHE at the beginning and end of each day. This works well. Activities at morning break and lunch time and during many other experiences around school are well used to support pupils' learning in aspects of PSHE. The school makes good use of these additional opportunities to extend pupils skills. From a very early age, pupils are expected to do things for themselves and they are encouraged to become as

independent as possible. By the end of Year 2, pupils begin to have some idea of self, and learn to notice other people. They help to collect equipment, and show care and sympathy for others in their group.

133. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and involves the use of well-planned practical experiences, for example, dressing and changing for physical education lessons in Reception and Year 1. Older pupils improve their knowledge of personal hygiene and safety, particularly when using knives and utensils preparing sandwiches for snacks. By the end of Year 6, pupils are encouraged to communicate and socialise through speech, signing, symbols and the use of picture exchange system (PECS), in this way they learn to share, take turns, make choices and decisions. They have good opportunities to work individually, in pairs and small groups. Several pupils have opportunities to work, play and socialise with mainstream children through planned integration lessons. All pupils have opportunities to mix with mainstream pupils on occasions such as when local primary pupils are invited into school for assemblies, science and mathematics special days.
134. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils well. Pupils' responses are regularly assessed and recorded and good records are kept. Varied and stimulating teaching encourages pupils to listen well in lessons, and try very hard to achieve their targets. Most pupils sustain activities for extended periods of time. Teachers and support assistants provide good models of listening, respecting and valuing others and working hard. As a result, behaviour and pupils' enthusiasm to learn is good.
135. Individual welcome sessions at the beginning of the day and 'good-bye' sessions at the end of the day, circle time, breaks and lunchtimes, movement around the school, and experiences out on visits are all used to consolidate and extend learning. Detailed assessments are made and information shared with parents. This helps parents and the school follow the same approach to develop a particular skill. PSHE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.