

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**SANDSIDE LODGE SCHOOL**

ULVERSTON

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112466

Head teacher: Mrs J Billingham

Reporting inspector: Mrs N Buckingham  
16722

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 252952

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandside Road Ulverston
Postcode:	LA12 9EF
Telephone number:	01229 894180
Fax number:	01229 894180
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Shuttleworth
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16722	Mrs N Buckingham	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it?
			Modern Foreign Language	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
				What should the school do to improve further?
19741	Mr T Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18819	Mr J Atkinson	Team inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
			Post 16	
21397	Mrs I Bradbury	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
			Art and design	
18932	Mrs H Jones	Team inspector	Geography	
			History	
			Religious education	
22227	Mr M McCabe	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Physical education	
			Education inclusion	
			Special educational needs	
22466	Mrs D Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Design and technology	
			PHSE/Citizenship	



The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited  
14 Enterprise House  
Kingsway  
Team Valley  
Gateshead  
NE11 0SR

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sandside Lodge School is a day special school for pupils aged between 2 and 19 years who have severe learning difficulties. A few have more complex learning difficulties and an increasing number are recognised as having Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). At the time of the inspection there were no pupils of nursery age and only 1 pupil of reception age because two pupils were absent. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and attainment on entry is below what would normally be expected of pupils of this age because of their learning difficulties. Currently there are 64 pupils on roll and this is a significant increase since the previous inspection. No pupils have been excluded during the last year and there are no pupils from minority ethnic groups.

The school is situated in Ulverston in the southern end of the Lake District and pupils come from a wide area. Most pupils are transported to school by mini-bus or taxi and some have long journeys. The socio-economic background of pupils is varied. Fourteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The oldest pupils and students attend courses at Furness College in Barrow. The school has good links with a number of primary and high schools into which some pupils are included on a part time basis.

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

Sandside Lodge is a good school with some very good features. As a result of the good teaching pupils learn well and make good progress overall. This is supported by the very good relationships and team work between all adults and pupils across the school. All have a shared commitment to the success of the school. These are strengths of the school and lead to a very positive learning environment. The work of the school is led very well by the head teacher who has a clear vision for its future development. Excellent use is made of the community to enrich pupils learning which in turn supports the good progress they make in a range of subjects. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The head teacher provides very strong leadership and provides a very strong steer for its future development.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good and as a result pupils make good progress and have very positive attitudes towards school.
- All adults in the school work very well as a team and have a shared commitment to the continued success of the school.
- Relationships across the school are very good and pupils are well managed which leads to very good behaviour.
- The school ensures very good equality of access and opportunity to all pupils to school activities.
- The school makes excellent use of the community to enrich pupils' learning.
- Provision for personal, health and social education is very good.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities.

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

- The role of the curriculum co-ordinators.
- The role of the governing body in complying with statutory requirements and greater involvement in the monitoring role and in the long term development of the school.
- A wider involvement and consultation in agreeing the School Improvement Plan.
- The quality of information in reports to parents and ensuring that they meet statutory requirements.
- The use of Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum.

- The length of some lessons.

*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 May 1998 and responded positively to the key issues raised in that inspection and has gone on to make further improvements. As a result progress has been good. It has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies successfully and these have a positive impact on pupils' achievements in these subjects. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and there are improvements in many subjects of the curriculum especially information and communication technology. The school makes good use of P scales (nationally agreed assessment scales) and PIVATS (Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting) to assess pupils' progress and uses this data to set both individual and whole school targets. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is now more focused and wide ranging leading to a better informed senior management team and governing body. However, there is too little consultation about the formation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The school took the decision to employ classroom assistants previously employed by the Local Education Authority and this has given a stability to classroom support and pupils. A commitment to work towards the Investors in People award has led to improved opportunities for staff development for all staff.

## STANDARDS

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

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by Year 6</b>	<b>by Year 11</b>	<b>By Year 13</b>	<b>Key</b>	
speaking and listening	A	A	A	very good	A
Reading	B	B	B	Good	B
Writing	B	B	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B		

Generally pupils achieve well and make good progress over time in most subjects of the curriculum in relation to their prior learning. Whole school targets have been set following consideration of the assessment information the school uses to monitor pupils' progress and these aim to raise the level of pupils' achievements. The school also uses the P scales and PIVATS information to set individual targets on pupils' individual education plans (IEP) which are achievable and appropriate allowing pupils to make good progress towards meeting them. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics science and personal, social and health education. Particular attention is given to the development of pupils' communication skills and this is very successful. Pupils with ASD are able to make good progress in terms of their behaviour because of the good management strategies used by staff. Successful links with Furness College give students very good opportunities to gain externally accredited awards and an understanding of the wider world. This adds to the opportunities they have in school. Similarly some younger pupils are able to access some lessons in local primary schools and benefit from working with mainstream children.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They enjoy school and work hard responding well to the challenges presented to them in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils act sensibly and are friendly towards each other and adults. They behave very well in lessons. Behaviour plans are monitored consistently ensuring that any misbehaviour is well managed and there is very little disruption to lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and carry out any duties well. They develop confidence as they move through the school. Older pupils who are involved in the school council do so with increased maturity. Relationships across the school are very good and are a strength of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are in line with similar schools. Some absences are outside the control of the school. For example, respite care which is too far away from the school. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall with just over a third of the teaching observed being very good or excellent. The best teaching is in Years 3 – 6 where it is consistently good or very good. There is some good teaching in every subject and this is supported by the very effective teamwork between teachers and classroom assistants, which is a very influential factor and means that pupils have every opportunity to learn well and make good progress. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan their lessons and often work is tailored to meet individual abilities. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good overall and the basic skills are well promoted across the school. Communication skills are particularly well promoted with signing and the use of symbols supporting the spoken word. In most subjects a good range of activities is provided and resources are often imaginative and motivate pupils to maintain their interest. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure and lessons are well planned. Personal, social and health education is well developed and the new citizenship programme is being well taught. Where teaching is less successful tasks are not always appropriate for the ages of pupils, the pace of lessons is weak and objectives are vague. In addition, sometimes pupils with the most complex learning needs are not fully engaged in lessons and learn little. In these lessons, insufficient thought is given to how these pupils can be included so that they are learning as well as their peers. The school meets the needs of pupils well, including those pupils with ASD.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The quality of the curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements and is relevant to pupils' needs. The school provides very good equality of access and opportunity for pupils and makes excellent use of the community to enrich the curriculum. Some lessons are too long for the younger pupils, in particular, who find it difficult to sustain their concentration.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social and moral skills and this is evident in their very good behaviour and attitudes to school. Spiritual development remains good and supports the school's positive ethos. Cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The school uses the local community well to improve pupil's knowledge and understanding of their own culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school continues to look after its pupils well and pupils feel safe and secure. Child protection procedures are secure and appropriate risk assessments are in place. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance are good. Assessment of pupils' progress is good and procedures for monitoring their personal and academic development are good.

Parents have very positive views about the school. They are happy with the quality of education their children receive and feel comfortable about approaching the school. Some parents regularly support school activities and organise events which raise considerable amounts of money for the school. The curriculum is balanced and broad and is relevant to the needs of the pupils. The curriculum for Post 16 students is well organised and offers them a wide range of activities on top of basic skills. There are good links with other schools and some pupils have regular opportunities to attend mainstream schools. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and significantly enriches pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher provides very strong leadership and gives a clear education direction to the work of the school. She works well with an able deputy and all staff have a shared commitment to the success of the school. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is not fully developed and the senior management team does not consult widely enough in formulating the School Improvement Plan.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors support the school very well, but not all statutory requirements are in place, for example, omissions in the Annual Report to Parents. They monitor the budget very well and ensure that the school achieves value for money on major expenditure but do not actively monitor the work of the school. They have a limited role in determining the long term strategic view of the schools' future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors teaching and uses P scales and PIVATS well to assess pupils' achievements and to set whole school targets for improvement. The school consults widely, for example, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff and escorts etc, about their views of the work of the school, this information has been collated but it is not exactly clear how it

	will be used.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses available funds well. Staff are well deployed, the school uses its own and the community resources very well and as a result pupils learn well and make good progress.

The school has sufficient well qualified teachers for the number of pupils and has a very good number of classroom assistants who are also well qualified. They work very well as a team, which has a positive impact on pupils' ability to learn and make progress. Accommodation is good overall and the specialist rooms in the upper school are used well. Resources in school are satisfactory overall but are good in the specialist areas and in ICT in particular. The leadership and management of the school have helped to create a positive learning environment in which pupils are valued as individuals and their efforts are celebrated and supported. The school is developing ways of implementing the principles of best value, for example, when making major expenditures and beginning to compare themselves with similar schools.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and achieve as well as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework their children receive</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the areas which most please parents and also that the amount and frequency of homework which is set is inconsistent across the school. However, the inspectors found that pupils are offered a good range of extra-curricular activities, for example, residential visits, and the school makes very good use of the community to enhance pupils' experiences.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 The achievements of pupils are good when set against their prior learning and their individual special needs. All pupils have statements of special educational needs which identify severe learning difficulties as their major problem. An increasing number are identified with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and only a very small minority have very complex learning needs. It is therefore inappropriate to compare pupils' achievements with national averages and expectations. The school meets the needs of pupils very well and there are no discernible differences between the achievements of boys and girls. Although there are only a very small number of pupils with complex learning needs insufficient thought is given to how they can be fully engaged in lessons and thus make better progress. Pupils make good progress over time as a result of the good teaching and very good teamwork, which gives pupils very good quality support and increases their confidence.

2 All pupils have an individual education plan (IEP) and, where appropriate, some have a behaviour plan. These are used consistently in lessons. While the school monitors individual progress and uses this information to set whole school targets, it does not undertake any further detailed analysis about how well boys and girls progress, for instance. The school uses both P scales and PIVATS to assess pupil's progress and are in the process of having some pupils' work moderated by PIVATS to compare how well they are doing, for example, with other schools.

3 Achievements in English are good and pupils make good progress especially in communication skills which are reinforced across the curriculum. In all lessons pupils and students listen attentively and respond using whatever means they can, for instance, by speaking, by signing or visual/physical gesture. Pupils are encouraged to speak in sentences and their confidence increases as they move through the school, for example, older pupils can hold simple discussions during school council sessions and with adults in more informal situations. Achievements in reading are good and pupils enjoy books at many levels, for example, looking at pictures and reading with an adult or group or using books independently. The youngest pupils know that symbols have meaning and older pupils are developing appropriate strategies for self-correction. They read with expression reflecting different characters. Pupils' achievements in writing are generally in line with their abilities. Younger pupils over-write or copy underneath words and sentences which have been written for them by an adult and some pupils use-joined up writing which shows some maturity in style. Other pupils use symbols appropriately to make their meaning clear. In Year 8 some pupils can use a dictionary to find a particular spelling but pupils generally make good attempts with their spelling, even if they have the right sound but the wrong letters. Pupils write for different purposes, such as, invitations and lists.

4 In mathematics pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is good overall, lessons are well structured and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. By the end of Year 2 some pupils can count to 20 and recognise numbers to 10. The use of games and number rhymes makes learning fun and pupils respond positively. Work using numbers is extended and by the end of Year 6 some pupils can count forwards and backwards and also in two's and ten's. Mathematical language is used, such as, next to, underneath and ninth, and pupils are encouraged to respond appropriately and this supports improvement in their language generally. Older pupils build on previous work and teachers recap and reinforce work so that pupils have a secure understanding of basic concepts. They learn about money and use this knowledge practically when shopping for ingredients for food technology.

5 Pupils achieve well in science and make good progress because of the good range of interesting resources, good subject knowledge of the teachers and challenging activities. By the end of Year 2 pupils investigate materials in a number of different ways and by the end of Year 6 have extended this work and also have a good understanding of electricity. Older pupils investigate how animals move and can categorise items into 'hot' or 'cold'. By the end of Year 11 they build on their prior learning and carry out investigations in more depth, they look at the differences between living and non-living things and learn how the digestive system works. As they move through the school pupils record their work, sometimes using graphs and this supports their numeracy skills.

6 Achievements in ICT are good and pupils make good progress. This is largely due to the improved provision for the subject and regular use has increased pupils' confidence. By the end of Year 2 pupils can use a mouse, are familiar with the interactive whiteboard and with help, they can load a drawing program and print their work. Less able pupils are beginning to understand cause and effect and enjoy using switches to activate toys. By the end of Year 6, pupils have increased their skills and use a range of programs for a variety of uses and can use the Internet for basic research. By the time pupils are at the end of Year 11 they have quite sophisticated skills and some work independently. They published a newsletter using editing and collating skills, set up their own files and use the neighbourhood network.

7 In religious education pupils achieve well and make good progress mainly because of the very positive learning ethos which is generated by good support, good resources and an appropriate pace to lessons. Pupils learn about the life of Jesus, they think about feelings and develop an understanding of special occasions. They also learn about other religions, for example, when visiting a Greek Orthodox Church.

8 Students in Post 16 achieve well in both the life skills and basic skills elements of their curriculum. Their work is accredited via nationally recognised awards and they are well prepared for continuing their education or seeking employment.

9 Achievements in most other subjects of the curriculum are good overall, but satisfactory in music and French.

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

10 Attitudes to learning have improved since the previous inspection, and are now generally very good. Pupils enjoy school and work hard throughout the day. They are interested in the tasks given to them and, through resourceful teaching and good support from classroom assistants, most sustain their concentration well in lessons.

11 Behaviour remains very good, both in and out of class, and also when pupils go out of school on visits. Pupils act sensibly and show proper respect for the school's fabric, fittings and resources. The ethos of the school is calm, orderly and happy. The pupils' very good behaviour is supported well by the very good relationships in the school and this supports their social and moral development. The school uses a commercially produced approach to managing behaviour and this is successful. Some pupils have individual behaviour plans and these are consistently monitored and sometimes referred to in lesson plans. In lessons pupils generally meet adult expectations that they will work hard and co-operate with each other when appropriate. There have been no exclusions in recent years and bullying is not a problem. No incidents were reported or observed during the inspection.

12 Pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection, and is now generally good. The ethos of the school is calm, orderly and happy. Most understand the impact of their actions upon others and show respect for other peoples' feelings. For example, in a Year 8 physical education lesson



pupils clapped and cheered each other's efforts. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, and carry out their duties well. The newly formed school council, which meets each week and consists of all pupils in the upper school, is a good example of this. It is developing well and provides valuable opportunities for them to show initiative. Some older pupils also volunteer to help to look after younger ones when going home in the afternoon. Relationships generally remain very strong. This makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Adults and pupils respect each other especially in the upper school which enables pupils to grow in confidence and mature. Younger pupils look to adults for reassurance and support. Pupils are polite and work well together when opportunities are provided for them to do so.

13 Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now broadly similar to that for special schools nationally. What is more, the head teacher anticipates further improvements to come about shortly. This is because a new respite centre has opened locally, which means that pupils in respite care will be able to attend school, where previously they could not because their home was too far away. Unauthorised absence remains extremely low. Punctuality is not a problem despite the long distances that many pupils have to travel in order to attend school. They arrive on time and sessions start promptly.

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

14 Teaching is good overall with about a third of that observed being very good or excellent. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The best teaching is in Years 3 – 6 where all teaching is good or very good. There is some good teaching in every subject and it is consistently at least good in ICT, design and technology, geography, personal and social education and physical education.

15 In the best lessons where teaching is excellent or very good every opportunity is used to extend pupils learning, for example, in a literacy lesson for Year 1 pupils when stimulating resources encouraged and challenged these young pupils and maintained their interest throughout the lesson. In these lessons teachers are clear about what it is they want pupils to learn. Very good use was made of a digital camera in a geography lesson to record places and objects on route. These were then used back in the classroom to remind pupils what they had seen. In these lessons teaching was lively and the enthusiasm of the teacher was transferred to the pupils who responded with equal enthusiasm. Much thought is given to the choice of resources which reinforce the lesson objectives. In an English lesson with older pupils, with the most complex learning needs, photographs allowed them to match symbols to the photograph. In many lessons imaginative resources maintain pupils' interest in learning, motivates their imaginations and reinforces the learning objectives.

16 Lesson planning is generally good with clear objectives and a good structure. Reference is made to pupil's individual learning or behaviour targets on many plans and work is also different to meet individual abilities and this supports pupils' opportunities for learning. Behaviour is very well managed so that classrooms are calm environments in which pupils concentrate and work hard. They want to please and are given every encouragement to succeed. The quality of plenary sessions at the end of lessons is variable with the best involving all pupils and reviewing what each has learned using good questions and sharing good work. Less successful plenary sessions are hurried and tend to finish abruptly.

17 Within the classroom teachers not only use oral and visual means for communication but supplement these by signing and symbols so that all pupils are developing their individual communication skills. In addition the very good teamwork between all adults and the very good knowledge they have of individual pupils means that pupils learn well. Also all adults provide good role models for the pupils which supports their moral and social development. The very high adult/pupil ratio has a positive impact in the classroom and this, coupled with the very good knowledge all adults have of the pupils and the very good relationships between them, means that pupils feel secure, learn well and make progress. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and can plan the work in small steps. Pupils are encouraged to

think about what they are doing, work as independently as they can, but know that support is available if required.

18 Teaching in English is overall good, the National Literacy Strategy is well planned and has been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Similarly the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Basic skills are effectively reinforced across the curriculum and the use of subject specific technical language is encouraged, for example in science. Numeracy skills are also used well in lessons, for example, in physical education. In a design and technology lesson in lower school for example, pupils used mathematics' skills to classify fruit and vegetables and used adjectives such as, "soft, cold, squashy and gorgeous" which they had previously learnt to use in an English lesson.

19 In some subjects such as English and mathematics, pupils are taught in ability groups which enables teaching to be effectively aimed at their specific abilities. In English, for example, in Years 7 - 11, one group of pupils learned to identify letter combinations at the beginning and end of words whilst another group of a similar age experienced a sensory story about the sea shore in which they felt pebbles and sand with their feet.

20 Weaknesses in teaching occur when lessons do not have sufficient activities to keep pupils interested and tasks are not always age appropriate. In other lessons there are missed opportunities for pupils to experiment and develop their creativity, as in an art lesson when the tasks were set and there was no room for individual imagination. Also some lessons are too long, especially for the youngest pupils who struggle to maintain their concentration. Occasionally the few pupils with the most complex learning needs are not always fully involved in lesson activities and therefore do not learn as effectively as they might, for example in an art lesson with Year 1 pupils.

21 Day to day assessment is good and is used to inform future lessons, for example, classroom assistants record pupils' responses during lessons. Homework is occasionally given but often it is not planned, with the task being to complete unfinished work from the lesson. This gives parents only limited opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.

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

22 The quality of the curriculum is good and there has been a good improvement since the last inspection in the key issues identified at that time. The time allocated to subjects, particularly mathematics and science, has been increased. A careers education and guidance programme has been introduced at Post 16. The length of the school day has been increased and is now in line with the nationally recommended figures. A scheme of work for ICT has been introduced and is being taught throughout the school.

23 All statutory requirements are now in place and pupils experience the full range of the National Curriculum along with religious education, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and sex education. The school provides very good equality of access and opportunity for pupils including visits to specially adapted venues for residential activities. In this respect, the school is largely meeting its stated aim of providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. In the vast majority of lessons, pupils with additional difficulties, such as autism, are well provided for. The school has provided specialist-teaching areas for these pupils and staff have received relevant training in teaching approaches, which meet these specific difficulties. Pupils with extremes of behaviour are taught individually where necessary but the school constantly and thoroughly reviews their progress to ensure that they are able to return to their class as often as possible. For example, the behaviour of one pupil is

monitored and recorded at five second intervals in an attempt to identify the circumstances most likely to trigger difficult behaviour.

24 Teachers have received training in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these Strategies have been used well to develop the teaching of English and mathematics. Effective schemes of work exist in most subjects and have been based on the national guidance available and adapted where necessary to meet pupils' specific needs. In geography and religious education, these schemes have not yet been fully developed but this work is identified in the school development plan. In the upper school, the scheme of work for English is being developed to take account of some features of the National Literacy Strategy, whilst incorporating other material which is more relevant to pupils' needs.

25 Individual subjects are managed by different teachers in the upper and lower school and these teachers collaborate to ensure that the subject is fully covered without any undue repetition or omission. In upper school pupils have a class base for registration and a pastoral tutor and are then taught individual subjects by specialist teachers in designated areas of the school. In this way, pupils become more accustomed to a wider range of adults and are prepared for their experiences in colleges.

26 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities and experiences for its pupils. This includes a very good range of extra curricular activities and excellent links with the local community. A good example of this is the Parent and Toddler Group who join the youngest pupils for one afternoon each week. These links significantly enhance pupils' learning and include visits from theatre groups, visits to local museums, exchanges with a partner school in France, and residential experiences including one to Tenerife. There are also a number of valuable links with local mainstream primary and secondary schools which allow pupils to receive some education within a mainstream setting which give pupils access to more specialised teaching and experiences. For example, pupils have undertaken a joint residential experience with pupils from a local high school and have taken part in a summer school at a local arts college, which has led to them receiving dance lessons from a teacher at that school.

27 Spiritual and cultural development is good although more focused planning is needed to continue to develop aspects of the pupils' multicultural development. Since the last inspection, the provision for spiritual development has remained good and social and moral development remains very good. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good, it is very well supported by visitors to the school and visits made by the pupils.

28 Provision for pupils' spiritual education is good. The prayers at the beginning of the day refer to the days intended activities, all the pupils listen attentively and concentrate well and one of the pupils says "amen" at the end of the prayer. This prayer time has about it a positive calm and there is a short period of quiet, calm reflection for pupils and staff. There are appropriate references to pupils in the class, for example, in one class one of the pupils was spending the day at another school and her class remembered her in their prayers. A group of older pupils, in their prayer time light a candle to reflect that Jesus is the 'light of the world' and all contribute to a thought for the week. At lunchtime, the pupils say grace led by one of the pupils as part of the well-ordered routine. Teaching and learning in religious education support the pupils' spiritual development through the telling of stories from different religions. Spiritual development is well supported by personal and social education when pupils learn to recognise feelings and emotions to help them understand their own feelings.

29 The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good and is supported well by the good relationships between the staff and the pupils. Every day routines and consistent management of behaviour help the pupils to be aware of what is acceptable and what is not. All adults have high expectations that pupils will behave well and pupils are very aware of what is right and wrong. Staff reinforce this understanding through careful explanations, for example, that taking other pupils property is

not acceptable because it is wrong and it upsets that person. This helps the pupils to develop an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. The pupils and students look after the school environment well. Art and project work is displayed attractively and valued by everyone in addition to giving the pupils pride in their achievements.

30 The provision for pupils' social development is very good and closely linked to the provision for moral development. Pupils listen to each other well, for example, in news time they express themselves well and listen quietly. Social development is encouraged through residential visits, for example to Tenerife, France and Wales, which give the pupils opportunities to develop their independence skills away from home. The pupils know how to behave as an audience, for example, when watching others dance they make appreciative comments, such as, 'They danced brilliantly' and applaud each other. Snack time in the senior department is well organised and the pupils are able to wait their turn to purchase their drinks and snacks. They make their purchases independently and go outside for a break with very few prompts. The older students use their social skills well when they are at college, buying their own drinks and using a vending machine, after which they sit and chat confidently. In ICT the pupils work well together taking turns to use the interactive white board and they wait quietly for help when they need it, others are beginning to work independently which is encouraged by all the staff. All adults are very good role models, and treat the pupils with courtesy and respect. The very good relationships between adults and pupils have a positive affect on pupils' moral and social development because the pupils have confidence in staff and feel secure.

31 The pupils' cultural development is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In art and music, there are good opportunities for the pupils to experience different cultures, for example, Australian aboriginal painting and songs to inspire an art lesson. Religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils understanding of different cultures, for example, a visit to a local Greek Orthodox Church gave the pupils an opportunity to experience a different environment and atmosphere. Generally, the celebrations in the school are Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter but the Hindu festival of Divali broadens the pupil's experiences. Books such as 'Handa's Surprise' used as the basis for a topic, help the pupils to understand a different culture but there are insufficient multicultural books available in the school. The school has a close link with a French school and a group of pupils and teachers from there visited for three days enabling the pupils to get to know each other. Other visitors into the school have included people of different races and religions to help to give the pupils a wider understanding and experience of different cultures. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to have a range of cultural experiences which is now richer than at the time of the previous inspection. It is aware of the need to continue to plan specifically for this aspect of the pupils' personal development.

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

32 The school continues to look after its pupils well. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and followed closely. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day, and the working practices adopted by all staff are good. Arrangements for child protection remain secure. The head teacher has designated responsibility for liaising with the outside agencies and is properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by a physiotherapist and speech therapist. They liaise with class staff who continue their programmes within the classroom environment. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and used consistently when needed. The administration of any medication is effectively carried out and recorded appropriately. Some school staff have trained as First Aiders and they keep their training up to date, which enables them to deal with minor emergencies.

33 Procedures for supporting and monitoring pupils' personal development remain effective. Teachers know their pupils very well, understand their needs and respond positively to them. High standards of behaviour are promoted successfully by all staff. As a result, the school is a calm and orderly

community with a good climate for learning. Praise and rewards are used well and achievements are celebrated. The school also puts a lot of emphasis on promoting independence and encouraging pupils to take responsibility and show initiative. The newly formed school council, which comprises all pupils in the upper school, is a good example of this. It is already operating well and provides regular opportunities for pupils to air their views about the school.

34 Attendance is monitored thoroughly. Registers are marked properly at the start of sessions and suitable arrangements are in place to follow up any unexplained absence. Pupils are actively encouraged to come to school regularly and rewarded when they do.

35 Assessment of pupil's academic progress is good throughout the school. Following the last inspection the school has introduced appropriate accreditation to subjects at Post 16 which has given added focus and value to the work they do and it is valued by pupils and parents. Very good knowledge and assessment of pupils is reflected in well organised pupil profiles. These contain pen portraits of each pupil, their individual education plans, behaviour management plans and risk assessments where appropriate, which are well used in lessons enabling teachers to plan for individual needs. Older pupils are also encouraged to undertake self-assessment of their work. In art, for example, older pupils record their likes and the media they have used.

36 The school has brief but clear assessment and marking policies and pupils work is usually dated and annotated well. However this is not the case in every classroom. In some lessons very good use is made of the teaching assistant to record pupils work and achievements as the lesson progresses and this information is transferred to pupils' records.

37 The school makes very good use of P scales and PIVATS to accurately assess pupils' progress especially in the core subjects. This data is well used in whole school target setting. However the data available is not yet fully used in other contexts. In the foundation subjects for example curriculum co-ordinators collect the P scale data but do not use it to evaluate planning or the curriculum. PIVATS information on pupils is not shared with parents so they do not have an informed view of exactly how well their child is achieving.

38 Annual Educational Review meetings are well organised and valued by parents. They result in clear, well used Individual Education Plans which are used in planning, in lessons and reported to parents. The school uses the Annual Educational Review system to report to parents on pupils' progress in the National Curriculum. However the quality of the reports is patchy, they do not always contain all subjects studied and do not make best use of the detailed assessment information collected by the school. Older pupils are involved in their own reviews where the school feels it is appropriate and there are plans to extend this to younger pupils in line with the revised Code of Practice guidance. However they do not as yet contribute in writing to the report.

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

39 Parents continue to express very strong levels of support for the school. They rightly feel it is doing a good job in educating their children and are happy with the standards achieved. Parents report that the head teacher and staff are approachable, welcoming and willing to discuss their children and other related problems

40 The school has maintained a good relationship with its parents, but its educational links with them are not as effective as previously reported, although, overall, they are satisfactory. In particular, pupils' annual reports are not as good as they should be. Furthermore details of attendance are not provided. The governors' annual report is also incomplete. It lacks information about the progress made

in addressing issues raised at the last inspection as well as the school's provision for special educational needs and disabled pupils. The prospectus, however, fully meets requirements and provides parents with useful information. In addition, a wide range of on-going correspondence, which includes regular updates of the work done in class, keeps parents well informed about life generally in school. Parents are properly involved with their children's individual education plans and given suitable information about the progress made towards the targets contained in them.

41 Parents continue to give good support to school activities, such as educational visits and achievement assemblies, as well as any courses and workshops organised for them. The Friends Association also remains very active and has recently raised around £19000 towards the cost of a new school minibus. The use of homework is variable and some parents would like it to be given more consistently. Home/school diaries are used very effectively to maintain a valuable dialogue between teachers and pupils' homes.

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

42 The head teacher provides very strong leadership and gives a clear educational direction to the school. She works very effectively with the deputy head in leading all staff to a shared commitment to raise standards and care for the pupils and students. The very good leadership has succeeded in creating a learning environment in which relationships are very good and pupils and students feel safe, secure and valued. Consequently this fosters a very positive ethos in the school where the individual needs and efforts of all pupils and students are very well supported. The school leadership has responded well to the last inspection and a number of significant improvements have been made. The provision for Post 16 and careers education has improved the opportunities for pupils to extend their education and successfully prepare for adult life. The head teacher is monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, feeding back evaluations to individual teachers and identifying and sharing good practice. The head teacher constructs a good School Improvement Plan which clearly identifies the priorities and the targets to be tackled and guides the work of the school but wider involvement of staff and governors is limited. Therefore the expertise and commitment of interested groups is not utilized to best effect. The head and deputy know the school's strengths and areas for development and have a strategy for improvement. Staff meet regularly to discuss curriculum matters and pupils' individual education plans. The curriculum co-ordinators take their roles conscientiously; for example, there are subject development plans with identified priorities, however, these are not costed because co-ordinators are not given a budget. Since the last inspection the role of curriculum co-ordinators has not been sufficiently developed to allow for the effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and its impact on the learning and achievements of the pupils and students.

43 The governing body is involved in the life of the school and very committed to the aims and values of the school. For example the Chair of Governors goes swimming with a class of pupils each week and a parent governor regularly visits the school to support pupils in their learning. They are committed to helping the school to improve the standards of achievement, the range and quality of specialist facilities and resources required to meet the diverse needs of all in the school community. The governing body is very effective in monitoring the budget and ensuring that the school achieves value for money on major expenditure such as the school buildings. Therefore they make a good contribution to the school through their support to the staff and the work that they do. However, the governing body's involvement in the School Improvement Plan is very limited and therefore has a restricted role in developing the vision and future development of the school. The governing body does not effectively monitor the curriculum of the school or the progress of the pupils. They rely entirely on the head teacher's report and have limited strategies for reviewing the overall development of the school, for example, they do not make focused visits and submit written reports for the governing body to consider. The governing body does not meet its statutory responsibilities with respect to its annual written report to parents.

44 The school is efficient in its strategic use of resources. Financial planning and control are very good. The deputy head teacher monitors standards funds and the Chair of Governors and senior administrative assistant take responsibility for the monitoring of the school budget. The governing body discusses and approves the school's budget proposals. The day-to-day financial controls, procedures and administration of financial matters are very good. There are comprehensive methods for accounting for monies collected, checking invoices and ensuring that unauthorised expenditure does not occur. These systems are very effectively managed by the senior administrative assistant in conjunction with a local finance service. The school has not been recently audited.

45 The leadership and management of the head teacher and the senior management team are good and financial and administrative procedures are very efficient. Achievement throughout the school is good in many subjects of the curriculum. The pupils are very well behaved and have great enthusiasm for school and the extensive additional opportunities that it provides. Therefore the school provides good value for money and is well placed to continue the improvements since the last inspection and implement future initiatives. The school is developing ways of implementing the principles of best value, for example, when making major expenditures and beginning to compare themselves with similar schools.

46 The school has sufficient well-qualified teachers for the number of pupils and has a generous number of classroom assistants who give very good support to teachers and pupils'. Procedures for staff development and induction are good and although staff turnover is not high a member of the teaching staff has undertaken a mentoring course and is currently effectively supporting a teacher new to the school. Classroom assistants have access to a similar level of support. The range of training staff have access to is good and extends their knowledge and understanding of subjects and also current national initiatives, such as, the Key Stage 3 Strategies. Training is also linked to identified school needs, for example, the use of P scales and PIVATS and this has a positive impact in the classroom in terms of teachers' planning. Detailed records and evaluations of the professional training undertaken by all staff and performance management procedures have been effectively established. Classroom assistants, who are well qualified, have also attended a wide range of training relevant to their needs

47 Pupils are taught in a very positive physical learning environment and this has a direct impact on the progress they make and their attitude towards school. The classrooms and corridors are bright and colourful and their achievements are visually celebrated with well arranged displays. The good accommodation described in the last report has been maintained but the library remains underused by pupils, mainly because of where it is situated and also its' small size. The specialist rooms in the senior department are well used and positively support the improved standards in science and design and technology. Inadequate storage facilities in the hall means that equipment is stacked against walls which limits the space available and could be a safety hazard although staff are very careful when using the hall for physical education. The new ICT suite is used well and a well-equipped light room is a very useful resource for pupils with the most complex learning needs to develop their sensory awareness. Outside areas are adequate but lack interesting and imaginative play equipment.

48 Very good resources for ICT have resulted in good improvement in pupils' achievements in the subject. The school makes excellent use of resources in the community to enrich subjects such as history, geography, religious education and music. Resources in school generally are satisfactory and are sufficient for the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49 In order to build on the strengths and improve further the head teacher, staff and governors need to:

- (1) develop the role of the curriculum co-ordinators by monitoring teaching and identifying subject development priorities within a given budget,  
(Paragraphs, 42, 71, 76, 87, 92, 98)
- (2) develop the role of the governing body by ensuring that their Annual Report to Parents fully meets the legal requirements; developing ways in which it can formally monitor the work of the school by making more systematic visits and submitting reports; and have a more active role in developing the long term future of the school by, for example, being more involved in the framing of the School Improvement Plan,  
(Paragraphs 40, 43)
- (3) include all staff, governors and parents when formulating the School Improvement Plan so that there is wider involvement and consultation with the school community,  
(Paragraph 42)
- (4) improve the quality of the information in reports to parents so that there is more consistency across the school; ensure that all subjects are reported on and levels of achievement are reported where necessary and make sure that they meet statutory requirements.  
(Paragraphs 37, 38, 40)

50 In addition to the key issues above, governors should include the following minor issues as part of the action plan:

1. Review the length of lessons. (Paragraphs 20, 56, 65, 102)
2. Make better use of ICT across the curriculum to further improve pupils' skills.  
(Paragraphs 84, 88, 95)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	17	32	12	0	0	0
Percentage	3	27	51	19	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	64
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.5

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	62	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

### *Financial information*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y12**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y12**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	582

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001 – 2002
	£
Total income	676,597
Total expenditure	667,555
Expenditure per pupil	11,921
Balance brought forward from previous year	43,494
Balance carried forward to next year	52,536

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Post 16 results 2002**

### **Accreditation for Life and Living (OCR)**

**2 students Communication**  
**4 students ICT**  
**5 students Numeracy**  
**3 students Home Management**  
**7 students Leisure**  
**3 students World of Work**

### **National Skills Profile**

**4 students ICT**  
**3 students Number**  
**4 students Personal skills**

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	64
Number of questionnaires returned	50

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	86	14	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	24	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	32	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	28	10	2	12
The teaching is good.	86	14	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	30	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	14	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	74	22	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	6	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	76	20	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	62	14	8	6	10

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

### **ENGLISH**

51 Because of the nature of their difficulties, pupils do not achieve in line with their age and some younger pupils achieve at higher levels than their older peers.

52 Throughout the school pupils' overall achievement in English is good in relation to their difficulties and against the very precise individual targets set by teachers and used in their lessons. In one lower school class of younger pupils, their achievement is very good because of the excellent teaching they receive. The school has maintained the high standards of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching identified at the last inspection and this has improved for some younger pupils in lower school so that it is now excellent. The National Literacy Strategy has been well adapted by the school to meet the specific needs of all pupils. There has been a noticeable impact on pupils' skills particularly in speaking and listening but also in their reading and writing.

53 Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are very good throughout the school. This is because the skills they learn in English are reinforced in other lessons. In a registration group in Year 4 for example, each pupil is asked, "would you like dinner today?" They are then encouraged to respond in sentences using, "Yes please" or "No thank you." Pupils of all abilities are confident speakers or they do their best to respond appropriately to the content of the lesson using alternative forms of communication. In Year 8 for example, pupils with more profound difficulties responded to the touch of pebbles on their bare feet either verbally, saying "dirty, good, ooh," or by gestures and bodily movement smiling or grimacing both in reaction to the experiences offered to them or in anticipation of their turn. In Year 1, pupils remembered the story of "The Three Little Pigs" they started in an earlier lesson and as the teacher read the next section, they mouthed "Chinny chin chin" at the appropriate time. Higher achieving pupils in the same class suggested that alternative words for "angry" could be "cross" or "mad." Self advocacy is encouraged through the recently formed School Council at which pupils and students can discuss topics of interest.

54 Pupils' achievements in reading are good throughout the school. In a Year 1 class, all pupils recognised that symbols have meaning and higher achieving pupils were confidently reading sentences such as, "I will blow your house down." In Year 11, pupils are reading at a level which is appropriate to their ability. Lower achieving pupils use their fingers to follow every word but they recognise that they have made a mistake and make good attempts to correct it themselves. Higher achieving pupils in this class use expression in their reading for example, changing their voices to reflect different characters.

55 Through the use of an assessment scheme from another Local Education Authority, the school has decided that it will concentrate on the development of pupils' writing skills. This is a good use of the scheme but during the inspection, pupils' achievements in writing were found to be in line with their ability. Some pupils had achieved very high levels for their ability because of the high expectations that teachers have. In Year 8 for example, pupils were clearly used to using dictionaries to check their spelling before asking the teacher. Pupils make good attempts at spelling and get the right sound even though sometimes with the wrong letters, writing "cole" for "coal" for example. Their handwriting develops in maturity and the handwriting of higher achieving pupils is regular in size and often joined and mature in style. Lower achieving pupils are still at the earlier stages of writing and will copy or write over the letters written for them by staff. Other pupils use the appropriate symbols to express their meaning. Pupils are used to writing for different purposes. Older pupils for example have studied "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and have used this work to write formal wedding invitations and lists of wedding presents.

56 In English pupils learn well and have very good attitudes to their work in the majority of lessons. In one lesson with younger pupils in the lower school, pupils' response in the lesson was excellent. This was because of the excellent teaching they received. Pupils persevered for long periods with tasks that were challenging but achievable. For example, pupils who had difficulty in articulation were gently prompted to say "sticks, hard, soft" even though they found this very difficult. Because they were given time and lots of prompts they stuck at it and were delighted with the praise they received. Pupils are familiar with the reward schemes operating in class and ask for a "Smiley Face" when they have completed good work. Pupils take great care with their written work within the bounds of their capabilities for example when one pupil in Year 8 tried four times to stick a sentence strip in the correct place on her work. She had physical difficulties but was not deterred and sighed with satisfaction when she succeeded. In a lesson in Year 8, pupils were delighted with the nonsense poem they were reading and tried very hard to guess the word which was going to rhyme with the preceding line. All pupils enjoy their work and in one class, were keen to take it home to show their parents. Some English lessons are very long, over an hour in some cases, and younger pupils particularly find it difficult to sustain their concentration for this length of time. They are clearly tired towards the end of the lesson and teachers have to work very hard to sustain pupils' flagging concentration.

57 Teaching in English is very good overall and with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The best teaching occurs in lower school where it is sometimes excellent. This is because the teacher shares the objectives for the lesson with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. The teacher makes excellent use of support staff in playing character roles from the story of "The Three Little Pigs." Despite their self-consciousness, they enjoy playing the parts and their enjoyment is an excellent stimulus to the pupils' understanding of the different characters in the story. All teachers plan very specifically for the individual learning needs of their pupils and this enables the very good progress which they make. Pupils are involved whenever possible in understanding how well they have done in the lesson as for example, in a lesson in Year 7 when the teacher asks; "How do you think you have worked?" and then discusses each individual's work with them. Teachers' methods are well suited to pupils' needs as for example, when a class of pupils with more severe and complex difficulties are taken on an imaginary trip to the seaside. The teacher had prepared large sheets stuck with pebbles and sand for the pupils to walk on in their bare feet. This was also available to one pupil in a wheel chair who was helped to rest his feet on the sheets. Seaspray was recreated using a water spray, to the delight of most pupils and less enthusiasm in others. All pupils however responded actively to the lesson. ICT is well used in some lessons, for example in Year 5 when pupils use specific software that helps to develop their reading skills.

58 The English policy and curriculum meet all statutory requirements and the subject is well co-ordinated and managed by two teachers for lower and upper school respectively. The curriculum for lower school is planned in accordance with the National Literacy Strategy and is well matched to pupils' needs. In upper school, the school is still developing material that it feels will best suit its pupils and is giving very careful consideration to a range of material including some from the National Literacy Strategy. However, because all English is taught in upper school by one teacher, good oversight is maintained of what is being taught so that pupils move on to further work at an appropriate time. Pupils' work and progress is carefully assessed and this information is then used well to set individual targets for pupils in English as well as broader school targets such as the development of pupils' skills in writing. The English curriculum is well enhanced by visits to theatres and by visits to the school of theatre groups such as "Shakespeare 4Kidz."

## **MATHEMATICS**

59 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well. The very good working relationship of the staff ensure pupils feel secure and try hard. The

use of the National Numeracy Strategy further contributes to the good achievement. The provision for mathematics has improved since the last inspection especially in the quality of teaching and learning.

60 By Year 2, more able pupils, with encouragement, count to 20. They recognise numbers to 10 and can match in a number game. The exciting games help pupils to recognise numbers on a line and they love to count loudly and softly. The very good support from the class assistants and well prepared activities ensure pupils move to activities quietly and sensibly. The good use of number songs reinforce the fun of numbers. Pupils with ASD can cut out numbers up to 10 to place them in sequence but pupils with more complex needs are not always usefully engaged in the lesson activities.

61 By Year 6, pupils respond to the very good routine and good use of signs to recognise a chosen number. The most able pupils can count backwards from 19 and count in two's to 20. They count from 30 or 40 in ten's to 100. The teachers use every opportunity to use mathematical terms such as next to, underneath, ninth month and 12 months. The pupils in turn respond by using the correct words. Appropriate work sheets provide work at the right level for each pupil where they find missing numbers using a number line to help them. The good use of work trays helps a few pupils to anticipate the next piece of work.

62 The excellent team work helps Year 7 pupils to concentrate well to achieve a high standard of work. The teacher makes good reference to a previous lesson and work achieved in an ICT lesson. All pupils are confident in using computers to complete tasks to estimate, reason and calculate correct answers. The most able pupils are beginning to realise that thinking in their heads is a mental activity. Pupils are able to express what they have achieved and what they have done well. One boy said if it was all easy they would not be learning anything. The secure routine for pupils with ASD encourages them to recognise numbers on a square. One boy in Year 8 counts in ten's, two's and five's and from eight in ten's to 98. He makes very good progress responding to the routine of a lesson and is now more relaxed with formal work. By Year 9, pupils with more complex needs respond well to counting and movement games. They are beginning to anticipate the next instruction and are making good progress over time to repeat numbers to 5. They enjoy shopping for ingredients for food technology and are able to make a choice.

63 By Year 11, pupils estimate coin amounts and count in ten's. A few pupils can count backwards from a given number. One boy completed a task to estimate missing numbers in a sequence. The teacher encourages pupils to express how they have reached their answers, for example, two boys said the work was hard but became easier when they looked at it and took their time. The most able pupils enjoy the new workbooks and think carefully about writing in 10's along a line.

64 Pupils' learning in mathematics is reinforced through other lessons for example in physical education where pupils count skittles and fruit for graph work in ICT and in design and technology when pupils separate fruit and vegetables into groups. However, this area could be extended with planned opportunities to extend numeracy in all subjects

65 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy framework enables teachers to reinforce skills from previous lessons. This is seen particularly well with Year 7 who are making good progress in estimating, ordering and using their mental and oral skills effectively. Very good use is made of whole group and small group work where individual needs are assessed and supported very well by staff who work exceptionally well with each other. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons are very effective, they celebrate achievement and encourage pupils to be aware of what they and others have learnt. Each class has a computer and these could be better used during mathematics lessons. In the best lessons, work is planned very well to meet individual needs, it is both interesting and fun. Pupils respond with enthusiasm, for example, in Year 1 pupils can hardly wait to say their number and hang it on the line. In Year 4 pupils count in two's to 20 and show great pleasure in



each other's achievements. Very young pupils need structure and a better use of resources in order to maintain their interest and occasionally activities are too long and pupils become restless and don't learn as well.

66 The subject is particularly effective where a co-ordinator teaches all upper school pupils which ensures secure planning, assessment and overview. The two co-ordinators successfully plan together and provide a wide range of colourful, relevant resources which are easily accessible and well organised. This makes most lessons interesting and gains the attention of the pupils. Daily assessment is good and informs future planning and supports learning.

## **SCIENCE**

67 Pupils across the school make good progress and achieve well. The pupils' records of experiences show that all pupils have made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of scientific investigations and experiments.

68 The youngest pupils investigate materials by testing different materials to see which would be best for making an umbrella. They investigate the relationship between cause and effect by examining what happens when jelly is dissolved in hot water. Pupils are fascinated by the changes and keen to investigate what has taken place. This work is extended in Years 3 to 6 when pupils investigate which materials are the best insulators by conducting an investigation, recording their findings and making a conclusion. They understand that materials can change state; for example they examine what happens when chocolate is heated and predict what happens to ice as it melts, concluding that a solid can become a liquid. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of electricity, its dangers and how it is supplied to homes and factories. This understanding is enhanced through the special 'Electricity Day' organised by the school.

69 In Years 9 to 11 pupils investigate which words can be sorted in the categories of 'hot' and 'cold'. They conduct an investigation into the time that it takes water to boil water and record their findings on a graph. They undertake a project on how animals move by writing the script for a video and understand that some animals move in more than one way. By the end of Year 11, pupils have built successfully on their previous learning and begin to carry out science investigations in more depth. They understand the features of living and non-living things. They look at food chains and how the digestive system works. They carry out a project on what snails eat by keeping a record of their findings and can deduce which type of leaves snails prefer to eat.

70 The teaching of science is good. Lesson planning is thorough and interesting resources are used effectively to capture the pupils' interest, resulting in pupils being very attentive. Teachers prepare challenging activities and have high expectations of what pupils will achieve which leads to pupils working very hard and being motivated to tackle the tasks that are set. Teachers have very good scientific knowledge and use scientific language when questioning pupils, which leads to pupils using scientific terms and extending their vocabulary, for example, in a Year 7 lesson about the digestive system. Teachers question pupils skilfully and explain carefully what they have to do and therefore they follow instructions and participate in discussions enthusiastically and confidently. Classroom assistants are very effective in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in lessons, enabling pupils to make good progress, for example, in a lesson for Year 11 pupils studying metals. Pupils are well behaved and mature in lessons, always encouraging each other by sharing and appreciating ideas and working collaboratively in pairs and groups.

71 The curriculum is well planned. This helps pupils to build successfully on their previous knowledge and increase their learning in small steps. Assessments enable teachers to know what to include in future lessons and therefore pupils learn at a pace that is appropriate to their development and ability. The co-ordinators have yet to monitor the quality of science teaching but the school has

appropriate plans for this to take place in the future. There are good resources for learning and pupils benefit from their use of the school allotment and greenhouse in developing their understanding of how plants grow.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

72 The provision for art is satisfactory overall and the progress the pupils make is good, as it was during the previous inspection. Art is valued in the school, this is reflected in the high quality of the wall displays around the school. Other areas of the curriculum, such as English are supported through work in the subject and in drawing the fruit in 'Handa's Surprise' to reinforce the pupils' understanding. Pupils' progress and development of skills is also supported through specific projects, for example, the Grizeldale project when the pupils worked with professional artists to design a sculpture on the Riddings Wood Trail.

73 The pupils at the end of Year 2 make progress with painting skills. The younger pupils paint with enthusiasm and can do simple direct observational drawings, although they do need some help, they are developing the skills and the understanding of what to do to draw, for example, a vase of flowers. Their observational drawings show colour variation in the use of paint. They can colour in with accuracy and are beginning to use different media for their work, such as watercolour crayons. The older pupils work shows more control of pencils, crayons and felt tipped pens as well as paint. They can use different materials to create collages, such as 'Elmer' the elephant and make lines of different forms, such as wavy, curly and zigzag lines. They are able to paint three-dimensional models of their houses, and can use scissors with increasing accuracy to cut out shapes. The younger pupils experiment with finger paint, making prints of their designs enthusiastically. By the end of Year 6, pupils create collages using a range of materials and fabrics. They are able to make prints using a potato as the stamp, the prints created are well spaced and clean. They are able to represent seasonal changes through their painting and collages and good use is made of digital cameras to photograph the changes in the trees. They are able to assess their own work and describe what media they particularly enjoy using. A vivacious wall display shows the pupils painting skills in their representation of the story 'Three Billy Goats Gruff', the characters are painted enthusiastically and vigorously and demonstrate the pupils' skills very well.

74 By the end of Years 9 and 11, pupils show a good attention to detail in their work. They know and understand the difference between primary and secondary colours and can name the primary colours. The collages show a good use of tone and texture, such as, collages of cobwebs, as well as the development in painting skills. They are able to make simple mosaics, which display well-structured patterns. The pupils do use 'air dry clay' to make pottery, but because this dries quite quickly, it means that those pupils who have difficulties in manipulating it quickly find it difficult to use. The older pupils have a basic understanding of the work of some famous artists and have made collages in the styles of Lowry and paintings in the style of Hockney.

75 Teaching and learning in art is good overall. Examples of good teaching include real celebration of pupils' achievements, for example, when one of the younger pupils wrote the shape 'M', his initial, for the first time in finger paint. The lessons are well planned and objectives clearly explained to the pupils who are carefully guided and encouraged by all the staff, this has a positive effect on their behaviour. Resources are selected appropriately to help the pupils understand, for example, texture and colour through handling gloves and scarves made from different fabrics. Pupils concentrate very well especially when the pace of the lesson allows them to start the practical work quickly. Good use is made of the art and music of different cultures to extent the pupils range of experience, for example, Australian aboriginal paintings and artefacts used to inspire pupils' art work. When teaching and learning are less successful, the choice of tasks is not appropriate to the pupils' ages and teachers' expectations are insufficiently high. For example, senior aged pupils painting cut-out shapes in simple stripes.

76 The resources for art are satisfactory and the materials are well stored in an easily accessible place. There is no kiln available in the school but due to the help of a secondary school in another town, the older pupils have been able to experience the full range of different media in art. The co-ordinators for the subject appreciate the support from the links with this secondary school and a local primary school in giving the pupils a range of opportunities to develop their skills. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, although teachers' planning is monitored, the co-ordinators do not monitor the teaching of the subject, nor do they have a budget to manage and therefore cannot prioritise purchases and this is an area for development. Assessment of pupils' progress is made at the end of each module and the curriculum is suitably based on the national guidance for the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

77 Pupils' achievements and progress are good by the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 11 which is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a good range of recorded evidence with digital photographs and attractive descriptions. By Year 2 pupils are beginning to recognise the difference in textiles and can make decisions about which colours and patterns they prefer. For example one boy knows the bag fastens with string and two pupils could recognise the colours purple and orange. Pupils are beginning to learn how to tie and dye material and make definite choices about colours. The busy lesson encourages skills of cutting, sticking and twisting.

78 By Year 6, pupils classify fruit and vegetables. They can recognise and name a cauliflower, carrots, and broccoli. The most able pupil knows all the fruits and vegetables including a parsnip, courgette and mango and this linked well to a recent story about fruit reinforcing their knowledge and understanding of the topic. The excellent use of literacy and numeracy to categorise fruit and vegetables as to smell, taste and feel ensures all pupils think, listen and express themselves. For example, pupils came up with delightful words such as squashy, fantastic, gorgeous, yummy, delicate and even, "a banana looks like a moon". Pupils know it is healthy to eat lots of fruit and vegetables. They were planning to make a fruit salad and contrast it with the taste of tinned fruit.

79 Very good independent learning is encouraged with Year 7 pupils weighing and mixing ingredients to make plain biscuits. They were able to express themselves well to describe the taste, they have made good progress to understand that when flavours and sugar are added the biscuits will taste sweeter. By Year 9, pupils make sandwiches with fillings of their choice bought earlier in the week from a local supermarket as part of a mathematics lesson. An effective lesson encouraged pupils to make decisions about the most absorbent towel to use when drying their hands. The words were reinforced well with pictures of the activity.

80 The quality of teaching is good with thoroughly planned lessons to ensure pupils make choices and fully contribute and make good progress in their learning. The work for younger pupils is appropriately linked to current topics. The curriculum for older pupils reflects the lack of opportunities to experience design and technology with use of work benches, tools and resistant materials. The teachers use resources from a local high school and the strength in teaching ensures learning opportunities are linked well to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils have designed tree shapes and used jig saws to cut out decorations which were attractively displayed. Older pupils were enthusiastic about their design and production of Christmas cakes and a Christmas dinner. Menus are attractively printed using word processing. The co-ordinators lead the subject well with the lower school staff working well as a team to plan and evaluate work together.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

81 Pupils achieve well and make good progress in geography throughout the school. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection. Excellent progress was achieved in one lesson for pupils aged 7 when very high expectations of pupils' abilities led to this excellent progress in relation to geographical skills. They were able to say that the coast is "where the land meets the sea" and say that a sheep is dirty because it's been in the mud. Excellent planning ensures use is made of very skilled teachers' assistants who know the pupils well and ensured they noticed geographical features during a minibus drive along the coast road. Very good teaching to pupils aged 10 ensured they could define all the words of the question they were addressing such as "High Street", "Closed" and "Traffic". Very good use of ICT enabled pupils to map a multi-media record of their project including their own voices.

82 By the time they are 11 pupils use worksheets well to answer questions about dangers, crossings and delivery lorries. They are very aware of safety in a car park and behave very well. One pupil with ASD in particular, who is often taught separately, joined in the visit with help from teaching assistants and behaved very calmly in a new situation. This reflects well on the expectations of the staff and their knowledge of a challenging pupil. By the time they are 14 pupils are able with help to identify Tower Bridge, Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey on a pictorial map of London.

83 Sixteen year old pupils are able to use photos of the rain forest to agree the main features of the environment and confidently report their findings to the group. They are also able to deduce from the photos that the rain forest must be hot as the people are wearing shorts and sandals.

84 The co-ordinators for the subject are enthusiastic and ensure excellent use is made of the local community to promote pupils understanding. The local area naturally provides a wealth of geographical opportunities, which are used in a thoughtful planned way to enable pupils to learn. Although resources, including software for geography are good the subject would benefit from co-ordinators being able to undertake planned long-term development of resources. Despite some very good use of ICT such opportunities are not well developed in all classes. Short term planning is usually helpful but long term planning especially for older pupils is less secure

## **HISTORY**

85 No lessons were seen in history during the inspection as a result of the modular way in which the subject is taught. However analysis of teachers planning and pupils' work shows that pupil's achievements in history are good, as a result of a positive ethos for the subject, good use of interesting and relevant displays and the excellent use of the community. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

86 By the time they are 7 pupils are trying out old household items such as irons and dolly tubs at a local museum as part of a Victorian project. By the end of Year 6 more able pupils can describe a picture about life in Egypt as "people are building a pyramid for a nasty king who forced them to build it". More able pupils in Year 9 can label a Pyramid and say it is made from stones in Egypt. A 16 year old pupil can create his own Egyptian God having been taught a God had an animal head and a human body he used his own understanding to create the God of the Nile who had a human body and a very appropriate crocodile head.

87 History is well co-ordinated across the school. Co-ordinators ensure that every opportunity is taken to involve the community in the subject. This is achieved through well planned visits to local museums such as the Dock Museum and invitations to individuals and groups, such as the Sealed Knot to come to the school and bring the past alive for pupils. The use of national guidance as a basis for planning for younger pupils ensures the National Curriculum is covered and pupils do not cover the same work twice. However the procedures used in the senior department do not have a similar effect and so pupils in five year groups can be covering the same work, as the work on Egypt shows, although from a different angle. Although the school has some software for history, evidence shows limited use of ICT in the curriculum. Resources for history are good but would benefit from co-ordinators having the opportunity to plan for further developments by managing a subject budget.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

88 Since the previous inspection, the provision for ICT has improved. It meets the statutory requirements and all aspects of the subject are included in the planning. All pupils and students now have access to the computer suite as well as computers in their classrooms. The resources for the subject are very good and the use of the computer suite has a positive impact on the opportunities available for the pupils to develop their skills. The use of the computer suite for teaching, particularly, English and mathematics is effective in reinforcing and extending the pupils' skills and understanding. There are computers in all the classrooms but the use of these is not consistent for supporting all subjects across the whole curriculum and pupils' emerging skills could be further developed. However, pupils do make good progress.

89 By the end of Year 2 pupils develop their ability to control a mouse and the more able pupils are able to drag and drop text or pictures with only verbal prompts from an adult. They can load a drawing program with help and can use a building program independently. The less able pupils can operate toys through switches and are beginning to understand cause and effect. For example, using a Jelly Baby toy with a switch and showing a great deal of excitement when it 'dances'. Even the youngest pupils are confident in using the interactive white board as a touch screen to move objects into different areas of the screen and to draw with their fingers using a painting program. They can print their work with help, although often these are just verbal prompts. By the end of Year 6, the more able pupils are able to use a publishing program to produce interesting work; they can save and retrieve their work from files on the computer. Some of the more able pupils who make very good progress write their own articles and import graphics to illustrate them from a CD-Rom. They develop their keyboard skills, particularly using the spacebar, return key, and are able to make changes to a simple piece of writing. They use a word

processing program to write sentences, which include capital letters, full stops and the correct spacing. They are able, with help, to insert text into graphics, such as speech bubbles, and this supports their learning in English about speech. They can also use a data-handling program to sort, for example, pictures of fruit into groups supporting their understanding of different ways of showing information. The pupils make good progress in the use of a symbols generating program to support their reading, they know the names of the equipment in the computer suite and are able to use the internet, with adult support, to do some basic research.

90 By the end of Year 9 the more able pupils can use programs on the computer to write answers to questions, for example for a history project. They continue to develop skills in selecting and loading programs, using techniques in a drawing program to fill and change the colour and print out their own work independently. In a joint project with older pupils, they wrote a newsletter, based on videoed and tape-recorded interviews. They develop an understanding of using the neighbourhood network, saved and retrieved their writing and set up their own files. They are able to use a publishing program confidently, including the skills of editing and collating their own articles. By the end of Year 11, the pupils are confident in the use of word processing; continue to employ the skills learned in creating the newsletter although the less able pupils continue to need adult support.

91 Teaching and learning in ICT is good overall. Where the teaching is very good, the planning is very good, including contingency plans in case of a power cut. The teachers know the pupils well and create a very good environment in which they learn. Resources are very well prepared, for example, fruit for the pupils to choose and sort and all the staff working with the pupils know what to do. The pupils concentrate very well because the questions asked by the teachers are appropriate to extend their understanding. The very good pace of the lesson helps easily distractible pupils to concentrate and complete each task. The relationships between the staff and the pupils are very good and they encourage the pupils to stay focused on the task in hand. The pupils concentrate well and learn to use the wide range of equipment with confidence. They begin to work independently and are supported when necessary. The teachers consistently use the correct vocabulary to describe operations on the computer, for example, finding the 'tools' on a painting program, which helps the pupils to learn the appropriate terms and understand their use. When the teaching is less successful, there is no discussion with the pupils about the learning objectives for the lesson and the organisation of the classroom is not well planned. All the teachers are confident in their use of the technology and this has a positive impact on the pupils learning. This has been supported well by in-house training in the use of the new technology available in the school as well as the New Opportunities Fund training.

92 Resources and accommodation for teaching and learning in the subject are good. The staff use the interactive white board very well and its use has a positive impact on pupils' learning, confidence and access. The computers are well maintained and there is a good range of suitable software for most subjects. A technology support assistant works each morning in the computer suite and this ensures that the computers are known to be working prior to the lesson and are loaded with the appropriate software, enabling teachers to start lessons on time. The school is in the process of adopting an internet policy, which has the approval of the local education authority, this needs to be done as soon as possible so that careful records can be kept of pupils' use. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic about the subject and monitor teachers planning but do not monitor teaching in the classrooms, this is an area for development.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

93 No lessons were observed during the inspection but analysis of teachers planning and pupils' work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Pupils in Years 7 – 11 have one lesson

each week. Some pupils are properly disapplied from the subject and have an additional English lesson. The commercial scheme of work used is appropriate and the new co-ordinator is looking at ways to enhance this with more practical resources. Standards since the last inspection have been maintained.

94 Pupils learn how to greet each other, such as “Bonjour” and “Au revoir”, about French food, such as, “le café, la fromage” and French culture. They can count up to ten and know a few colours. Playing simple games helps to make learning fun. In addition they learn how to ask and answer basic questions, for example, “Qui est-ce? C’est moi”. The school has links with a school in France and visits have been made in the past which have given pupils opportunities to experience the French way of life.

95 The co-ordinator is a very recent appointment and is undertaking a review of the curriculum, planning to introduce ICT and appropriate accreditation which would raise pupils’ confidence and self esteem while also supporting assessment.

## **MUSIC**

96 Across the school pupils’ achievements in music are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 - 6. No lessons were observed in Years 7 - 13 but teachers planning and evidence from files show that pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. All pupils enjoy the sessions when professional musicians visit, they all take part in whole school productions, in which they perform for their parents. By the age of seven pupils have had experience of playing percussion instruments and they sing together enjoying familiar rhymes. They learn about pitch and duration through recognising high and low notes and long and short sounds. When the same activity goes on for too long pupils lose interest and their attention waivers. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 are taught together and show great enthusiasm when singing together. The teacher plans these sessions very well and has a good balance of different activities, which keeps pupils interested waiting for the next task. Very good support from other staff means that all pupils can join in. They perform individually, in a group and as a class and enjoy learning to sing in a “round”, London’s Burning. Older pupils have dance and drama included in the curriculum and learn the basics of composing. They are introduced to a range of musical instruments and have the opportunity to see and hear them played, when outside professional musicians visit school.

97 Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and the best teaching occurs when there is good planning and the lessons are well structured and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils respond positively to music when actively joining in and there is a brisk pace to the lesson which keeps them motivated. Teaching is good when the teacher has a lively enthusiastic approach, the lesson is well structured and the learning objectives are clearly communicated to pupils and are referred to at the end of the lesson so that pupils are made aware of what they have learned. Praise and encouragement give positive feedback to pupils who are pleased with their performances and are happy that they have done well. Resources are interesting, for example, when learning about note duration the teacher used familiar objects such as, a hairdryer, a hammer, a whisk and scissors and these helped pupils’ understanding of long and short notes. In another lesson, pupils were given long coloured ribbons to use to keep their attention when singing as a group.

98 The co-ordinator plans the curriculum but does not monitor lesson planning or teaching so that she is unaware of how well the subject is being taught throughout the school although she is involved in the whole school productions. The curriculum is currently being reviewed and an audit of resources to teach what is planned is being undertaken. The co-ordinator does not have a specific budget for music and whilst resources are adequate at the moment, a wider range generally and some specific resources to promote multi-cultural development would enhance pupils’ experiences.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

99 Pupils in the lower school make very good progress in physical education and in the upper school their progress is good. In this respect, the school has maintained the high standards described in the last inspection and has improved them for pupils in the lower school. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities and challenges to extend their physical capabilities and develop their confidence and social skills.

100 Up to the age of seven pupils play simple games which teach them the importance of rules as well as giving them opportunities to take exercise and roll and pass a ball. Pupils of all abilities are well involved in these activities through the excellent use of skilled teaching assistants who encourage and support pupils with specific and additional difficulties such as autism. Between the ages of eight and 11, pupils are involved in gymnastic activities which teach them to move around the hall at different speeds and in a variety of styles such as skipping and walking. They improve their sense of balance through standing on one leg and adopting various shapes as they do so. By the age of 14, pupils engage in dance activities which stimulate them physically as well as developing their ability to perform in front of others and to comment on others' performances with suggestions for improvement. They perform line dancing to music, with the higher achieving pupils showing an improving sense of rhythm and imaginative ways to start and finish their performance. One group starts with hands in the air and fingers clicking for example. Lower achieving pupils find it very hard to keep to the beat but they appreciate nonetheless that they are required to work together as a group and that they should start and finish the dance together.

101 Teaching is very good overall in lower school and good in upper school. Lessons are planned so that pupils of all abilities are engaged and develop their skills at their own level and pace. This is helped by the sometimes excellent use of teaching assistants who are well briefed and knowledgeable about the pupils. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are developed through physical education when pupils learn to respond to terms such as "faster, slower, left and right," and to count the beats in a dance lesson.

102 Pupils enjoy physical education and their attitudes are very good. They clap each other and describe the performance of others as "brilliant." They are eager to take part in the activities and will persevere with seriousness in tasks such as dancing in time, which many find very hard. Their performance and stance visibly improves when they are given props such as spangled stetsons to wear during their line dancing. Lessons in physical education are long, sometimes up to an hour, and occasionally pupils find it hard to sustain their concentration for this length of time. The school should give consideration to reducing the length of lessons so as to allow pupils to participate with full enthusiasm.

103 The curriculum for physical education is very good with pupils being offered a wide range of activities including swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities, sometimes on a residential basis. Good links have been made with a local specialist arts college and some pupils participated in a summer school which has led to skilled teaching from a specialist dance teacher from the college.

104 The subject is well co-ordinated by two well qualified and enthusiastic teachers. Pupils' achievements are assessed well and recorded through the use of photographs, for example. The co-ordinators have recently worked with all staff to establish resource needs for the subject, which has resulted in some significant expenditure on equipment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

105 Pupils achieve well in religious education and generally make good progress as a result of a very positive learning ethos within classrooms and an appropriate pace to lessons. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and a very good lesson was seen for pupils aged 10. Teachers make sure all pupils are involved in lessons, use humour to good effect and go to great lengths to gather a range of none standard



resources to engage less able pupils. In a lesson for pupils aged 16, for example, staff had gathered a vast array of purple objects which were used successfully to keep less able pupils enthralled.

106 By the time they are seven pupils with autistic spectrum disorder develop their understanding of feelings through the use of mirrors and a range of photos. They also develop their knowledge of the life of Jesus by acting out the story of the loaves and fishes with fish fingers and bread rolls. By the time they are 11 pupils can understand that birthdays are special occasions and through work on Jesus and his friends they are also able to imagine what it would be like to be cured of blindness. By the age of 14 less able pupils respond well to opportunities for reflection and more able pupils can label a map of the Holy Land with the places Jesus was born, lived and died. Sixteen year old pupils can suggest why listening and being helpful are good skills for a religious leader. They could not decide however if a leader needed to be beautiful.

107 The upper school and lower school co-ordinators are enthusiastic about religious education and worked hard, using detailed action plans, to develop the subject. They have particularly begun to look for and develop ways of ensuring religious education is accessible and appropriate to less able pupils. Whole school planning ensures that excellent use is made of the local community to enhance the curriculum.

108 However, work needs to be done to further develop resources in a planned way and to ensure that planning for older pupils makes sure they do not repeat work they have previously covered

### **Citizenship - personal, social and health education.**

109 The curriculum for citizenship is very good. It is taught in specific lessons in the upper school and throughout all activities in lower school. Morning circle time sets the scene for young pupils with an appropriate emphasis to take turns, share and play co-operatively. Pupils are making positive gains in confidence and the routine of work. The targets for all pupils are reinforced throughout the school day. The strong relationships between staff ensure pupils feel secure, behave well and are developing as independently as possible. A full programme on citizenship is followed to include families, respecting others, rights and responsibilities, young people and the law. Pupils wrote their own anti-bullying policy and understand the class rules. Pupils in Year 9 spent time discussing emotions and decided to learn sign language in order to make it easier to talk to one of the pupils. The community nurse and the Health Trust make a positive contribution to health education in drug misuse and sex education, which are taught effectively. By Year 11 pupils can explain that a stranger is someone you do not know. The good use of role play introduces the pupils to the right to say no, stop and how to ask for help. They are interested in the subject and understand what to do and can say who they trust and what they would do if accosted by a stranger. The very good advice for citizenship ensures a good structure for lessons which are well planned and evaluated.

### **POST 16**

110 The provision for students aged 16 to 19 years is good and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is organised into two main areas - basic skills and life skills - and this leads to good preparation for further education, the world of work and adult life. Students' achievements are assessed and accredited through the nationally recognised award schemes. As a result students are positively motivated to participate in the full range of opportunities on offer and make good progress in their personal development, leading to a growth in confidence and independence.

111 Students make good progress in their literacy and communication skills. They have good opportunities in most aspects of their learning to practice their reading skills; for example, students read

and follow instructions in food technology, practise high frequency words and the more able pupils read independently from a collection of carefully chosen fiction. They develop and practice their writing skills in many aspects of the curriculum; for example they maintain a diary, keep records of their work experiences and residential visit. They develop their speaking and listening skills when asking questions and expressing opinions in the many discussions that they are involved in; for example, when deciding how much money they need for the visit to college and when asking questions to the priest on their visit to the local Greek Orthodox Church. In numeracy students develop their skills in estimating, weighing, addition, the use of money and time. These are effectively achieved by applying their understanding in real life situations such as weighing ingredients in food technology, working out prices of ingredients and recognising the coins that make up the amount. Students make sound progress in their information and communication skills. They use their ICT skills to word process a thank you card and use graphics to illustrate the card. They use a digital camera to take photographs of their activities and use keyboards in their musical experiences. They can use the mouse confidently, store information, save it and print it. At Post 16, for example, students have visited a wide range of places of worship and have compared them in follow up sessions. During the week of the inspection they visited a local Greek Orthodox Church and were able to use their previous learning to ask questions from the priest.

112 Students make good progress in their life skills. They achieve well in independent living skills and the world of work. They develop a good understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and of safety in the home. Students' career preparation and work experience has improved since the last inspection. Through the good links with the local college of further education, students are much more aware of the options that are available to them and participate in the 'choices programme'. This has given students access to modules in the creative arts, the opportunity to act independently in a different environment and motivated and increased their expectations of what they can achieve. Students now have planned work experiences in Years 12, 13 and 14. They begin with a work experience within the school and progress to an experience in the community. This leads to students growing in confidence to tackle the responsibilities that are essential in the work place. Their work preparation skills are enhanced through the school's organisation of a mini-enterprise scheme whereby students planted bulbs and made window boxes for plants.

113 Students enjoy a wide range of leisure and recreational activities and make sound progress in their physical skills and good progress in their social skills. A strength of the provision is the residential visit that includes all students and gives very good experiences of outdoor pursuits. They participate in activities such as fell walking and canoeing and this increases their teamwork, confidence and initiative in tackling new challenges. They have further opportunities to extend their interests and hobbies by visiting places such as the bowling alley and swimming baths. Students' creative skills are enhanced through participation in the college options of music, art and craft.

114 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well prepared and learning activities are appropriate to the range of abilities and needs. Relationships between adults and students are very good. As a result, students are conscientious, interested in their work and ambitious in what they want to achieve. Teachers' questioning skills are good and very effective in encouraging students' participation, this leads to students working collaboratively and listening to each other's ideas. Teachers assess students systematically and keep good records of what they have done and use this information effectively in planning the next stages of the students' development. The Post 16 provision is well managed and is now making a positive impact on students' aspirations in continuing their education and seeking opportunities for work experience.