

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FOX WOOD SCHOOL**

Birchwood, Warrington

LEA area: Warrington

Unique reference number: 111496

Headteacher: Lis Burbage

Reporting inspector: Charlie Henry  
16979

Dates of inspection: 7 - 10 April 2003

Inspection number: 253966

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:	4 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chatfield Drive Birchwood Warrington
Postcode:	WA3 6QW
Telephone number:	01925 851393
Fax number:	01925 816795
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Denise Shaw
Date of previous inspection:	5 December 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16979	Charlie Henry	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements What should the school do to improve further?
9282	Clare Lorenz	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Physical education Post-16	
2351	Jacque Cook	Team inspector	Foundation stage Music English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?
19386	Trevor Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics Educational inclusion Design and technology	
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
22391	Nick Smith	Team inspector	Science Geography History Special educational needs	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Religious education	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fox Wood is a mixed community special school for 76 pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A quarter of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). This is an increased proportion since the last inspection. A few pupils also have additional special educational needs, including visual and hearing impairment. Currently there are 72 pupils on roll. These include three children of Nursery and Reception age and eight students aged over 16. There are twice as many boys as girls. All but one pupil, who is being assessed, have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Three pupils are from homes where English is not the main language spoken. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average at a quarter. Attainment on entry is low and often very low.

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

Fox Wood is a good school. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They develop very positive attitudes to learning and make very good personal development due to the high quality teaching and level of care from all staff. The headteacher provides very clear and effective leadership whereby all staff work very well together, continually improving how well they meet all pupils' special needs. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Ensures that pupils make good progress overall and achieve well, especially in developing their communication skills.
- Promotes pupils' personal development very well, including their social and moral development, resulting in very positive attitudes to school, the development of very good relationships and increased levels of independence.
- Involves the community very well to extend what pupils learn and increases further their personal development.
- Has very good links with parents.
- Very effective leadership and management create an environment where all staff work together to continuously improve how well they meet pupils' needs.

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

- Pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT).

*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**

Since the school was last inspected in December 2000 it has continued to improve very well. Almost all aspects of the key issues from that inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, pupils' progress has improved well and their personal development has improved very effectively. The planning and teaching of communication skills have improved very well, leading to pupils making very good progress in this area. Staff development has resulted in more effective management of pupils' behaviour. Changes in class organisation have led to less able pupils spending far more time with other pupils of their own age. The school is more effectively led and managed. Staff with management roles have clear responsibilities and a much improved planning process is in place, based on effective monitoring of how well pupils are learning and making progress. Accommodation has improved well following a change of school site. Teaching and learning of information and communication technology in discrete lessons have improved, although further development is required to ensure opportunities for learning this subject in other areas of the curriculum are consistently planned for and pupils make better progress. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning has improved very well and the curriculum has improved well, particularly the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which has improved very effectively. Procedures for pupils' care have also improved well. Given the involvement and effort of all staff in the school's development the capacity for even more improvement is very good.



## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good A
reading	B	B	A	B	good B
writing	B	B	B	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	B	B	A	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

The school is making good progress towards achieving targets set for pupils' learning. Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress overall across the areas of learning within the foundation curriculum. They make very good progress in developing their communication and their physical skills. Pupils in Years 1-9 and students in Years 12 and 13 also make good progress overall. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress overall. They make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills, including the use of signs and symbols. Progress and achievement in almost all other subjects are good, except in design and technology where these are satisfactory. Pupils do not make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology due to shortcomings in the planning of what they will learn. Pupils with additional special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress as other pupils. Boys do as well as girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school. They enjoy and are interested in what they do and try very hard to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. They behave well, are polite and well mannered in class and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils' personal development is very good. They build very good relationships with one another and with adults and become increasingly more independent.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Absences are almost always due to medical reasons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	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 and learning is good for pupils of all ages. It is always at least satisfactory and often very good, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching and learning in most subjects, including English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education is good. It is satisfactory in information and communication technology, where opportunities for teaching and learning in other subject areas are not consistently taken, and in design and technology, where what is taught is not consistently planned as well as it should be. Literacy is taught very effectively, especially the development of pupils' communication skills, and numeracy is taught well. All staff work very effectively as a team to ensure they meet pupils' needs well. They know their pupils very well, plan very effectively and develop very positive relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils try hard to do well, are keen and interested and gain new skills and knowledge effectively. Teaching for pupils who have English as an additional language and for those who have additional special educational needs is of equally high quality, so that these pupils learn as well as others of their own age.

## **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is good for almost all subjects. Very good use of the community enriches the curriculum. There are good links with a local secondary school and a college of further education.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. As a result on the emphasis on developing communication skills for all pupils, the few who have English as an additional language have their needs met as well as others.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils' social and moral development is promoted very well. Cultural and spiritual development is promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Procedures for ensuring child protection and welfare are very good. There are also very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.

The curriculum has an appropriately broad range of subjects, with a good balance of time spent on each. The curriculum for design and technology, other than for food technology, is not planned effectively to ensure that pupils build on what they have learned in previous classes. Information and communication technology is not developed adequately in other subjects. The curriculum for students in Years 12 and 13 is good and builds well on what they have already learned and prepares them well for when they leave school. There are very good arrangements for work experience. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are effective. Individual education plans are detailed, with targets that are usually specific and measurable. The school works very well with parents. It involves them in decisions, consults effectively about how to work together even more effectively and arranges a broad range of events. The quality of information they receive about how well their children are making progress and the broader aspects of the school are very good.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very clear leadership and very effective management that encourages all staff to meet the needs of each pupil and raise standards even higher. Subject co-ordinators are successful and plan well for further improvement.

How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body is very well informed about the school and use this very effectively in contributing to its shape and direction.
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The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Monitoring and evaluation procedures provide very valuable information about the success of the school in meeting pupils' needs and areas where further improvement could be made. Staff make effective use of assessment of pupils' progress using PIVATS and P scales (performance levels for pupils below the lowest level of the National Curriculum).
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Resources are used very effectively, through the close link with school improvement planning.

There is a good match of teaching and support staff, in terms of experience and expertise, with the requirements of the curriculum. Administrative staff are very effective and contribute very well to the smooth running of the school. Accommodation is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection, through a change of school site and further development of facilities. It is attractive and well maintained. The range of resources for learning are satisfactory overall. They are very good in mathematics. Facilities are extended very successfully by the use of the community, including the local library. The school approaches obtaining best value from its resources well.

### **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 and they make good progress.</li> <li>• They are kept well informed about how well they are doing.</li> <li>• Behaviour at school is good. Their children are helped to become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and staff have high expectations of their children's work.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they feel at ease if they need to discuss any difficulties with the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangements for homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with the positive views of parents. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory although parents do not always recognise that requests that are written in home school books are homework.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and reflects the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils of all ages make consistently good progress and achieve well, although in Years 10 and 11 they make very good progress overall. They make good progress in achieving targets set on their individual education plans (IEPs).
2. There are no measurable differences in the progress and achievement of pupils of different levels of ability, nor those who have additional special educational needs. Boys achieve as well as girls. The small number of pupils who have English as an additional language also make as much progress as other pupils. This is due to the emphasis of all staff in developing all pupils' communication skills. Teacher and support assistants speak clearly and stress the important words, which helps pupils learn well. Signs and symbols are used effectively for pupils who find the spoken word difficult to understand or who speak few or no words. Pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders learn to use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) well (when picture symbols are used in place of printed words). This helps their understanding of what their teachers and support assistants want to say to them and also enables them to communicate with others more effectively.
3. Reception and nursery aged children make good progress and achieve well. Their communication, literacy and language skills improve very well as every opportunity is taken in all lessons for these skills to be used and extended. All children communicate effectively. The most able speak in short sentences and the use of the PECS ensures all are able to make their wants and needs known effectively. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. All children also make very good progress in their physical development, notably in swimming and in physical education lessons. Their co-ordination has improved well and they are confident in the water and when using apparatus in the hall. Although at different stages, the children are making good progress in becoming able to look after themselves as part of their personal, social and emotional development. With assistance, they get ready for swimming and eat together socially. Children are beginning to learn to count and a few accurately name colours. Their mathematical development is improved well through the use of number songs. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is increased effectively through exploring a wide range of materials including sand and water. They learn to use computers and to work equipment through switches. Playing musical instruments and such activities as experimenting with painting and printing help children make good progress in developing their creative skills.
4. Overall, pupils make good progress in English. This is because all teachers, with the help of support staff, use the National Literacy Strategy to good effect. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress. Targets for further learning are set effectively, based on thorough knowledge of pupils' needs. Pupils make very good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills. They make good progress in reading. Pupils of all ages are interested in books and enjoy visits to the library to choose new ones. Pupils also make good progress and achieve well in writing, although not all opportunities to develop the use of writing are taken in the different subjects of the curriculum. Students in Years 12 and 13 make good progress in all areas of their English work.
5. In mathematics, pupils achieve well and make effective progress. Numeracy is taught well through other subjects and the National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted and contributes well to how well pupils do. Pupils increase their understanding of numbers, using them in their everyday activities in school and when on school visits, such as to the supermarket. Students in Years 12 and 13 use this knowledge when in the refectory as they attend college each week. Pupils of all ages learn mathematical language well, supported by the strong focus by all staff on developing pupils' communication.

6. Pupils make good progress in science, with very good progress in Years 10 and 11. This reflects the quality of their teaching and learning. They learn about the science behind many of their everyday experiences, for example, about plants growing and the simple properties of forces, light and other physical processes. As they go up through the school they begin to understand about fair testing and carry out simple experiments using this understanding as they try to understand the results.
7. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in most other subjects. This is because teachers plan what they are to learn well, building effectively on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology overall, although they make good progress and achieve well in food technology. This is due to weakness in the planning for other aspects of the subject, leading to less effective teaching and learning. Pupils do not make satisfactory progress in ICT, because it is only taught every other half term as a separate subject and teachers do not plan consistently for pupils to use ICT in the different subjects.

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

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and to their work. There are very good relationships between all members of the school's community and this reflects the caring ethos of the school. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The pupils' personal development is very good because of the climate of mutual respect and the emphasis on personal and independence skills. This positive picture represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection.
9. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school and enjoy their lessons, because overall the teaching is good and relationships are very good. For example, children in the nursery and reception class were clearly very excited at going swimming and there were lots of smiles. One even took off his shoes and socks too early in preparation. During a Years 3 to 7 science lesson, pupils responded enthusiastically on seeing magnetic force make toy cars jump. Pupils are keen to get on with their work, because they are motivated by the tasks they are given to do. For example, in a Years 3 to 6 class, pupils with ASD responded very well with enthusiasm and anticipation when they were able to smell and taste the fruits in the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. A less able pupil reacted very positively in a design and technology lesson for Years 7 to 9 when he saw his own picture in a photo frame. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 were very interested and well motivated throughout a very good mathematics lesson as they responded to the teacher's enthusiasm. The majority of pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning all of the time. They work sensibly, concentrate well and try hard to succeed.
10. Behaviour throughout the school is good and is often very good. In lessons most pupils behave well because they enjoy their work, are very well managed by staff and are praised and rewarded for their good behaviour. There are appropriate relaxation and calming down techniques to help effectively with anxiety and improve behaviour. Behaviour around the school is good. At break times pupils play with one another well. Younger pupils and children play in a separate area with equipment such as small bikes and there is a very happy atmosphere. Bullying is not a problem at all, and there are no exclusions. There are very good relationships between the pupils and between pupils and staff. Increasingly as they get older, pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on others and will show care and concern for each other. For example, during a trip to the library, a Year 9 pupil helped a less able pupil to find books. In assembly pupils clap and cheer when others gain awards for their work and effort.
11. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are working in an atmosphere free from any oppressive behaviour and have very good relationships with the staff. The PIVATS assessment graphs show that most pupils are improving in attention, independence and working with others. They listen well to their class teachers and the learning support assistants in lessons and are willing to take part in clearing up. Pupils care for each other; for example, in a science lesson, pupils in Years 3 to 7 help each other to use magnetic forces and, at lunchtime, older pupils help younger ones. Pupils get on well together, creating a very purposeful working atmosphere. For example, in a very good Years 7 to 9 mathematics lesson, pupils worked very well together

collecting data about different foods. Older pupils have opportunities for integration with a mainstream school and go on appropriate work experiences. These opportunities add further to their maturity. A particular feature of the pupils' personal development is their response to the opportunities to increase their independence. For example, at lunchtime older pupils queue quietly to collect their food and are able to behave well when unsupervised.

12. The level of attendance was not mentioned in the last inspection report. It is now 91 per cent, which is satisfactory. Almost all absence is due to periods of ill health. Pupils arrive at school punctually, with very occasional lateness due to transport difficulties.

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is always at least satisfactory and is often very good or better. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Developments in planning the curriculum and the introduction of better methods of assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have contributed very well to this improvement. Teaching and learning for children of nursery and reception age, for pupils in Years 1 to 9 and for students in Years 12 and 13 are predominantly good. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are usually very good, and always at least good. This is because of the very high quality of the team work of all staff and the very good relationships with all pupils. The joint planning by staff ensures that pupils' needs are met very effectively.
14. Overall, teachers have high levels of knowledge of the subjects they teach. This ensures they can match well the needs of each pupil during the same lesson. However, while there has been professional development in the use of ICT in other subjects this is still only beginning to be used as a matter of course and is not adequately planned for in many subjects, including mathematics.
15. Teachers' planning is very good and based on a thorough knowledge of the pupils' skills and difficulties. A wide range of activities is organised that maintains pupils' interest well and, as a result, helps them learn more effectively. Teachers skilfully match the tasks to suit the pupils, so that whatever their ability, they are able to work as independently as possible. For example, in a very good Year 9 English lesson, the teacher and support staff ensured that all pupils were involved in a well planned range of activities at different levels when creating a new verse for the poem '*Christina Crump*'. More able pupils used a symbol computer programme to write a new verse, while less able pupils used the outline of a crisp packet as a writing guide. Weekly planning meetings that involve all of the staff who work in a class are particularly effective and ensure that all know exactly what learning is being planned and what each pupil needs to do. Consequently, if a member of staff is busy another member of the staff can help, avoiding unnecessary waiting. If a member of the staff requires help to move non-ambulant pupils then this is promptly given. This effective team work carries through to the pupils and contributes to the very effective relationships they have with their staff. As a consequence their wish to learn remains very high.
16. Effective classroom routines ensure that pupils know what to do with a minimum of direction. Teachers use effectively the beginnings of lessons to explain what is planned, and how this fits with what they have learned previously. Pupils are then often split into groups using different parts of the room, carrying out activities that are appropriate to their abilities. At the end of the lesson the class joins together as one group again, teachers reinforce what the pupils have learned and extend their understanding. Teachers assess well what their pupils have learned by observing what they are doing and asking them questions. They also set further challenges to test their learning. Pupils respond particularly enthusiastically to these, trying hard to show how much they know and to do well for their teachers and support assistants. Teachers then use this information effectively to plan for the next lessons. As a result the level of knowledge and staff expectations of what they expect pupils to do remains consistently high, contributing to the progress that is made.

17. The teaching and learning of literacy, especially speaking and listening, throughout the school are very good. A characteristic of most lessons is the emphasis on effective communication, with the use of Makaton signing, PECS symbols and simple electronic communicators to involve pupils more effectively. As a result, pupils work very hard and showing great interest and involvement in what they are doing. From the moment they arrive in school pupils are encouraged to communicate to their best ability. Staff praise pupils' attempts at explaining their own ideas, for instance, when pupils are asked what will happen next in a story. Staff are very patient when waiting for pupils to respond, even though this can take a little time. They use simple yet appropriate language and consistently sign to support their teaching. Pupils concentrate well, increasingly trying to do more for themselves. For example, in a very good Year 1 religious education lesson good signing and verbal encouragement from staff enabled all pupils to fully participate in linking the death of Jesus and the Easter celebration. The teaching of numeracy throughout the school is also effective. Staff make use of many opportunities to develop these skills. For example, in physical education lessons where they learn about 'mathematical' language, such as 'over' and 'under' and 'next to', and in counting.
18. The management of behaviour is effective and based on carefully thought through methods to get pupils to behave well. Staff consistently carry out the agreed procedures well even when a particular pupil's behaviour is very difficult, as when, as a result of an autistic spectrum disorder, a Year 4 pupil found difficulty concentrating in a music lesson. The support assistant very patiently and skilfully distracted the pupil's attention, calming him down and then drew him back into the class activity. In a very few lessons the changes of activity are not sufficiently clear to the pupils with the result that they become restless and their responsiveness decreases.
19. Support staff make very important contributions to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress. They are very skilled and knowledgeable about the pupils and teachers make full use of their abilities. They plan carefully which pupil or pupils they will work with and detail what they are to do. The very good teamwork of all staff is a characteristic of the best teaching and learning. Resources are usually well prepared and of suitable quality. On a few occasions they are not as appropriate as they might be, as when using a set of scales that were not easy for pupils to see if the pans were balanced. Teachers use the local community well, for example visiting places of interest, to make learning more exciting and relevant.
20. Homework is set regularly for many pupils, particularly involving practising reading and developing speaking and listening skills. Parents do not always realise that what is written in the home-school books is homework. They are asked, for example, to read a book to their child or to help to find resources for a topic that is being covered in class.

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

21. Overall, the curriculum is good and has improved well since the last inspection. Throughout the school, an appropriate range of subjects is taught with adequate time spent on each. The curriculum for nursery and reception children is good. It is based firmly on the areas of learning for the foundation stage with a very appropriate strong emphasis on communication, language and literacy. Planning is detailed and takes account of the needs of the children in the class when selecting topics to study. As a result they build well on what they have learnt previously. Links with the topic cycle in Years 1 and 2 are not made sufficiently to ensure subjects are not unnecessarily revisited.
22. Provision for English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art and design, Spanish, music and religious education is good. It is satisfactory in design and technology. Weakness in the curriculum for English was a key issue in the last inspection. This subject has been developed effectively and there is now an appropriate scheme of work (plan of what pupils will learn) that links effectively with the National Literacy Strategy. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been appropriately adapted and is beginning to have a good effect on pupils' progress. The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection in that there are now reliable computers in



- all classrooms and staff have completed basic training. However, it is not taught for long enough and, overall, remains unsatisfactory. It is only taught as a separate subject for alternate half terms and its use in other subjects, including mathematics, art, design and technology and a modern foreign language and for students in Years 12 and 13 is unsatisfactory. It is very effectively used in the sensory base and for pupils in Years 10 and 11, who have the opportunity to gain external accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) 'Transition Challenge'.
23. The curriculum for post-16 students is good overall. It builds effectively on the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 through ASDAN's 'Towards Independence'. The elements of this accreditation are chosen carefully to ensure they are relevant to the students' needs. This work is supported by the use of local community facilities, with three days each week taking place in a local youth centre and at a local college of further education.
  24. The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is good. In addition to using commercially produced schemes of work which teachers use to plan appropriately for their class groups, it is taught throughout the other subjects and also through the everyday routines of the school. Termly PSHE targets are set and assessed for each pupil which helps all pupils to make good progress. For example, in geography, pupils learn about the effect of litter in the environment and understand the need for cleanliness. Very good use is made of times, such as breaks and lunchtime to support personal development. For example, at lunchtime, there are targets for each pupil, such as 'to choose and collect lunch independently'. There is a strong emphasis on independence skills and pupils are making very good progress in this area. There is a good personal development programme to prepare students in Years 12 and 13 for when they leave school, focussing on their needs at this period of change in their lives.
  25. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. Teachers plan well to ensure that their needs are met as well as for other pupils. There is effective support from specialists who visit the school, for example, to provide advice for staff who work with pupils who have visual and hearing difficulties. Behaviour plans are drawn up for those who require extra attention on this aspect of their development.
  26. The provision for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Although there is no specific additional support for these pupils staff take into account their needs effectively when planning their lessons and when teaching. The emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, including through the use of signs and symbols, is as helpful for these pupils as it is for others. In addition, staff present very good models to demonstrate to pupils how to speak and sign correctly.
  27. There is a very wide range of additional activities for pupils to extend their learning. Pupils attend activities during lunch break and go to the local shopping centre and a local school for after-school activities, such as trampolining. There is a good range of residential experiences including stays at an outdoor pursuits centre in the Lake District and in Tenerife. There are also visits to shows, local theatres and concerts. During these extra-curricular activities, staff ensure that all pupils are included by providing appropriate help for those who need it.
  28. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. Many very effective links have been established to promote, extend and enrich pupils' learning. Pupils visit places of worship for religious education and go to museums to support their history work. In Years 1 and 2, they visit Risley Moss, a nearby country park, to look at the wooden sculptures as part of their art and design lessons. Other classes make very good use of the local shopping area to improve their independence skills. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 buy ingredients for food technology classes and learn to handle money correctly. Visitors are invited into school to make contributions to lessons, such as on healthy eating, and in assemblies, religious education, art and music. For example, a regular visit from a musician from a local church adds very well to the music lessons in the sensory base. The library is used very well by all classes each week.
  29. Links with other schools are good. There are very good links with a nearby secondary school, that extends the range of learning facilities, for example, in science, where a broader range of

specialist equipment is available for demonstration and use in lessons. The link also provides opportunities to work with mainstream pupils, promoting, in particular, their social and personal development. A few mainstream pupils help with classroom activities and complete work experience placements in the school. There are plans to re-establish links with the local primary schools. These activities have a positive effect on the development of pupils' social skills and language.

30. There is good provision for careers and vocational education. Opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work are well matched to their ages and stages of development. The statutory requirement for careers education and guidance is well met. From Year 9 on, careers officers contribute to pupils' annual reviews and their transition programmes. By the time they enter Years 12 and 13, students have personal careers advisors who know them well and are involved in planning for the available opportunities when they leave school. All students have very good work experience, with all having places in the local community, such as in shops, the library and a local supermarket. Staff in these establishments offer very good levels of support and a range of meaningful experiences to which the students respond very well. For example, one student recently completed successfully a placement with Warrington Rugby League Football Club.
31. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection and demonstrates the level of care that the school places on the broader development of all of its pupils. The school's approach to valuing each pupil underpins all that it does.
32. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well through both planned experiences and incidental opportunities. In PSHE lessons, pupils are encouraged to think about different celebrations. They show reverence in assemblies and put their hands together to pray as they are encouraged to join in, for example to say the Lord's Prayer. Most assemblies contribute well to this aspect of the school's provision. The calm and pleasant atmosphere gives opportunity for a thoughtful start to the school day. In one very good assembly, an outside speaker focused on getting pupils to think about people who help us. There are opportunities for spiritual development in religious education lessons. For example, in a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher very successfully conveyed the feeling of sadness at the death of Jesus. Pupils were given time to reflect on the meaning of this event. Younger children in the nursery and reception class say a prayer at the end of the day and have a calm session when they all sit quietly. The caring ethos throughout the school, and the mutual respect which is evident, make a very positive contribution to the spiritual climate in which the pupils learn.
33. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. These areas of development are supported by a well planned programme for PSHE, which encourages pupils to become independent. There is an unmistakable moral code in the school and pupils are given clear standards of what is right and wrong. Younger children in the Nursery and Reception class are encouraged to take turns and there is very good reinforcement of the use of 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils are encouraged as part of the PSHE programme to think of others. For example they collect for charities, they take part in Red Nose Day for Comic Relief and have raffles to raise money for 'Jeans for Genes'. The school has achievement awards for good behaviour, which are presented weekly at the Friday assembly. For example, one pupil received an award for excellent behaviour on a visit to the Blue Planet Aquarium. Another pupil is praised as a 'Star Pupil' for being mature and helpful throughout the week.
34. Pupils make very good progress in social development. Pupils develop positive attitudes to the happy and friendly environment that staff have created throughout the school. They are encouraged to share equipment and to join in activities. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their social skills and become more independent by taking responsibilities, such as taking the register to the office and clearing up after a lesson. A visit to the shops and a drink bar with a group of Years 3 to 6 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders provided a good opportunity for them to practise their social skills. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at ease in the shopping centre and are very well behaved and polite. One pupil bought a newspaper and magazine on her own and paid independently. Pupils are effectively taught skills in eating and personal hygiene. Snack times are treated as learning occasions and good manners and social behaviour is expected, including clearing their own dishes away. Students in Years 12 and 13, visit a local college of further education and are encouraged to mix very well with other college students.
35. Provision for cultural development is good overall. Pupils are made aware of their own culture with visits to the theatre, and to local places of interest, such as Styal Mill. They have explored

wooden sculptures at a nearby country park. Traditional nursery rhymes are taught in English for younger pupils and great literature, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, is studied by the older pupils. The visiting musician often includes religious and folk music for the pupils to join in each week. On a recent residential visit to Tenerife pupils visited Mount Teide, a volcano, and went around a banana plantation and ate in Spanish restaurants, where they asked for 'la cuenta' (the bill). This very good cultural experience which was enhanced by activities in school, such as making Spanish fans, cooking paella and learning appropriate Spanish words in modern foreign language lessons. Multicultural education is an improving area. It is a priority for further development in the school plan, starting with a thorough audit of what currently takes place and their resources. Pupils have the opportunity to appreciate differences and similarities between cultures. For example, pupils looked at the Sikh religion and a visitor from the Sikh community came to the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 participate in a demonstration of worship from the Hindu religion and handle artefacts linked to Islam. Those in Years 7 to 9 explore key festivals in the Muslim and Christian calendars. Pupils have also made African masks and Inca hats in art and design.

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

36. The procedures for the protection and welfare of the pupils are very good. The quality of these aspects of the school's work was not mentioned in the last inspection report. The teacher responsible for child protection matters is well informed. All staff receive regular updated training and are aware of child protection issues, based on procedures agreed by the local area child protection committee. Medical facilities are very good with a nurse on site full time to care for the pupils, administer medicine and carry out health checks. The school has a comprehensive health and safety policy and the caretaker and buildings governor make regular checks of the premises. Transport arrangements are efficient and effective, contributing well to the very caring approach of the school.
37. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying or racial harassment are very good. Pupils' behaviour is managed very positively and, as a result, they are clear about what is and is not acceptable behaviour. There is a great deal of praise and encouragement when it is deserved, and clear statements of disapproval to show when behaviour is unsatisfactory. The weekly Friday assembly is eagerly awaited by pupils as this is the time when the headteacher and class teachers give certificates for good effort and achievement, and for meeting behavioural targets. The kindness of pupils in cheering other class members' achievements helps maintain the positive support for good behaviour and working hard. The recording of any incidents is thorough and allows the headteacher to spot patterns of poor behaviour. There have not been any exclusions from the school, nor have there been any recorded occurrences of oppressive or racist behaviour.
38. The procedures for recording and improving attendance are good. The educational welfare officer has helped effectively to improve the attendance when this has been necessary. Parents are usually very prompt about informing the school about the cause of their children's absence and the school contacts them if there is any delay in this information.
39. Educational and personal development support and guidance are good. Annual reviews of pupils' statements of special educational needs are effective and ensure that the requirements of these statements are planned for. Termly individual education plans (IEPs) enable the aims of annual reviews to be met well. The targets in IEPs are usually specific and cover a suitably broad range areas of a pupils' learning, including personal development and, if appropriate, behaviour. A range of support services, including physiotherapy and specialist teachers for pupils who have visual and hearing impairment, have a positive effect on pupils' welfare, particularly those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. The lack of full-time speech and language therapy since September 2002, has caused delays in a few pupils' communication needs being fully identified. At present this specialist support is provided one day each week. During the inspection week interviews were taking place for an assistant speech and language therapist to augment the current provision. The school, because of the shortage of therapists, has given effective training to staff and parents to widen methods of communication with pupils, for example with PECS.



40. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All staff know their pupils well and, in many cases, also their families. The pupils are assessed as they start at the school and this baseline information enables pupils' first IEPs to be produced. These plans provide the basis for specific teaching to match pupils' needs. Their progress is regularly monitored and this information is used to plan the next steps of their learning. In addition, each pupil has a comprehensive file of information on academic and social progress as well as a "rainbow file", a record of achievement, completed by the pupil, which records successes at school. The assessment of students in Years 10 and 11, and also Years 12 and 13, is satisfactorily supported with the use of ASDAN accreditation schemes.

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

41. The school has worked successfully to develop very effective links with parents. Even though most parents live a long way from the school their involvement in its work is good. Judgements on these aspects of the school were not included in the last inspection report. This very helpful relationship begins with the comprehensive information provided by parents as pupils join the school, that is used by their teachers in the Foundation Stage.
42. Parents have very positive views about the school. They consider overwhelmingly that their children like school and are making good progress. They believe that the school is very approachable and that any problems that arise will be sorted out. The inspection confirmed the parents' positive views of the school.
43. The quality of information that parents receive, particularly about the progress their children make, is very good. Parents receive an end of year report of their child's progress, which is issued in the summer term. These reports provide good detail of what pupils know, understand and can do. In addition, parents can clearly see the progress their children are making by the school's use of graphs, covering the different parts of the curriculum. These are relatively new yet are already proving to be valuable in showing the extent of progress a pupil has made from one year to the next. The reports are discussed at the annual review of the statement of special educational needs, usually held early in the autumn term. There are also termly reviews of IEP targets. All of these meetings are well attended by parents.
44. The home-school book provides an important means of regular communication between parents and staff, especially for pupils who have little or no speech. Many parents provide valuable information about what their children are doing at home that staff can use to develop further their communication. Parents also respond to a range of teachers' comments and questions. They follow up on activities that teachers are working on with the pupils in class, for example in developing their communication skills. Again this is very useful given that most pupils travel by taxi and this limits the frequency that staff can speak with parents.
45. Regular, informative and well presented newsletters are sent to all parents, covering information relevant to all pupils and about the school's development. There are also termly information sheets from each class, detailing the topics pupils are to cover in their lessons. These enable parents to know what is going to take place, plan ahead and contribute to their children's education. The school prospectus is good. It provides good information about important aspects of the school's organisation and procedures and its expectations of parents, for example, concerning informing the school if their child is ill. Parents are not routinely informed about their right to withdraw their children from sex education. The governors' annual report to parents is thorough although has a few required items missing, for example, a report on sporting achievements and on disability access.
46. Parents' contribution to their children's learning at school and at home is good overall. There is a small group of regular volunteers who come into school when asked. They are especially useful in assisting with the successful off-site swimming sessions. A few parents come with their children to school to take books out of the school or local library and hear them read at home.

47. The school issued a questionnaire to ask for parents' views on how to strengthen its links. As a result, coffee mornings and workshops directly relating to pupils' needs, for example, on behaviour, health issues and communication development, have been arranged. These have usually been well attended. Fox Wood Friends' Association arranges well supported social and fund raising events, such as the Valentine disco, and is now contributing to the school's facilities by purchasing playground equipment. Parents are also generous supporters of their children's charity fundraising events at school.

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

48. Improvement since the last inspection in leadership and management is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership based on a clear vision to raise standards that is shared by all the staff and the governing body. As a result, the aims and values of the school are central to its policies and to what happens from day to day. Effective consultation and decision making, where all staff feel they are involved, has built a team with high morale that is very prepared to accept change and is committed to ensuring all pupils make the best possible progress. It is very apparent in the way the school quickly adapted to the new premises when they moved in 2001. Teaching and non-teaching staff comment that they feel involved and appreciate the openness of the way the school is run. This has contributed to the success of the senior management team taking on new roles since the deputy headteacher left in February. The adjustment in roles also demonstrates how well the headteacher leads by example, as she took on the additional responsibilities for the temporary co-ordination of two subjects.
49. The school is managed very well. Almost all the issues from the last inspection have been successfully dealt with. The three-year school development plan is of very high quality and clearly charts how the school will continue to improve. A comprehensive pattern of consultation and evaluation with the staff and the governing body sets priorities and with more detailed action plans establishes costings, roles, time scales and how success will be measured. The yearly cycle of review, audit and priority focus is particularly helpful for subject co-ordinators writing their development plans. The leadership provided by subject co-ordinators is good overall. In a few subjects that have been prioritised, including English and science, leadership is very good. Regular subject meetings provide opportunities for staff to be kept up to date and share expertise. A constructive proforma completed by subject leaders audits the provision made and provides a record of what has been achieved. A range of pupils' work has been collected and standards agreed in a number of subjects to assist in assessing accurately how well they are doing. Communication is very effective. The pattern of meetings is very well organised, including staff briefings, staff meetings, curriculum meetings, class and subject planning meetings and senior management team meetings. As a result, strategic decisions are well thought through and the day-to-day running of the school is smooth.
50. There are very comprehensive monitoring processes established, which have improved the quality of teaching and learning considerably. Another example of staff involvement is in the choice of criteria used. A self-evaluation exercise and discussion about what makes a good lesson led to their selection. The headteacher, members of the senior management team and, currently, a few of the subject co-ordinators observe lessons. All teachers are seen teaching at least termly and frequently more often. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning further, a consultant has also observed lessons on a number of occasions. The quality of all the feedback to staff is very good, identifying what works well and what is in need of improvement. There are plans for all co-ordinators to see their subject being taught by other teachers. Even without direct lesson observation, co-ordinators have a good overview of what is taught in their subjects through termly monitoring of teachers' planning. The senior managers also scrutinise teachers' records, the classroom environment, pupils' individual education plans and behaviour plans. Any outstanding tasks for teachers to complete are indicated and signed off once dealt with. Pupils' progress is monitored well through the use of PIVATS and targets are set using the 'P' levels. However, the information obtained is not broken down to check if there are any differences in rates of progress

by groups of pupils such as those with autistic spectrum disorder or those speaking English as an additional language.



51. Procedures for performance management are carried out very well and are gradually including all the staff. At present, teachers, support staff and administrative staff participate. A comprehensive training programme meets individual and whole school needs effectively. Training has been extended to include midday supervisors to improve successfully the provision for pupils during the lunch period. Induction procedures for new staff are very good. There are also two very helpful booklets, one for short-term temporary staff and another for those appointed to the school which provide relevant information about the way the school works.
52. The governing body plays a very effective part in the leadership and management of the school. Although there are relatively few governors, the committee structure of curriculum, finance, personnel and buildings works very well, reporting to the whole governing body. Governors are very well informed about the school and use their knowledge well, for example, when participating in drawing up the development plan. The headteacher's termly report to the governors specifically highlights matters for discussion and action, successfully targeting areas where decisions need to be made. One result is that staff absence has considerably reduced through policies and procedures established. Staff are invited to governors' meetings, for example, to the curriculum committee to talk about policies and their resource implications. Governors take their monitoring role seriously, checking the progress of the school development plan and overseeing budgeting and expenditure, such as the allocation of funds specifically for implementing the Key Stage 3 strategy.
53. Finances are managed very well. Budget expenditure is closely linked to the priorities in the development plan. Teachers make a bid for any additional funds they may need showing clearly how it will improve the standard of education. Expenditure is tightly controlled through the accounting procedures. Staff are regularly updated on the funds they have available. The principles of best value are applied well. To enable the school to obtain additional funding, a comparison was made of the costs per pupil in other similar schools. The high levels of monitoring constantly challenge staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is no complacency as can be seen in the development of the curriculum for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Governors have faced difficulties in ensuring that money is spent wisely with reference to unsatisfactory elements of the new building because they have not been able to manage the contract themselves. However, they have persisted in acquiring the standards necessary, and the pool, for example, no longer leaks. In order to make the most effective use of support staff, the governing body has campaigned successfully to have the additional funding for staff working with individual pupils transferred to the school budget. The level of consultation is high within the school and also with parents and the community. For example, parents requested music therapy in response to a questionnaire about improving the school. An evaluation of the provision indicated its potential gains and music therapy is now included for those who will benefit. New technology is used well to support teaching and learning, for example in the preparation of resources, and in managing the school, particularly its finances.
54. There are sufficient, well-qualified and experienced staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The current headteacher is leaving at this term and the post of deputy headteacher has deliberately been left vacant for the governing body and the new headteacher to appoint. The administrative staff are particularly efficient and effective. They have clear job descriptions but are flexible enough to make sure that everything gets done. Visitors and telephone callers are made to feel welcome. They know the children well and make them feel valued which is one of the reasons that there are no shortages of volunteers for taking the register in the morning.
55. At the time of the last inspection the accommodation was a key issue as it restricted pupils' educational opportunities. In 2001 the school moved to new premises, a converted and extended primary school. This provides satisfactory accommodation, although there have been delays in completing a few aspects of the alterations. The accommodation is bright and well maintained. The school has a specialist art room that doubles on two days of the week as a teaching base for students aged 16-19. Students spend the rest of the week learning off-site at a youth centre and a local college of further education. While this accommodation is satisfactory, the students do not have a permanent base that they can identify as their own. The provision of such dedicated accommodation is a priority for the school and there are discussions with the local education

authority and local colleges to provide this. The delay in finishing landscaping the areas around the building has meant that pupils have to be restricted to playing on hard surfaces. The new hydrotherapy pool is a valuable facility and is used very well to develop pupils' skills. The range of resources for learning is satisfactory overall. Resources for teaching mathematics are very good and they are good in the Foundation Stage and for teaching Spanish. The school library, which is small, is augmented well by regular visits to the local library to support pupils' learning in school and at home.

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

56. The governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:

- (1) Increase pupils' progress and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
  - developing and implementing a whole school plan for what pupils will learn;
  - rigorously monitoring the quality of teachers' planning and how well pupils learn; and
  - develop further staff expertise in the teaching and use of ICT within different subjects.(Paragraphs 7, 14, 22, 76, 81, 100, 105)

Governors may also wish to include the following minor issues when constructing their action plan:

- (1) Consistency of targets in IEPs. (Paragraph 39)
- (2) Access to the grassed areas around the school to extend opportunities for games and physical education activities. (Paragraph 55, 115)
- (3) Analysis of progress made by different groups of pupils. (Paragraph 50)
- (4) A few aspects of information provided to parents. (Paragraph 45)
- (5) Provide more opportunities for pupils to write their own ideas and opinions. (Paragraph 69)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	30	32	9	0	0	0
Percentage	1	42	44	13	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	72
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8.8	School data	0.4

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
69	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	871

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	869,573
Total expenditure	855,942
Expenditure per pupil	12,968
Balance brought forward from previous year	80394
Balance carried forward to next year	94025

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	72
Number of questionnaires returned	36

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	22	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	0	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	31	3	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	22	25	0	28
The teaching is good.	64	33	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	25	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	19	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	36	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	67	28	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	19	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	36	0	0	17
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	36	0	0	14

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

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

Overall, the quality of provision in the foundation stage is good.

#### Strengths

- Very good progress in communication, language and literacy and physical development.
- Good teamwork of staff and volunteers.
- Good assessment when children join the class to measure progress against.
- Very good assessment in swimming.
- Additional means of communication such as signing and symbols used very effectively.

#### Areas for improvement

- Closer links with the next class.
- Use of space within the classroom.

57. Children make good progress and achieve well. They improve their communication skills and develop their physical skills very well. Children learning English as an additional language make similar rates of progress as other children in the class because of the strong emphasis on teaching language and the meaning of words. Initial assessments, including a completed detailed booklet by parents about their children and information from statements of special educational need are used effectively to draw up individual education plans containing very appropriate targets for children to work towards. These provide a good basis for planning work and checking the progress being made. Lessons are planned well to make the best use of staff so strong relationships are formed with the children. This helps them to learn because they want to do their best for those with whom they work. Information and communication technology is used well to support children's learning. In many sessions there is a group working on the computer or operating equipment such as the food mixer in cookery. Although the classroom is organised into areas for different activities, there are times when children are not able to make the best use of the space. For example, they may be sitting too close to another child, which is distracting. At present there are few occasions when the children have an opportunity to work with pupils in the next class to widen their contact with others including staff.
58. Very effective routines are quickly established that help the children to build their confidence and make good progress in their **personal, social and emotional development**. They extend the time they are able to sit on a chair, such as, during the registration session. Good teaching ensures children are constantly praised and encouraged when they achieve well and when they are behaving well. This improves their self-esteem and their behaviour improves. Also, the very good knowledge staff have of the children means they do not put them in situations where difficulties may arise. For example, during play sessions children are offered a selection of toys they will enjoy and restricted to one area of the classroom to prevent them wandering aimlessly. Staff sit near children with short concentration spans and prompt them if they become restless. Opportunities are made for children to work together. In physical education lessons they all hold one hoop and two children take turns to pull from opposite sides of the hoop, which develops co-operation, and awareness of what the other children are doing. Staff work with specific children when they are changing for physical education or for swimming. This is effective as they are aware exactly how much assistance to give to encourage each child to undress and dress him or herself.
59. Children's **communication, language and literacy** skills are developed very well through very good and consistent teaching. There is a constant emphasis on language by all the staff, which ensures children make very good progress. In registration sessions, many children are able to select their name from a choice of two. The youngest child recognises his photograph. Action songs are very effective in helping to build vocabulary. For example, following the actions to 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' leads to accurate naming of parts of the body. The continual use of signing, objects of reference (items that represent an activity or a place such as an arm

band for swimming and a wooden spoon for cookery) and symbols helps children make the link between speech and meaning. Their understanding is further developed through the PECS. This is particularly effective for children with autistic spectrum disorder, removing frustration by helping them to communicate. The less able children know that they can give a symbol back to say they want to do an activity and the more able ask for items. For example, a child speaking English as an additional language used the system effectively to ask for Lego and for a drink. Children develop a love of stories through listening to the big book being read in an exciting way. They point to items on the page when asked and the more able join in with refrains such as 'swishy swashy' and 'we are going on a bear hunt'. They look at books, which they have chosen with their teacher, turning the pages from left to right.

60. Children make good progress in developing their **mathematical** skills. Good teaching using a range of resources ensures pupils learn to count. They enjoy the puppet caterpillar, which munches a leaf at a time –'munch, munch, munch', so each time leaves that are left have to be counted. Songs such as 'Five Speckled Frogs' and 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Once I Caught a Fish Alive' help children to learn the sequence of numbers and as a result, a few rote count and are beginning to realise that one represents one item. This takes longer with less able children but is reinforced in many other activities such as cooking. With staff help, children trace over numbers with increasing accuracy. Most match circles into shape sorters and many are beginning to distinguish colours in order to sort objects, for example, putting blue model boats with others of the same colour. Computer programs help children to understand that actions make something happen on the screen. The more able match numbers and the less able change images and music by using a touch screen.
61. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are developed well. Children make good progress as they explore different materials and the good teaching ensures they learn through their play and use a range of tools appropriately. They examine the texture of sand and use spades to fill buckets to make sandcastles, a few with assistance. Children fill containers with water and empty them observing when staff show that some items float. Good teaching helps children to understand the passage of time. Each day, the timetable is gone through using symbols and using such words as 'before' and 'after'. Each child makes his or her own mix for biscuits. With staff help, they combine the ingredients either using a spoon or operating a food processor with a switch. They roll out the biscuit mix, cut shapes and put the trays in the oven. Through using touch screens on computers, children discover they can make things happen by touching the screen. Good choices of programs guide children to press specific parts of a screen rather than at random. They understand that switches change things, such as turning on a fan to represent wind and snow in a story and in the sensory room, creating light effects and operating the bubble tube. Children are made aware of the world beyond school through the visits they make into the community. For example, they visited their homes on the mini bus and took a picture of each house to display in the classroom.
62. The very high quality of teaching and learning in lessons where the focus is on children's **physical development** leads to very good progress. Children are organised very well to help their learning. They sit in a tight circle with staff sitting with those who need help and improve their skills in passing a ball from one to another. Agility is increased as children complete a circuit of apparatus: they step up steps, walk over a bridge, slide down a slide, crawl through a tunnel and balance on a beam. Through an energetic demonstration by a member of staff, pupils understand what to do and the more able jump off the beam and are beginning to think about how they land. The teamwork of staff is very good indeed during the hydrotherapy session. Two pupils at a time are carefully helped to enter the pool. They make rapid progress in gaining confidence in the water, learning to kick, to tolerate water on their face and move around the pool lifting their feet from the bottom. Staff encourage and praise every achievement, ensuring the member of staff who is recording progress very effectively, knows what has been achieved. Volunteer help is well used and very effective in playing with children that are not in the water.
63. Regular sessions of art and music and good teaching help children to make good progress in their **creative development**. Staff give many opportunities for children to select the colours they would like to use. Children make marks and shapes on paper using a range of tools including



large shaving brushes and sponges. Through making wrapping paper by printing shapes, children begin to develop a sense of composition. Interesting whole class work, such as using handprints to form the leaves on a tree and making textured bark, gives children the experience of working on larger pieces. They play percussion instruments and make their own shakers. During break time and lunchtime, several children play independently in the house and the castle. They open and shut the doors and windows and 'park' their tricycles and model cars.

64. It is not possible to assess the progress made in this subject since the last inspection because there are no references in the previous inspection report to the foundation stage.

## ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

### Strengths

- Very good progress in pupils' communication skills.
- Effective assessment of what pupils learn used well to plan further teaching and learning.
- Good progress in reading and writing.
- Good use of targets from individual education plans.
- Effective subject management provides good support for other staff.

### Areas for improvement

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to write their own ideas and opinions.
- Increasing the use of computers.

65. Pupils and students in all years make very good progress in developing their communication skills. This is the result of the emphasis that all staff place on this aspect of their learning. They encourage pupils to use signs and symbols very effectively to communicate with others to make choices in response to questions that are asked and in things they want to do, such as, at break time they sign or speak to say whether they want a drink or not. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, in particular, use PECS to communicate effectively. They use a card with printed symbol to show they have completed an activity or what they want to do next. This aspect of the school's work has benefited from the advice of speech and language therapists, although this has been limited lately due to a shortage of therapist time. Additionally, because staff know pupils very well, they understand what the least able pupils, who do not speak or use signs nor recognise symbols consistently, are trying to say by their reactions, such as a change in their expression or eye contact. There is effective planning to ensure that pupils whose first language is not English can communicate effectively and join in lessons fully. Staff check carefully that they understand what is said and successfully help them develop their vocabulary. Switches linked to simple taped messages are particularly well used with less able pupils to help them to participate fully in the lessons.
66. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have learned key words, signs or symbols for the important parts of their lessons and other parts of the school day. They use these to take an increasingly more active part in their learning. Listening skills also improve, for example, they listened carefully to the teacher and responded with interest and enthusiasm to the variety of props used to portray the death of Jesus. Many less able pupils begin to use eye pointing to express their wishes. By the end of Year 6 vocabulary has increased, as has the length of time that pupils can listen carefully. Pupils in a very good English lesson for Years 4, 5 and 6 were able to relate pictures in books to real objects. The teacher's skilful choice of questions encouraged pupils to describe their favourite fruits. By the time pupils leave school the majority are able to express their opinions and make choices. More able pupils can hold a simple conversation and respond appropriately to questions from adults and other pupils. They initiate conversations with adults by asking questions and explaining what they have been doing, although their ability to converse with each other without adult support and prompting is less effective. Students in Years 12 and 13 practise their communication skills in new situations, especially as they visit the college each week, for example in the cafeteria.

67. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading. They are interested in books and enjoy looking at and listening to the pictures and stories. In whole class reading sessions when the group is looking at a book or reading written texts together, teachers use effectively symbols alongside printed words and pictures to help pupils read a simple story. Teachers ask questions well to check pupils' understanding and further develop it. By the end of Year 2 most pupils develop an awareness of books and enjoy following a story, for example, they get excited as they listen to *Brown Bear*. By the end of Year 6 more able pupils learn to recognise their name, the names of their friends and many basic everyday words. They know how to use pictures in books to find out what is happening in the story. Those pupils who are able turn pages carefully and can follow text with their finger. The majority of pupils in Years 7 to 11 recognise familiar characters in stories and can match the names to the pictures. More able pupils learn how to use letter sounds to work out simple new words effectively and read aloud confidently. Clear progress was made during a literacy session for post-16 students using shared text (where pupils and staff read together), where most pupils could recognise a character from Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* by pointing to it from a choice of three. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make as much progress as other, as do those for whom English is an additional language. They enjoy looking at books and other reading material and most learn to read a range of words.
68. Pupils make good progress in writing. By the end of Year 2 many pupils hold pencils and crayons increasingly well, and try their best to form accurate marks as they visually track the patterns they are copying. Less able pupils are beginning to understand that pressing a simple switch can lead to something happening, such as music playing. By the end of Year 6 most pupils record information in writing, copying some simple shapes with increasing accuracy. A few write their own first names. By the end of Year 9 pencil control has improved. More able pupils copy over a model, making horizontal, vertical and circular lines. Less able pupils learn to make purposeful marks on paper. This progress continues well so that by the end of Year 11 many pupils copy writing with support, for example, when making labels for displays. Less able pupils have increasingly become more consistent using switches to express their views. In Years 12 and 13 more able students recorded information on paper, such as when they visit shops for ingredients to use in food technology.
69. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. They are very good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers and support assistants know their pupils well and effectively use this knowledge in lesson planning and in assessing and recording the progress pupils make. Individual targets are in place for each pupil in each lesson and this ensures that pupils' new knowledge and skills are built upon that which they already know. This maintains interest and enthusiasm well. In a few lessons not enough emphasis is placed on planning a good range of individual activities. A few teachers make good use of ICT in their classrooms to support and reinforce skills, although the use of this technology to support all aspects of English is in the early stages of development. Following further training staff are becoming more aware of the opportunities for its use. Relationships in lessons are very good and pupils are able to learn in a very happy atmosphere. Support assistants are well informed, work very well with their teachers and make very valuable contributions to individual pupils' learning. Good planning ensures that the wide range of attainment of pupils in each class is usually catered for. However, although pupils and students are taught basic skills of letter formation well, pupils do not have enough opportunities in lessons other than English to use these skills. Displays on classroom walls and along corridors provide good examples of writing and promote pupils' pride in their work.
70. Literacy is promoted well in all subjects. There is a very good focus on developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. There are opportunities in all subjects to develop reading and writing skills through identification of key words in lesson planning. For example, in a very good Year 11 science lesson, pupils remember the key words 'gravity', 'push' and 'resist'. The provision made by the school for alternative and augmentative communication users is good and enables pupils and students to participate. The provision is managed well and clear priorities have been identified which will enable the school to move forward. The use of symbols, signs and communication systems such as single switches and complex communication devices ensures that pupils take a full part in their lessons and learn well.

71. Overall, there been good improvement since the previous inspection. The subject is well managed and the weakness identified in the last inspection in planning has been effectively resolved. The procedures to assess and record pupils' achievement using the 'P' scales are thorough and show clearly the progress that pupils are making. Resources are satisfactory and most, such as big books, are stored in the library so that they are easily accessible to all staff. The library is too small for most whole class groups and there is a limited stock of books, especially for post-16 pupils. However, very good use is made of the local library, including asking parents to help with these visits and jointly choose books with their children to be read at home.

## MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

### Strengths

- Pupils' good progress and achievement throughout the school.
- The assessment and recording of progress.
- Learning resources.
- Leadership and management of the subject.

### Areas for improvement

- The use ICT to improve pupils' learning of mathematics.

72. By the end of Year 2 the more able pupils sort a limited number of large and small items, match numbers together, and sort objects by their colour or shape. They count up to five, with help, and sometimes say which number comes next. Many pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, copy numbers, and begin to sort items out by colour. Less able pupils recognise items that they use regularly and match familiar ones, for example cups. By the end of Year 6, the less able pupils are gradually increasing their awareness of common shapes, whilst the more able pupils sort toys and other small items by size, shape and colour, and match numbers to five. With help, they match dots on a dice, or several toys, with the correct numeral, up to five. The most able pupils count reliably up to ten and estimate collections of objects as being more or less than a given number. Shapes, such as triangles, squares and circles, are known and are named on request.
73. By the end of Year 9 most pupils count to well over twenty, add and subtract numbers to ten, and use a calculator to solve simple multiplication sums. They recognise coins to 50p and know the names of common three-dimensional objects, such as a sphere or cube. Help is needed when making a picture graph, of their favourite food, for example, however they understand what the graph means. Less able pupils continue to need help with learning to count to five. A few increasingly consistently choose between two different items when matching and have an understanding of the numbers one and two. By the end of Year 11 they have continued to extend their understanding and use of numbers. The more able pupils recognise numbers to twenty. They take part in simple shopping with help at a nearby supermarket and the more able understand the exchange of money for the items they want. Amounts up to £1 are used, with a little help. Less able pupils copy their teacher or support assistant when counting and many try to anticipate which number comes next. They understand "in", "outside", "under" and "on top". The least able pupils choose between two items, such as when asking for a drink, or between different snacks.
74. In the Year 12 and 13 group, the more able students 'count on', for example from five or ten. They know if a number is odd or even. Daily timetables are understood, such as when different lessons take place, or when it is time for dinner or going home. With help, they take a more active part in shopping. They pay for their purchases, name the coins to £1, although most are not sure what each one is worth. Less able pupils help to put shopping items into the trolley from the shelves. They recognise numbers in the prices, but not consistently accurately.

75. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. As a result, pupils learn well in individual lessons as well as in the long term. Teachers plan their lessons very well, with very good links to the National Numeracy Strategy both in the long-term planning and in the preparation and activities of each lesson. Lessons begin with a good 'warm-up' activity before leading on to the main activities in small groups. The work in the groups is chosen according to pupils' individual targets. Teachers check how well pupils are making progress towards their targets in almost every lesson. This information is very well used to make alterations to what they intend to teach next, and to how they intend to teach it. The targets for a few pupils are, however, too broad to be a valuable guide for short-term planning. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with staff. This leads to pupils paying attention, concentrating and working hard. Support staff are very valuable in working with individual pupils and small groups. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject as well as of their pupils. Lessons are mainly run at a good and challenging pace, although occasionally, lessons are too long, or one part of a lesson continues for too long. On these occasions, pupils become a little restless and do not pay attention as well as they do at other times. A particularly effective aspect of the teaching in mathematics is the way in which all staff communicate effectively with pupils, using signing well, showing pupils picture and symbol cards, and singing number songs and rhymes. This helps all pupils to learn well, regardless of the level of their ability.
76. This subject is managed and led very well, with a clear plan for how the subject will develop in the future, including an improvement in the way ICT is used in lessons. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and organised and provides valuable help to staff with their planning and lesson ideas. Resources for mathematics are very good and have been built up very well over recent years. Assessment and the recording of progress are very effective, are consistently used by all teachers and enable the co-ordinator to have a very good understanding of how well pupils are doing.
77. The only comment in the previous inspection report about mathematics was that the National Numeracy Strategy was well used. This guidance is now very well used in mathematics lessons. In other subjects, pupils' numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding are well reinforced and extended.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good.

### Strengths

- Pupils make good progress overall.
- The use of learning activities that relate well to the everyday lives and needs of pupils.
- Good subject co-ordination and leadership.

### Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to improve progress and achievement.
- The consistent use of information about pupils' achievements to plan further learning.

78. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress because the teaching builds well on what pupils have learnt in the nursery and reception class. By the end of Year 2, pupils are becoming aware of a few of the basic properties of sound, for example where it comes from. They explore this as they make toys that produce noises. More able pupils understand that there are differences between the seasons. They use their senses to investigate the properties of materials, for example, the contrast between hard and soft. By the end of Year 6, pupils have continued to develop their experience and understanding of science. They carry out experiments and explore forces and motion, such as when switching on fans and observing the effects on the windsock that they have made. They know what happens when magnets are used on a race track for small model cars, recognising that magnets are responsible for making the cars move. Pupils build a basic knowledge of scientific words that they hear and use in these experiments, including 'magnetic', 'pull' and 'push'.

79. During Years 7 to 9, pupils continue to make good progress. The emphasis on practical lessons where all pupils take part helps them to learn effectively. By Year 9, they have carried out experiments on metals and magnets and identify materials that are magnetic and non-magnetic. More able pupils know that most magnetic materials are metals. They have a basic understanding of care for the environment and the value of recycling resources. Many understand the growth cycles of plants and can tell where seeds fit into this process. Less able pupils identify a few foods, such as fruit, that are healthy and others that are unhealthy. Pupils by the end of Year 11 and students in the post-16 group extend their understanding of forces in their daily lives, including gravity. They compare the results of the experiments on how fast light and heavy objects fall. They can explain the effects of friction when investigating how fast cars roll down slopes. Less able pupils identify the household equipment that needs or does not need electricity. They know that electricity can be provided by batteries and by 'the mains' through plugs and power sockets. They understand that electricity can be dangerous. All pupils and students develop further their knowledge and use of scientific words, for example, when comparing the properties of different materials, such as 'rough' and 'smooth', and 'light' and 'heavy'. They have a simple understanding of a fair test and use this when evaluating their own work.
80. Overall the quality of the teaching and learning is good. In Years 10 and 11 it is very good because of the thoroughness of the planning and preparation for lessons. The assessment of learning is used very well to guide further work. Teachers make sure their lessons are as relevant as they can by linking learning to the everyday events that pupils experience. This maintains interest. Teachers and support staff work well together, making sure pupils are always involved. They take time to teach new scientific words and wait patiently for pupils to respond to questions they ask. There is effective building on learning that pupils have gained in earlier lessons and in previous classes. Relationships are very good and create the atmosphere of constant encouragement for pupils to try their best.
81. The subject is well managed and, as a result, pupils' achievement and progress have improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how the subject should be improved even further, including the further development and use of assessment of pupils' learning. The subject improvement plan has also rightly identified that ICT is not used sufficiently.

## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is good.

### Strengths

- Good achievements and progress, particularly with two-dimensional work.
- Effective planning and assessment.
- The subject is well co-ordinated and led.

### Areas for improvement

- A wider range of opportunities for three-dimensional work.
- The use of ICT.

82. By the end of Year 2, the pupils use paint and make patterns and collage well. For example, they use sponges soaked in paint to create patterns on paper. They apply paint to previously prepared outlines, such as splattering paint with a brush to create the texture of owls' feathers. They paint, cut and stick shapes successfully onto collages to create pictures depicting such things as Mother Nature and Easter chicks. In exploring texture, space and distinguishing between colours they paint self-portraits and from influences of pictures they have seen of French and Chinese art. By the end of Year 6, pupils' pattern work is more extensive. They complete paintings and collages of transport by land, sea and air. The style of such artists as Picasso and Vincent Van Gogh is imitated, for example the picture *A Starry Night*. Cultural aspects of art are

given good attention where the pupils complete paintings influenced by their studies of Mexican and Chinese art.

83. By the end of Year 9, pupils are beginning to combine different media. They choose colours for particular purposes and experiment in creating various textures, shapes and form. A greater use of natural materials combined with painting is seen in their work. For example, leaf prints and the development of pictures of space where they paint with sponges and apply textures by gluing on glitter and seeds. By the end of Year 11, pupils have increased their awareness of the world of art. They complete work influenced by their studies of Dutch artists and American pop art. Their work is at times related to subjects such as history and visits they make. For example, brass rubbings and pencil and paint pictures influenced by their studies of the Victorians. Students in Years 12 and 13 show an awareness and development of their skills. They make and decorate masks, such as one of the Indian god Ganesh, applying glue carefully and sprinkling on sparkles and glitter to create a well-composed pattern and texture. Their experiences at a local college of further education are seen in their designs on textiles, with batik patterns using melted wax and tie-dye pictures.
84. The quality of teaching and learning for two-dimensional work is good overall. Teachers plan carefully what pupils are to learn, based on a good understanding of their individual needs. Progress is assessed and recorded well. There is a very good use of time, support staff and resources. Relationships are very good and, as a result, pupils work with good levels of enthusiasm. Work is displayed attractively in classrooms and around the school to celebrate the pupils' achievements.
85. Under the effective leadership and vision of the new co-ordinator the subject is moving forward rapidly. The subject was not reported on at the time of the last inspection, therefore it is not possible to make judgement of the extent of improvement. There is a good overall outline of what is to be taught in each class, ensuring pupils are able to build on previous work. The range of topics covered is satisfactory although too little three-dimensional work is studied. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and so has a good overview of what is being taught. Observation of lessons is planned to help staff further. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory. There are lost opportunities for its use for image development, for instance, the digital camera is not used by pupils. Resources are satisfactory, although there is insufficient software for the use of ICT and the pottery kiln is not used to fire clay work.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

### Strengths

- Pupils make good progress in food technology.
- Accommodation and resources for food technology.

### Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of pupils' progress and achievements.
- The use of ICT.

86. Throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately in design and technology. Many pupils make good progress in food technology. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils use simple tools, such as a roller and paint brush when making small models. Pupils choose different materials and colours to use when making these models. Less able pupils need more help in using tools, and in choosing materials. They show their preferences when helping to prepare simple foods. By the end of Year 6 more able pupils cut along lines with scissors with fair accuracy, for example, when making model land yachts. They cut balsa wood with a hacksaw with help and learn different ways of joining materials, such as a glue gun and sticky tape. In food technology, pupils choose the ingredients they like, including the fillings for their

sandwiches, pizzas, salads and cakes. Pupils name the parts of the models they have made, such as the wheels, wings or driver's seat.

87. By the end of Year 9, pupils get their own equipment out and put it away again at the end of lessons. They express clear preferences for some materials rather than others, such as clay, playdough, felt, fabrics, card or paper. Ingredients for cooking are chosen and weighed with a little assistance. Pupils learn to join the pieces of construction kits together, from small, detailed and complex ones, to large simple ones. Less able pupils operate mixers and blenders using single-touch switches. By the end of Year 11 pupils are developing more control of simple tools, for example, they cut card with increasing accuracy. With help, pupils use a staple gun for fixing card and wood together and a knife to cut sandwiches. Less able pupils express their preferences for particular foods more consistently.
88. Students in Years 12 and 13 make satisfactory progress. Much of their work is carried out at a local college of further education. They learn to use clay in different ways. They understand skills in dyeing and printing a range of fabrics and papers. Students handle a small range of tools, although they often need extra help to be accurate when cutting cloth, paper or card. Less able pupils also make satisfactory progress but need a considerable amount of help in much of what they do and in choosing materials.
89. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is satisfactory. It is good for food technology. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well. Most lessons have a well planned range of activities and they run at a good pace and in a positive atmosphere, maintaining pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Staff use a good selection of tools and materials to give pupils a wide range of learning experiences. Teachers and support assistants work well as a team. Occasionally they are too quick to give help, rather than letting pupils try a little longer and learn for themselves. This can limit independence and progress. Also occasionally, there are periods in lessons when activities are not well planned, such as what pupils will do when they have finished the main activity, or when they are waiting for their turn with an adult. On these occasions, pupils can become restless, and their behaviour deteriorates. Staff are particularly good at helping all pupils to learn by using clear signing, pictures and symbols and using clear and simple language, especially for less able pupils. Pupils' achievements are praised well during lessons and their progress is recorded effectively.
90. Overall, this subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The leadership of food technology is good. The co-ordinator is experienced and well organised. There is a good plan of what will be taught in each class. This enables her to have a good overview of what other staff are teaching and the progress that pupils are making. Accommodation is good, including a specialist room available for classes to use. Resources are also good. Overall, there is insufficient monitoring of how well pupils are making progress, as a basis for further improvement. Consequently, clear ideas for developing the subject plans and the resources are lacking. The school is aware of this area for development and has included it within planning. Throughout design and technology ICT is used too infrequently. This subject was not mentioned in the previous inspection report.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

### **Strengths**

- Good achievement and progress.
- Planning what is to be taught, including the emphasis for pupils with additional special educational needs.
- Subject leadership and management.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Use of local authority service to extend resources.

• The use of ICT for learning geography.

91. It was only possible to observe a few lessons being taught during the inspection, since geography and history share a rolling programme of topics. As a result the judgement on the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress is mostly based on the scrutiny of pupils' work and records, together with interviews with staff and pupils. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
92. By the end of Year 2, pupils explore the immediate environment; they find their way around the school and choose their favourite places. They identify people in school who help them. Less able pupils are familiar with different parts of their classroom. More able pupils know that a map can help them to find the shops, parks and the library. By the end of Year 6, many pupils identify important buildings in the area, such as the fire station and the railway station. They travel by train and bus to places of interest such as Risley Moss, a nearby country park, and identify features of places that they know from photographs. More able pupils continue to develop their understanding of people who help, for example as they visit the post office to complete their project by buying stamps. Less able pupils extend their understanding of their environment and are aware of different areas of the school, for example, the school office and hall.
93. By the end of Year 9, pupils are studying areas away from their own locality. They compare local settlements and those in other countries, and the different ways that people live. Many identify key features on aerial maps and in pictures. Pupils also compare and contrast the features of rivers with those of the Mersey. More able pupils have a basic understanding of the water cycle and they know how rivers develop. Most pupils become familiar with the new school surroundings, making maps and pathways of both inside and outside the building. By the end of Year 11, pupils can describe their visit to Tenerife and explain how bananas grow. They understand that climates differ and record their findings with photographs. More able pupils use maps to help them to tell their friends where they have been and use them to describe, for example, what it was like at the Forest Park. They develop a good vocabulary in describing their visits and when explaining why litter is not good for the environment. Most understand the differences between litter and non-litter and all help collect litter from around the school site.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are planned well to provide enough material for every pupil to take part in practical activities such as to illustrate safety and care of the environment. Lessons start with a 'recap' of previous work and pupils discuss what they know. This is helped by very skilled support staff, who prompt well and wait patiently for a response. Basic geographical knowledge is consolidated well by relating aspects to pupils' own experiences and by searching questions and interesting activities. Teaching is lively and confident and results in pupils who are interested and want to learn. Pupils are fully involved in lessons and staff use signs and symbols well.
95. The subject is well managed and shows good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has been influential in developing planning and assessment and is improving the use of the information provided from these sources. The attention to meeting special educational needs, especially through the sensory aspects of the curriculum, is a good feature of the planning. The subject is enriched by the imaginative use of visits and projects. These approaches have been influential in maintaining improvement. The resources are satisfactory, although the library service is not being used as effectively as it could be. ICT is also not used adequately.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

### Strengths

- Progress and achievement are good.
- Enthusiastic and effective leadership and management.
- Artefacts for pupils with visual difficulties and less able pupils.



Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT.

96. Due to timetabling arrangements in which history alternates with geography, only a few lessons were seen during the inspection. Judgements on pupils' achievements and progress and the quality of teaching and learning are based on these lessons and scrutiny of work and assessments and interviews with staff and pupils. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
97. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are aware of the passage of time through becoming familiar with their class timetable. They know that when they were younger they were babies. They look at pictures of babies from earlier times, such as the Victorians, and enjoy playing with old toys. In developing their communication skills most know how to sign 'baby' appropriately. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand historical vocabulary such as 'old' and 'new' when considering photographs of motor cars and buses. Most know a number of old songs and games, such as 'Hokey Cokey' and have looked at aspects of ancient cultures including the Romans. Pupils study the Victorians in Year 9, and can identify differences in objects used then and now, for example, clothes and transport. They understand 'past' and 'present' and can recognise fashions from 'long ago'. Pupils know that young people worked hard before going to school and they take part in role playing during a Victorian day. By the end of Year 11, pupils consider the dangers that surrounded ordinary people in the past. They know that working conditions in Victorian mills could be noisy and dangerous. Less able pupils have a simple understanding that they cannot see events that are in the past. They increase their understanding of time by using their timetables and know that special events, such as the Friday assembly, take place at certain times.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers start lessons with information gathering exercises to establish how much pupils have remembered from earlier lessons. Teachers are very aware of the additional special educational needs of their pupils and plan the lessons to ensure that everyone is included. For example, a pupil with a visual disability had artefacts he could touch which helped him to understand. Staff work very well as a team to keep all pupils involved and learning. They concentrate on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, through using simple yet appropriate historical vocabulary. Teachers use videos, for example, of Victorian mills and visits to museums to enrich what they are teaching. As a result, pupils are keen to learn, have very good relationships with staff and really do try to do their best.
99. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic to improve pupils' progress and encourage them to enjoy history even more. The topics and themes are part of a rolling programme. This method is effective because, although there are few opportunities to observe colleagues teaching, the co-ordinator is aware of their planning. This ensures that all areas of the subject are regularly taught. Resources are satisfactory overall. They are used particularly well in sensory based lessons for the least able pupils. ICT is used too infrequently. Assessment procedures have improved, with the information used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- Achievement and progress of pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of ICT in the sensory base room.
- Use of communication devices throughout the school.
- The quality of computers in the classrooms.

Areas for improvement

- Planning for what pupils will learn.
- The use of ICT in most subjects, especially mathematics.

100. The quality of pupils' achievements and progress in ICT throughout the school is unsatisfactory overall, due to weakness in planning for what pupils will learn. It is good for pupils in Years 10 and 11 where pupils follow an accredited award scheme. There is also particularly good progress in the sensory base, where there is very good use of ICT to meet the needs of less able pupils. The teacher makes very good use of switches and presentation software to involve pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. For example, pupils extend their understanding of cause and effect as they use a switch to turn a blender on and off when making a milk shake and to change the pictures on a visual presentation. This represents a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when it required considerable development.
101. Pupils have discrete ICT lessons every other half term. They work singly or in pairs at the computer with a support assistant, following a scheme of work that is well planned to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Targets are set appropriately for pupils of different levels of ability.
102. By Year 2, pupils use a touch screen appropriately when using painting programmes and are learning to use a mouse with increasing accuracy. Pupils achieve a special award for using the mouse well. Less able pupils operate a variety of switches. In a lesson where ICT was taught alongside a literacy session, pupils made very good progress using the touch screen and were very well supported by the learning support assistant. Most pupils knew that the image on the screen would change when they touched it. Less able pupils use switches to say 'good morning' at the start of the day. By Year 6, many pupils name different parts of the computer accurately, such as the mouse and keyboard. They use the mouse to select items on the screen and then 'drag and drop'. They use a remote controlled car, operate the play and record buttons on the cassette player and turn a CD player and the television on and off. Less able pupils are making good progress in using a switch to change images on the screen.
103. By Year 9, pupils can recognise the use of technology in school and other settings. They switch on the computer and enter their user code. They use a word processing program and more able pupils can enter sentences, insert letters and use the space and enter keys, although this use of ICT is not frequent. Most pupils use a programmable toy and more able pupils can make it turn left or right. One more able pupil has attended a local high school after school computer club. Less able pupils activate switches and become increasingly aware of the results of their own actions, watching the monitor as they press. In a lesson with Years 7, 8 and 9, effective teaching enabled the pupils to make good progress using a spreadsheet program to record and display information by creating simple bar chart. A more able pupil knew the name of the program being used. Another pupil was able to type in the colours of their selection of fun-size sweets, helping with spelling development.
104. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in ICT as a result of the good teaching. As part of the "independent living skills" section of their ASDAN accreditation, pupils learn where ICT is used in the home and at school. They use a computer, video, microwave and digital television and also learn how to send emails and access the Internet. For example, Year 10 and 11 pupils choose a word to put into a search engine. One pupil succeeded in accessing the Internet by clicking on the correct icons. He knew how to use the address bar, although he needed help to copy his search term "Eastenders", from the name written for him by the teacher. The least able pupils operate simple switches more consistently, their understanding has improved and most are aware of the results of what they have done. Students in Years 12 and 13 operate equipment in the classroom and around the school. More able pupils use the computer for games and for written work, such as letters. They access the Internet and find sites that interest them with minimal help. They have used the digital camera and recording equipment. Less able pupils use switches to operate the computer and music centre.
105. The leadership and co-ordination of ICT is unsatisfactory overall, as the planning for what pupils will learn throughout the school is inadequate. Although there is a suitable scheme of work used in discrete ICT lessons, the use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory, particularly in mathematics, design and technology, modern foreign language and art and design. Occasional

use is made for researching information, however this is not part of a planned approach for developing this use. For example, in history, pupils have used CD ROMS to look at the life of the Romans and Anglo-Saxons. In science pupils have also used a computer microscope. The co-ordinator is aware that this is a priority area for development. He does not have an adequate overview of the progress pupils are making nor influence in the use of ICT by all staff. ICT is used well to support the development of speaking and listening, where the pupils make good use of switches and tape recorders, although there is too little use of word processing to practise reading and writing skills. The computers in each classroom have been improved and there has been training for staff in the use of ICT. However, these developments are not yet improving its use sufficiently.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in Spanish is good.

### Strengths

- Good achievement and progress.
- Effective involvement of pupils of all abilities in learning.
- Links with the annual residential visit to Tenerife.
- Good leadership and management.

### Areas for improvement

- Extending the use of ICT to develop pupils' learning.

106. Spanish is taught in Years 7 to 11 and pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 9, the most able pupils recognise a range of words such as greetings and simple questions, colours and numbers. They answer greetings appropriately, and sort Spanish words from English ones on the computer. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, respond to a greeting, such as "Hola", by repeating the word themselves. The less able pupils experience Spanish music and songs, taste Spanish food and listen to Spanish words on tape cassettes. By the end of Year 11, the most able pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other speaking in Spanish. They attempt to translate what is said. When on a residential visit to Tenerife, they speak to the local people, ask for a drink, buy food and water, and ask for the bill in a restaurant. Their skills develop particularly well in areas such as greetings; food and drink; and things around the kitchen – the topics they are most likely to need and use when on holiday. Less able pupils recognise a narrower range of words, and have less confidence in speaking in Spanish. They continue to experience a broader range of the sounds, smells and tastes of Spain. This is made into a very positive experience for them, such as on a "Spanish Day" that is held each year.
107. No Spanish lessons were taught in school during the inspection. However, an examination of plans, records of progress, and displays, combined with a thorough discussion with the co-ordinator, indicate that the quality of teaching is good, and that pupils learn well in lessons. Lessons are well planned, and teachers use a good range of resources to bring the subject to life, including music and speaking tapes, posters, photographs and videos. However, ICT, including CD ROM resources and the Internet, is used very little.
108. This subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is very keen and positive about the subject and how it can be taught to all the pupils in Years 7 to 11. The plans for what should be learned are very good and enable pupils' progress is measured effectively. This subject makes a very positive contribution to the cultural development of the older pupils in the school. No judgement was made in the previous inspection report.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

Strengths

- Progress of pupils.
- Use of signs and symbols to enable pupils to make choices.
- Effective co-ordination.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT.

109. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in music. By the time they are in Year 2, the very good routines established by the class teacher help pupils to concentrate so they follow symbols and stop and start playing instruments when requested. They choose instruments and play them appropriately. During Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. They play loudly but also softly on drums and cymbals. In Year 6, many pupils recognise familiar musical instruments by their sound and with careful practising they perform patterns of body sounds such as stamping and clapping. Pupils in Year 9, learn to play short and long notes selecting the instruments they wish to play. Their understanding of notation is developing well. When listening to *'The Elephants' March'* they make long and short marks on paper according to the length of the notes. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use their skills in playing instruments loudly and softly to illustrate a story. By Year 11, they make decisions about which instrument and how to play it to represent a monkey or a cat. Throughout the school, pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make good progress, for example, in learning to play tambourines or shakers loudly or softly. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties listen to guitar playing and particularly enjoy the song *'If I were a Butterfly'*. With well-targeted support they all make sounds from their chosen instruments.

110. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall; at times it is very good and was excellent in one lesson. Staff work very well as a team in each classroom and take care to ensure all pupils participate in lessons. Just the right level of support is provided for individuals to enable them to play instruments such as shakers, tambours or bells. Signs and symbols are used well to help pupils understand what they are asked to do. PECS is used very effectively, ensuring all pupils, including those with autistic spectrum disorder, are able to make choices, such as which instrument they would like to play. Older pupils, particularly, respond well to the 'conducting' by the teacher and then by a pupil, to start and stop when it is their turn to play. Lessons are interesting and exciting which leads to pupils enjoying music and maintaining high levels of concentration. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Good use is made of recordings of musical pieces by composers from this country and abroad. Additionally, pupils are also taught about music from other countries such as the samba from South America.
111. The subject is co-ordinated well. A clear overview of what is being taught throughout the school is gained through a termly check of teachers' planning and comments made in the subsequent report are helpful to staff. They also provide a good basis for deciding the priorities for improving pupils' work set out in the comprehensive subject development plan. A regularly updated list of resources, which are mainly stored centrally, ensures teachers are aware of what is available and plan to use them well. However, staff do not yet use ICT to broaden pupils' experiences. No judgements were made about music in the last inspection report.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good.

### Strengths

- The good achievements and progress of pupils.
- Effective procedures for assessment and its use in planning lessons.
- Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' performance.
- Quality and range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils.

### Areas for improvement

- Provision of more outside grassed areas to widen the range of opportunities for games.
- The use of ICT.

112. Pupils make good progress, learning effectively across a broad range of areas of physical activities. This subject was not reported on at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learned to move in different ways using simple dance movements, and movements as part of their gymnastics sessions. They move freely and with enjoyment and confidence within the available space. Most adjust their speed and direction of movement when asked to and are starting to experiment with different types of movement. In swimming, they begin to gain confidence in the water. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills have continued to improve. They are developing increased control of a ball, for example, they aim the ball at a target with increasing accuracy. When playing a boccia game they show a good awareness of the need to aim the ball before rolling at a given target and respond with shouts of glee when getting near or hitting the target. Pupils make very good progress in swimming. Most use recognisable swimming actions on their fronts and backs with the more able on course to attain the Amateur Swimming Association awards from Grade 2 upwards. Eleven pupils attend a local high school for trampoline activities. Supported by staff and by three teachers from the secondary school the pupils perform a good range of basic movements well.
113. By the time pupils are at the end of Year 9, they are beginning to work well in teams. For example, in modified football games and ball games, involving catching and throwing where they successfully pass the ball to each other. In cricket they aim a ball where they want it to go and hold the bat appropriately strike at the ball. By the end of Year 11, because lessons are planned very well to ensure the work is matched to pupils' needs, they successfully play a game of 'Kwik

Cricket'. They show a good knowledge of where to field and bowl the ball in the right direction. The majority of pupils throw balls with accuracy over a distance and are able to retrieve a moving ball. When batting they control the bat well, make relevant strokes, with a few hitting the ball accurately over a distance. A few more able pupils learn to bowl overarm with many successfully bowling underarm. Swimming skill continue to improve well. Strokes are more fluent, and they take part in water games and in competitive events. Students in Years 12 and 13 increase their range of activities with the addition of yoga and outdoor pursuits activities, using facilities away from school. They show a good understanding how to improve their own performances and are enthusiastic and keen to take part in activities.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan effectively, based on the good monitoring of the pupils' performance and a thorough assessment of their individual levels of skill and their difficulties. Teachers show good subject knowledge, manage their pupils well with a good use of time, support staff and resources. As a result, pupils work at a good pace, showing good interest and concentration. They try hard applying themselves to their tasks with usually good levels of understanding about how to improve.
115. Physical education is well managed. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored well. There is a good scheme of work (plan of what pupils will learn) and a range of activities that enables them to progressively build on their growing skills. For pupils from Year 10 upwards their range of activities are greatly increased when they spend a week away from school in the Lake District on outdoors pursuits activities. These include horse riding, orienteering, climbing, abseiling, and football, canoeing, camping, caving, boating and walking. Resources are satisfactory, however, there is no suitable grassed area to extend the facilities of the hard court area and in the school hall that limits games activities. The school is actively exploring a range of links with mainstream schools to further extend the range of opportunities for its pupils. The use of ICT to help pupils' self-evaluation and improvement is not developed.

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

Overall, the quality of provision in PSHE and citizenship is good.

### **Strengths**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Effective assessment and planning.
- Good subject management and leadership

### **Areas for Improvement**

- To identify further opportunities for teaching and learning citizenship in other subjects.

116. By Year 2, pupils learn about themselves, their bodies and personal care. They learn when to wash their hands and are encouraged to follow dressing routines with minimal support. More able pupils are able to tidy away and collect familiar resources with a verbal prompt and will wait to take their turn in an activity. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders will exchange PECS symbols at snack time for a drink or a biscuit. Less able pupils are helped to improve their eating skills and are encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about healthy eating and personal safety. They use a Pelican crossing and learn how to press the button and what to do if the lights are red or green. Most carry out tasks increasingly independently and participate in new activities enthusiastically. They are showing more consideration for others and learning to display emotions appropriate to situations. Pupils learn about Hindu prayer and relate this to their feelings. Good teaching and the very good use of interesting resources ensure that the pupils' interest is sustained. Less able pupils are beginning to observe and understand the results of their own actions.
117. By Year 9, pupils have learned more about health awareness and keeping safe. They examine the value of friendships and relationships and are becoming more aware of when they can help other pupils. In a Year 7 to 9 lesson about the Last Supper, the topic of friendship was stressed.

Pupils explored how the disciples felt, that they were happy, but would be sad later. Pupils take more care of their possessions. Less able pupils continue to respond well to staff and other pupils, seeking and enjoying their attention. By Year 11, pupils are following the ASDAN Independent Living Skills module. They learn to behave appropriately in public places, such as a café, bus station and supermarket. They work well in a group and can communicate

feelings and ideas in simple phrases. They show consideration of the needs and feelings of other people and other living things. Less able pupils are communicating intentionally and are exploring materials in complex ways.

118. By Year 13, pupils are making good progress in personal development. Teachers concentrate on building pupils' self-esteem and helping them to achieve independence. They go shopping to a local superstore and purchase items independently. They know what is expected of them and behave well, using their familiarity with the layout of the shop and how to make simple purchases well. Students are also encouraged to do jobs in school, such as deliver dinner registers regularly. Less able students are increasingly showing interest in the world around them and are helped to improve how they communicate their choices with eye pointing and using switches.
119. The management of PSHE is effective. Targets are set within annual reviews for aspects of personal development. These are supported well by an overall plan of what is to be taught from which teachers plan to meet their class's needs. This planning also ensures that the statutory requirement to teach citizenship in Years 7 to 11 is met well. The co-ordinator has correctly identified that there are further opportunities to develop citizenship through other subjects. Assessment is very good and uses PIVATS and P scales, linked to the pupils' individual targets, enabling progress to be tracked and further targets to be set.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.

### Strengths

- Good progress.
- Use of artefacts to support learning.
- Effective leadership and management.

### Areas for improvement

- Develop further what less able pupils are to learn.
- The use of ICT to contribute to pupils' learning.

120. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in religious education. By the end of Year 2, pupils have listened to stories from the Bible. For example, in learning about Easter more able pupils know the Jesus died and then woke up again, while less able pupils taste the foods that are traditionally associated with this festival, such as a hot cross bun. By the end of Year 6, pupils learn about a few of the major faiths of the world, in addition to Christianity. Most know that churches are places where people pray. They take part in a Hindu prayer session. More able pupils know that most Hindus have a special place at home where they worship. Less able pupils know that the bells they listen to signify something special and listen carefully. As pupils get older they learn more about the important times of the year for different religions and faiths of the world. By the end of Year 9, they have built on what they know about the events leading up to the death of Jesus, including how people welcomed him to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They sing 'Hosanna' and wave palm leaves. Less able learners are helped with lesson activities by support staff. By the end of Year 11, most pupils understand more about praying in different cultures and how important this is to the different religions. They know more about the feelings involved, for example how in Christianity Easter is both a time of sadness and happiness. Less able pupils enjoy listening to these stories, joining in where they can, such as ringing a bell at just the right time. In Years 12 and 13, students extend their knowledge and understanding still further. They

listen to stories that are important to a range of faiths, such as how in Hinduism the god Ganesh has a head of an elephant.

121. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers prepare their work well so that pupils of all levels of ability can join in and learn. They use their support staff effectively, especially so that less able pupils are fully involved. Good preparation and joint planning means that they all know what they should do to help pupils learn. Resources are used successfully, for example, in setting the scene for a Hindu prayer session incense sticks are lit, adding to the special occasion, although ICT is used very little. Staff are very good at ensuring pupils behave well and, therefore, learn better, with pre-empting any difficulties that might otherwise occur. Praise is used successfully and helps pupils listen more carefully. The emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills is evident in all lessons, with the use of signing and symbols, and patience while pupils contribute.
122. The subject is well managed and this has led to very good improvement since the last inspection. A new scheme of work was introduced last year and this has resulted in more consistent planning to build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to develop this planning for less able pupils.