

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BAYTREE SCHOOL**

Weston super Mare

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109409

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Penney

Lead inspector: Mr Tom Smith

Dates of inspection: 10-12 May 2004

Inspection number: 258869

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
Age range of pupils:	3-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	59
School address:	Baytree School Baytree Road Weston-super-Mare North Somerset
Postcode:	BS22 8HG
Telephone number:	01934 625567
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Website:	<a href="http://www.baytreespecialschool.uk.org">http://www.baytreespecialschool.uk.org</a>
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D A Grosvenor
Date of previous inspection:	23/3/1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Baytree School is a day special school for pupils aged 3-19 years. There are 59 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are from a white European background. Other ethnic groups are represented in 15 per cent of the school roll. The pupils have a range of learning difficulties which include severe, profound, and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. The school is located within the Somerset coastal town of Weston Super Mare but draws its pupils from a much wider area. Many pupils are from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, although most social groups are represented. Twenty-six of these have opportunities to attend local mainstream schools or college as part of the school's inclusion programme. Less than two per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and these are proficient in its use. There are very few children in the Foundation Stage. Levels of knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils are well below their counterparts in mainstream education. Less than ten per cent of pupils start or leave during the school year. The school has gained a School Achievement Award based on progress it has made over a period of three years. The school is also a member of the local Federation and Excellence Cluster. Presently the school receives additional funding to provide for pupils with high dependency needs. The school is soon due to move premises on completion of a new building some three miles from the present site.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21044	Tom Smith	Lead inspector	Science, physical education, citizenship, special educational needs
19639	Gill Anderson	Lay inspector	
23300	Lily Evans	Team inspector	English, geography, modern foreign languages, music, religious education
27960	Jane Reed	Team inspector	Foundation stage, art and design, design and technology
1224	Graham Todd	Team Inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, history

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, AND 4 WITH COMMENTS ON THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE POST 16 PROVISION</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Baytree School is a good school which provides an effective education for its pupils and students.** It provides good value for money. Pupils and students achieve well because the good teaching enables them to make good progress over time. These achievements are regardless of their individual attainment or ethnic background. Pupils and students enjoy being at the school and go about their work with considerable enthusiasm and effort. Staff act as very good role models and this has considerable effect on the personal development of pupils and students. The school is led well and managed efficiently. Resources are used prudently and all staff are deployed to the best advantage of pupils' and students' learning. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching. All key issues have been successfully addressed. The strengths noted at that inspection have been sustained but are now joined by a number of others.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good leadership and management have created a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to raising standards further but governors are insufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school.
- The curriculum is good. It is taught well and learning is also supported by skilled teaching assistants.
- All pupils and students, irrespective of need or level of attainment, achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils approach their work with considerable enthusiasm and desire to learn.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils in Year 11 which lead to external awards.
- The poor accommodation restricts the range of learning opportunities provided, especially in information technology and for post-16 students, although the move to a new site should improve this.
- The care and welfare of pupils and students is very good because staff give this a high priority and monitor the development of each individual very closely.
- Almost half of the pupils have opportunities to work alongside peers in mainstream schools and college.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Year 6	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Year 11	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Year 13	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

**Pupils' achievements are good.** There are too few children in the Foundation Stage for reliable judgements to be made. By the end of Year 2 pupils build on fundamental skills learned in the Foundation Stage and they make good progress in their personal development and other learning. Most notably they develop good work habits and are keen to learn. Pupils also achieve well by the end of Year 6, and have begun to develop strengths in the quality of their communication. This helps better access to other subjects so that by the end of Year 9 they continue to achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 11 pupils also achieve well. However, they have too few methods

of showing this because there are insufficient opportunities for external accreditation. By the end of Year 13, students have developed appropriate social skills and personal maturity but these could be better were it not for the poor accommodation, which restricts their opportunity to demonstrate their progress toward adulthood. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and satisfactorily in information and communication technology (ICT). In the latter their achievement and progress are hampered by lack of facilities.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall.** Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils enjoy school, work hard, and have good attendance and very good punctuality.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality education. Teaching is good throughout the school.**

Teachers make lessons interesting and challenging. As a result pupils learn effectively and make good gains in their learning over time. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and they manage their classroom staff with great effect so that the needs of all pupils are fully responded to. The impact of the work done by teaching assistants and others is considerable and adds good quality to pupils' learning and achievements. Because adults insist on all pupils being able to communicate effectively this improves pupils' access to all other areas of learning. The curriculum is enriched by a thriving and well-managed inclusion programme of links with several mainstream schools; these often use facilities not present in Baytree School. Further enrichment is provided by good links with the local community. There is a good and effective partnership with parents which, along with good collaboration with other agencies, impacts well on pupils' personal, social and academic needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** The head teacher gives very good leadership to the school derived from her vision and high expectations for continued improvement. She is fully supported in this by a talented and effective senior management team. Since the last inspection they have moved the school forward and improved the quality of what it provides for its pupils. There is a clear focus on self-evaluation leading to a rise in standards. This process is also undertaken by subject leaders and because of the work done by them the curriculum has improved. The work of the governing body is satisfactory and they fully support the work of the school. However, they devolve too much responsibility to the head teacher and her senior managers. Governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met.

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

The majority of **parents** firmly support the school though a few remain frustrated at the cut back in services such as speech therapy. **Pupils** are justifiably proud of their school, taking a full and enthusiastic part in lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Involve governors more actively in the strategic management of the school;
- provide a wider range of accreditation opportunities for Year 11 pupils;
- improve provision for information and communication technology through more frequent technical support and an increased range of age appropriate software; and
- improve the environment for post-16 students so they have the opportunity to develop as young adults.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils in all year groups throughout the school achieve well, particularly in working toward the objectives set out in their individual education plans. There is no substantial difference in the achievement of boys and girls or between key stages. Since the last inspection there has been a consistently upward trend in pupils' achievements. This is because the school set challenging targets for its pupils and also adopted a Quality Framework which influenced its work. As a result of this the school gained a School Achievement Award based on progress it had made over a period of three years.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all ages and attainment achieve equally well because the quality of teaching is good and because of the hard work they put into learning. Reading by many is good.
- Pupils achieve well in their communication skills because the school uses a wide range of alternative communication systems.
- A significant number of pupils exceed the ambitious targets set for them in their individual education plans. Good teaching contributes to this outcome.
- All pupils achieve well in mathematics but those in Years 1 to 6 achieve particularly well.
- Achievement by pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) is only satisfactory, but standards are rising.

#### **Commentary**

1. The trend in pupils' achievements is rising though pupils admitted to the school have increasingly complex learning difficulties. Almost half of the pupils are so successful they are given frequent and planned opportunities to work alongside peers in mainstream schools and college.
2. Pupils and students in all years make good progress towards their individual targets in literacy, communication, numeracy and personal development. This is the result of good quality individual education programmes (IEPs) which itemise challenging targets for pupils and provide secure guidance for staff who teach pupils during the course of a working day. Lessons are planned well and fully take the needs of each IEP into account – while at the same time adhering to the requirements of the subject curriculum.
3. The school has achieved a fifty per cent improvement in the numeracy and literacy P-level targets set for last year. (A P-level is a measurement of attainment for pupils working below the National Curriculum levels.) To accomplish this it has used a wide range of assessment techniques appropriate to the attainment of each pupil and the information provided by these enables teachers to accurately plan for individual needs. These processes provide not only solid evidence of progress but also identify the most appropriate ways in which individual pupils learn – this reflects the demands of the assessment policy. On this basis challenging targets are set for pupils that are closely matched to individual needs. The targets, which become more challenging each year, have been met.
4. Pupils improve their language and communication skills year on year. This is because teachers and support staff work closely together in a way that ensures secure teaching of communication skills. For pupils on the autistic spectrum this includes a picture exchange communication system (PECS). Other pupils are taught to sign using Makaton symbols or through use of electronic aids. Higher attaining pupils and others also achieve well in reading and writing. The former achieve particularly well. This good achievement in reading is traceable to the very effective way in which the provision is managed. Almost one quarter of pupils and

students have individual reading lessons – in addition to the widely used group reading opportunities.

5. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in English, mathematics and science as well as in their personal development. This is the result of mainly good and very good teaching evident throughout the school. This generally good teaching has impacted on standards in the school to the point where 26 of the 59 pupils on roll now have regular opportunities to join with their mainstream peers. These pupils achieve a growing confidence in them and successfully meet the challenge of taking part in lessons taught by mainstream teachers.
6. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and make good progress in their learning. The skills they learn are used in a variety of other situations and the pupils therefore learn the point and purpose of using mathematics in everyday situations – for example, within their mini-enterprise or simply counting the numbers present at registration.
7. Pupils achieve well in science though for some older pupils the opportunities to develop their knowledge are restricted by poor facilities. There is a good emphasis on practical science and a strength of pupils' achievement is their construction and understanding of simple investigations. These develop the inquiring minds of pupils and make learning relevant to what they see around them.
8. Achievement in ICT, although satisfactory, is not as good as in other major subjects. This is despite the quality of provision being better than at the last inspection and continuing to rise. The work done by the subject leader is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT are inhibited by the poor facilities and insufficiently rooted in the thinking of some teachers; chances to extend and enhance learning by using the technology are sometimes missed.
9. In other subjects pupils achieve well. However, within some lessons individual pupils across the range of attainment are not challenged appropriately. The school's own questionnaire indicated that at least two pupils did not enjoy being at the school, stating that they did not work hard or learn much. There is no direct link between these two responses and the observations of the inspection team. However, despite the good quality IEPs the higher attainment of some pupils suggests they could be more effectively challenged. The school is aware of this as an issue.
10. Pupils in all year groups achieve well against the individual targets set for personal, social and health education. Those pupils with severe learning difficulties as well as those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) work well in groups and learn to share and make choices. For some pupils with ASD this is a remarkable achievement and a reflection of the ambition their teachers have for them.
11. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 build well on their prior achievements. For example, they have operated a mini-company involved in the production and selling of hanging flower baskets. In this they cooperate very well as a group and each contributes their particular skill – from design of labels and basic accounting to the actual production of the baskets themselves. The end products were of very good quality. The absence of a suitable range opportunity for public examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 means these pupils have a restricted means of announcing their achievement to the world. These opportunities are provided mainly to students in the post-16 phase where the majority achieve well in Accreditation for Life and Learning (ALL) and the National Skills Profile (NSP).
12. The school is able to evidence pupils' achievements through the keeping of detailed and systematic records. Samples of pupils' work are moderated and these serve as milestones in learning as well as achievement over time. The recording system is very efficient and enables staff to immediately identify achievement by any pupil – this then triggers a revision of targets for each. There is a significant body of evidence, in recorded work, annotated work and photographs, which show good achievement and progress over time. The professionalism of

staff and the leadership's commitment to raising standards ensure a sharp focus on continuous improvement.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Attendance is good and punctuality to lessons is very good. Pupils' attitudes to their work and also their, behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have considerable enthusiasm for the school and they show interest in all their activities.
- There are strong and effective relationships between pupils and staff; shown in a consistent and mutual respect.
- Pupils respond to the high expectations of the staff by working hard.
- Confidence and self-esteem among pupils is high – but for post-16 students this could be developed even further.

### **Commentary**

13. Pupils' attitudes to the school are characterised by the high level of interest and enthusiasm with which they go about their work. They enjoy the work they do because teachers direct it very closely to their needs and base it on what they already know. Children in the Foundation Stage have very good personal targets identified for them. Teachers allow these children time in which to make choices and they help each other out by serving drinks at morning break. Where possible small tasks, such as delivering the registers to the office, are also used to develop pupils' independence.
14. A consistent theme of the parents' meeting prior to the inspection was that parents wanted their child to be happy at the school. This outcome is certainly true for the majority. Two pupils expressed dissatisfaction through the questionnaires they completed, though this was for different reasons in each case.
15. Pupils with additional needs, such as those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) or profound needs, are integrated well into the life of the school. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) respond well to situations such as choosing which item they might want or managing the pace of eating during the course of their lunch. Staff are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and this involves them more closely in developing good attitudes to their work.
16. Throughout the school pupils and students respond very well to the high expectations of staff. The enthusiasm with which they approach their work is evident in every classroom. For example, Year 2 pupils reluctantly left the swimming pool after a particularly arduous session, Year 10 and 11 pupils worked together very hard in producing hanging baskets as part of their mini-enterprise.
17. Pupils are unfailingly courteous to each other and to staff. They learn good habits from staff who treat them with equal courtesy. The very good behaviour also results from the expectations of all staff who are quick to correct or advise on any misdemeanours.
18. The school promotes well the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils. Staff use every opportunity to widen the knowledge of pupils and develop in them secure feelings of self-esteem. Assemblies are well planned to include a good range of themes designed to increase the spiritual awareness and sensitivities of pupils. They are also enjoyable events.
19. Development of moral and social issues is deeply set in school life. The social development of pupils is assured through the many good quality contacts which the school has with its local community. Their sense of social responsibility and development of citizenship is encouraged

through participation in fund-raising events for charity. At a more local level, lunchtimes are used to develop in pupils the social skills they will need in later life.

20. Knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and religions is promoted well both formally and informally. Religious education (RE) lessons include studies of different religions – such as that for Year 10 and 11 pupils who considered the Five K's of Sikhism. Lessons are given reality by visits to mosques, synagogues and other places of worship.
21. Behaviour and attitudes in the provision for post-16 students is also very good. However, the poor accommodation has inhibited the development of their sense of personal responsibility and move toward adulthood. The proximity to the rest of the school and sharing of facilities, often simultaneously, does not develop within them a sense of having left formal schooling; nor does it enable them to develop a proper sense of independence.
22. The very positive attitudes of pupils and the dedication of all staff contribute significantly to a very good ethos within the school. Much has been done, in spite of the accommodation, to nurture, encourage and develop pupils' self-esteem and responses to others.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	1.2
National data	9.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.6

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

No of pupils on roll
59

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

Teaching is good throughout the school and as a result pupils and students learn effectively and achieve well over time. The drive of the school leadership and good quality management at all levels ensure a sharp focus on the work of further raising standards. In spite of the poor accommodation the school has provided a good quality education for all its pupils and students. The programme which offers pupils and students opportunities to work in other schools is well organised and makes an effective contribution to their personal and academic education. There is good collaboration with external agencies and the school encourages parents to be full partners in their child's education.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work together as effective teams and this ensures all pupils achieve well. This work is supplemented to a similarly high standard by health support staff and therapists. The opportunities provided for pupils and students to be included in the lessons and activities of local mainstream schools significantly benefit their social development as well as their academic achievement. The school uses a very good range of assessment opportunities which effectively track the progress of pupils.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The strong relationship between staff and pupils and the trust this brings about encourages all pupils to do their best.
- Teachers expect pupils to try hard and encourage this through a series of very good challenges to their learning. They plan well to meet the different needs of pupils and students.
- Teachers identify many ways in which to promote literacy and numeracy and use these well in other subjects.
- There is an insistence on good behaviour which allows lessons to proceed in calm and structured ways.
- Pupils work very hard and as a result they achieve well.
- A very good range of assessment methods are used to help plan stimulating lessons but more information could be given to pupils to help them understand what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to pupils' learning.

## Commentary

23. Since the last inspection, when teaching was judged as satisfactory overall, the quality has risen because of the monitoring programme put in place by the head teacher. The incidence of good and better teaching has more than doubled and is the main reason why achievement has improved throughout the school. Because of this programme senior managers and subject leaders are given planned opportunities to visit classrooms and comment on the work of their peers.
24. The quality begins with good planning. This takes a form which ensures the whole of the appropriate subject curriculum is provided. This is more finely tuned to the presentation in the classroom, taking into account pupils' needs and attainment. To do this teachers use a very good and rigorous array of assessment opportunities, ranging from formal tests to end-of-lesson plenaries. The results of these are then put together to form individual education plans which become blueprints for each pupil's learning. These blueprints identify strategies which facilitate learning and are made more effective by the deployment and expertise of teaching assistants. The teaching assistants provide a very good level of support to each pupil. When compared to judgements in the last report, their effectiveness has improved and they represent an important group with a significant level of expertise and responsibility. The more involved this group becomes in the provision for pupils the more effective are the outcomes.
25. The wide range of pupils' attainments in each class represents a challenge to the expertise of all staff. This challenge is successfully met because of the very good teamwork to be found in each classroom. These teams have been put together and also monitored by senior management. Within each team the class teacher is central to the deployment of assistants. This is done skilfully and the impact on pupils' learning is considerable both in its intensity and success.
26. Pupils work very hard at their learning, often without realising it. This is because of the enthusiasm and skills of staff who recognise even the smallest opportunities where learning can be achieved. For example, in encouraging a pupil to swim an extra width, the teacher set the challenge for a pupil to swim and 'Tickle the toes' of the assistant standing at the pool's edge. It is noticeable throughout the school that all pupils work very hard because of the demands made of them by teachers and other assistants.
27. Teachers promote well the use of literacy and numeracy throughout pupils' learning. In all subjects they identify good cross-subject links which enhance the quality of learning undertaken by pupils. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has also been extended since the last inspection. Although not yet in its finished state, mostly because of poor accommodation, the use of ICT has made a significant contribution to the range of learning styles undertaken by pupils as well as providing a good record of this same work.
28. The achievement and work of pupils is assessed very well and the outcomes to this are used to plan the next learning to be undertaken. A strong feature of this is the use of annotated work

in all subjects. These records provide milestones of learning for each pupil. It is the interim involvement of pupils which could be further improved. Older pupils particularly could be more involved in the assessment and critique of their own work so they become more aware of what they need to do in order to improve. However, a good example of this was seen in a Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2 physical education lesson. At the last inspection assessment practice was judged to be inconsistent throughout the school. The opposite is now the case and it is possible to identify achievement and progress for every pupil and student.

29. Currently most accreditation opportunities are offered to students in the post-16 phase. This is a weakness because it does not offer sufficient opportunity to all pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 to demonstrate the results of their hard work and achievement.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15 (43%)	17 (49%)	3 (8%)	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good overall. It provides an array of activities which enable pupils to make good progress as they become older. The school also provides a very good range of opportunities outside of the formal curriculum; these enrich pupils' lives. Although staffing and curricular resources are good the poor accommodation inhibits the quality of learning opportunities on offer.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good quality planning which underpins the curriculum is instrumental in securing good opportunities for learning.
- Pupils are given challenging targets in literacy and numeracy which are constantly reviewed and evaluated.
- The curriculum does not provided an appropriate range of opportunity for older pupils to gain nationally recognised awards.
- Any slow down in performance of pupils is quickly identified because of effective monitoring procedures.
- The range and quality of additional activities is very good.
- Good use is made of resources but the effectiveness of these is depressed by the unfavourable accommodation.
- The school has an inclusion programme which encompasses almost half the pupils on roll.

### **Commentary**

30. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 11 provides a good basis for present learning and future educational experiences. The whole of the required curriculum is taught and good planning ensures an appropriate breadth and balance to this throughout the academic year. Statutory requirements are met through the inclusion of religious education and personal, social and health education. Criticisms within the last report cannot now be recognised because the school management and staff have responded with positive action. Statutory requirements are now met in ICT, design and technology and religious education. Though the school does not teach a discrete foreign language the provision ensures that pupils appreciate the cultural and language differences of other nations.
31. The school gives a good focus to the development of literacy and communication skills in pupils. The impact of this is that pupils and students show good confidence in tackling the written word. The range of provision, such as the picture exchange communication system

(PECS) and electronic communicators, also ensures that all pupils and students are equipped to communicate according to their attainment and thus take a full part in their learning.

32. Planning for literacy and numeracy is underpinned by the principles of their respective national strategies. However, the outcomes are made more effective because these principles are incorporated into the detailed planning of IEPs. These become effective working documents which provide pupils and students with appropriately challenging targets. These are constantly evaluated and reviewed, with new ones set for each pupil. The outcomes of this are seen in the improved performance in annual targets.
33. There are very few children in the Foundation Stage but planning shows they follow an innovative curriculum which is a mixture of the early learning goals and elements of the first stages of the National Curriculum. This is entirely appropriate for such pupils and very good outcomes are ensured by the quality of planning, organisation and expertise of staff who teach these children. The personal development and individual needs of children are wholly provided for and incorporated in a focus on learning.
34. Planning of subjects is consistently good throughout the school. These plans are monitored by subject leaders who comment on particular aspects. Long term plans are developed flexibly so that lessons in the classroom are tailored to individual needs; what pupils already know is fully acknowledged. The impact of these plans is seen in good quality lessons which include the requirements of the subject curriculum but at the same time take full account of the ways in which individual pupils learn.
35. Where pupils have particular needs the curriculum provision is also good. The school has an increasing number of pupils diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and has responded by providing an effective high dependency unit for these pupils and others. These pupils benefit from a range of alternative communication strategies which enable them to take full part in their learning. Because ASD pupils are fully included in the life of the school their social development is particularly good – with some of these pupils being able to cooperate in joint projects. Provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is also good. In spite of the poor accommodation these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. Teaching and health care assistants provide sensitive and unobtrusive levels of care for these pupils which uphold their dignity. All classes comprise pupils of wide attainment. Despite this the equal opportunities of pupils are assured because of the awareness of staff and secure monitoring procedures. These latter arrangements mean that any dips in performance are quickly identified.
36. The curriculum for Year 10 and 11 and post-16 students is satisfactory though there are strengths in the way these students are prepared for their next stage of life or education. The curriculum they follow covers National Curriculum requirements but the school has not yet taken full advantage of the flexible arrangements available to these students. Although accreditation is available to post-16 students, through ALL as well as the NSP, there is insufficient provision for those pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, assessment practice is good throughout the school and staff use this well to plan the next stages of learning. Students are offered opportunities to join in activities at the local college of further education and the evidence suggests they benefit from these, particularly in their social and emotional development. Links with the Connexions service also prepare students well for the time when they will leave school. A weakness in the provision is that the accommodation does not allow these students to confirm their identity as growing young adults. Their location within the school and occasional mixing with other pupils reinforces a feeling that they have not yet left statutory education but merely moved to another classroom in the school.
37. Staff are very successful in widening pupils' understanding and experience of the world outside their school. They provide many opportunities for pupils to gain a good understanding of their local community as well as the part they have to play. Visits to theatres, museums and

involvement in dance productions successfully increase their notion of themselves as citizens within the community.

38. Accommodation is poor and restricts what the school can offer its pupils and students. The school site is cramped and a mix of permanent and temporary buildings. There is no area for sporting activity and the present play area provides space which can only be used in rotation by different groups. The school hall is unsuited to any activity other than that performed by primary aged pupils and the available space is further restricted through the need to store equipment around its perimeter. This has been a severe restriction to what the school has been able to achieve in terms of pupils' social and physical development. In spite of this the school has done well to mitigate and compensate for these deficiencies. The school leadership has looked outward to the community and as a result pupils and students have very good access to community resources which they use intensively. These range from visits to local facilities (such as the community recycling facility) to regular use by older pupils of local swimming pools. The school is fortunate to have an on-site hydrotherapy pool, which it purchased with the help of parents and the local community. This facility is used mainly by younger pupils and it has brought significant benefit to their physical and emotional development.
39. Resources are generally satisfactory. Weaknesses exist in the range and quality of educational software but this is something of which the school is aware. Other resources for learning are used well and problems in subjects, such as religious education (RE) and science, are resolved in most imaginative ways. ICT resources need upgrading. The school has already put aside a sum of money in anticipation of this when the move to new premises has been completed.
40. The school has a slightly higher ratio of staff than many similar schools. They represent a group with considerable expertise who are well qualified and whose professional needs are constantly upgraded through planned development opportunities. The teamwork they display is exemplary and the needs of pupils, whether physical, emotional or academic, are quickly responded to.
41. The leadership and management are aware of the few weaknesses in the curriculum and are making every effort to redress these. The impending move to new premises should be helpful in this process.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety very well. It provides them with very good support, advice and guidance. It considers their views satisfactorily and involves them in its work.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Care, welfare, health and safety procedures are very good and staff are vigilant in their concern for pupils.
- The pastoral support, advice and guidance are very good.
- The monitoring and evaluation procedures for tracking pupils' achievements and guiding them are comprehensive and very effective.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views, whilst satisfactory, needs to be further developed.

## **Commentary**

42. This is a small and caring school where pupils are known very well to all staff. Because of very good procedures which ensure their care, welfare, health and safety pupils feel safe and secure. This results in pupils wanting to be in school and keen to learn. They therefore show very good levels of effort and productivity which reflect their attitudes. Child protection procedures are secure and thoroughly implemented. Pupils have very good confidence in the adults within the school and are happy to turn to them should they need support. The policies and practices relating to health and safety are carried out well and the school does all it can to mitigate the problems brought about by the poor accommodation.
43. Advice, support and guidance for pupils are very good because comprehensive documentation is constantly refined and used within classrooms. This develops and focuses on pupils' targets as well as engaging parents in the learning partnership. This ensures that individual needs of pupils are firmly addressed. There is very good monitoring of teachers' and pupils' files by the leadership team. This ensures there is a consistently high level of advice and support for pupils throughout the school. This practice has also contributed extensively to the very good improvement since the last inspection - when the monitoring of academic performance did not provide effective support and advice for pupils.
44. The needs of pupils on entry to the school are becoming increasingly more complex. The school has responded to this by the appointment of several health care assistants who ensure that the physical welfare of such pupils is fully attended to. Good induction procedures for pupils fully involve support agencies, with whom the school works well. Parents have not reacted favourably to the loss of time provided by speech therapists. However, the school has ensured that the effects of this are minimised by appointing a speech and language assistant (funded by the local health authority) who works with individual pupils under the guidance of the qualified therapist. Much of this work is done on a daily basis.
45. Whilst pupils already have some opportunities to be involved in the work of the school their participation in decisions which directly affect them could be further increased. Currently there are limited opportunities for pupils to voice their opinions or feel they are part of a wider community – except through mechanisms such as an annual questionnaire. The school realises this, however, and plans to tackle the issue through the establishment of a joint school council along with their partner primary school.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with other schools and colleges are very good because of the head teacher's determination to extend and enhance opportunities for pupils.
- Links with parents are good and they have a very favourable view of work done by the school.
- The community has a positive impact on the work of the school.
- The work done with parents and their pre-school children is exemplary.
- Some parents would like more support for the work they do at home with their child.

## **Commentary**

46. Good quality links with parents reflect the quality of information they receive about the work of the school and their child's achievements and progress. Annual reports are clear and detailed; portraying what a child knows, understands and can do. Year 10 has a particularly good home/school book which enriches the quality of communication between the class teacher and

parents. However, parents do not always respond to the initiatives to involve them, with a recent survey producing a very limited response.

47. The link between parents and the learning done at school by their children is good and within this there are examples of very good practice. The school facilitates a weekly 'Parents School' involving parents of pre-school children. This is exemplary practice which lays very good foundations for them to be participants in their child's later learning in school. However, more could be done in similarly developing the cooperation of parents in work to be done at home. This would reinforce and extend learning throughout all age groups.
48. Some parents expressed the need for more information to help them support their child's learning at home. Home/school diaries are provided throughout the school and give immediate feedback for both staff and parents. Parents feel comfortable about visiting or telephoning the school as necessary and many make use of such opportunities. The school expects parents to be fully involved in the statutory annual review process of their child's statement. The majority make good use of this opportunity to contribute in advance of as well as attend the meetings. Parents' workshops are well attended and provide a programme of topics relevant to their needs. The school also provides class coffee mornings. These are of particular interest to many parents as they provide a direct link and very good opportunity for parents to meet with all staff who work with their child.
49. Links with the community are good because the school is successful in involving it in supporting its resources and work. It uses these well to enrich pupils' experiences and wider educational provision. Financial support has contributed well to school projects – such as the hydrotherapy pool. The community is receptive and welcoming to the activities of the school; for example pupils visit local shops. Such experiences make a good contribution to their personal development and developing sense of citizenship. The school also ensures that pupils develop a sense of community responsibility by regularly taking part in fund raising activities to support the work of national charities.
50. The strength of involvement with other schools and colleges is due to the head teacher's vision, initiative and strong outward looking approach. This enriches the work of the school and the experiences of pupils. Pupils from the new primary school with which Baytree School will share a site have already visited them and there is a developing vision of how the schools will work together. For example there is an intention to have a combined schools' council. Such an opportunity, along with others already in place, makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils as well as improvement in their confidence and self-esteem.
51. Links with other schools promote inclusion very well and some 26 pupils from the current roll have the opportunity to join with counterparts in mainstream. These range from single sessions or lessons to complete days. Contact with mainstream colleges is also regular through the Action Zone, Federation and the Excellence Cluster. Networks with mainstream partners and with other special schools and special needs organisations helps keep the school in line with initiatives and new ways of working. The head teacher's vision of being centrally involved makes a very good contribution to the outward looking and very strong ethos of the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and her expectations are high. The leadership team is effective and committed to continued improvement. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. The poor accommodation has been a barrier to raising the quality of provision.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategic planning shows a commitment to raising achievement and improvement of pupils' learning.
- Members of the leadership team have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they carry out most efficiently.
- Subject leaders monitor teaching and learning effectively and are very aware of priorities for future development.
- The school is committed to training of staff and the outcomes to this were seen in the good quality teaching observed during the inspection.
- The chair of governors is extremely active and undertakes a great deal of responsibility, but tasks need to be shared more equitably with other governors – particularly in strategic management of the school.
- School finances are effectively managed.

## Commentary

52. The head teacher provides very strong leadership and shows great vision and commitment to raising achievement. She is supported well by the deputy head teacher and two assistant head teachers. Issues from the last inspection related to curriculum development, assessment, monitoring and ICT have been fully implemented. However, the use of ICT in different subjects of the curriculum requires further development. Further improvement to the 14-19 curriculum is also a priority correctly identified by the school.
53. The head teacher is very supportive of staff and has a clear understanding of their strengths and skills; the level of trust and authority she has devolved to them has enabled her to create very effective teams. The appointment of two assistant head teachers has strengthened the leadership team since the last inspection. They have contributed to the strategic management of the school and assisted in the monitoring of standards. The head teacher has provided dedicated time in which subject leaders observe the quality of teaching and learning in their subject. As a result of this monitoring, target setting is ambitious but realistic and effectively tracks pupils' achievements. The collaborative leadership style of the head teacher ensures that all staff are given the opportunity to contribute professional opinions to the school improvement plan and shape its future direction. The school has a very strong commitment to inclusion. Currently nearly half of the pupils have the opportunity to attend lessons in primary, secondary or further education establishments. The school management is aware of a need to monitor and evaluate more carefully the outcomes of these inclusion practices.
54. Professional development is very good. Each member of staff has an annual interview with the head teacher and the school does its best to accommodate their identified training needs. Recently ICT has been a focus for whole staff development and the impact of this training has started to have a positive outcome on teaching and pupils' learning. Performance management is effective; the results of this are evident in the high proportion of very good and good teaching observed during the inspection.
55. The governors provide satisfactory support for the head teacher. Statutory requirements and appropriate sub-committees are all in place. Governors require reports from subject leaders and these are supplemented by teachers giving presentations at governor meetings. Each governor is linked to a class and some lesson observations have been carried out by them. The governors have contributed to the school improvement plan and some curriculum monitoring is taking place. At the forefront of this work is the chair of governors but, at the moment, she is undertaking far too much responsibility. She is the main person providing the support and challenge for the head teacher. Governors have undertaken training, but are insufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school. The governors have been very supportive of the head teacher in the planning and preparation for the move to the new school in September 2004. This has taken considerable amounts of their time. However, the project has

been tackled well and close working links have already been established with Herons Moor School, their partner in the project.

56. The school finances are managed well with funding being allocated according to priorities in the school improvement plan. The recommendations made in the recent audit have been fully implemented. The large carry forward this year is due to careful housekeeping and a desire to ensure a smooth transition to the new school by having a contingency fund. The general school budget is increased through some grant funding, such as that allocated to the high dependency class. Although the annual cost per pupil is high in comparison with similar schools, the school offers good value for money. This is because standards are rising, teaching is good, pupils achieve well and they are very well cared for; in addition the inclusion initiative is very well managed and pupils are benefiting considerably from the opportunities they are given.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	803,923
Total expenditure	804,628
Expenditure per pupil	15,777

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	80,623
Balance carried forward to the next	79,918

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, 4 AND POST-16 WITH COMMENTS RELATING TO THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The Foundation Stage is not reported in detail because the school has too few children about whom reliable judgements could be made. Where possible these children are included in learning opportunities for Year 1 pupils, which are thought most appropriate to their needs.

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **Modern foreign languages**

*This area of the curriculum was sampled during the inspection. The school provides a suitable programme of European experiences for pupils in Years 7 to 9. These extend pupils' awareness of cultures and languages other than their own.*

##### **English**

The provision for English is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils across the school achieve well in English and a significant number exceed annual targets because of the good teaching.
- Teachers use assessment and track progress very well.
- Reading skills are taught very well.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils in Year 11 to have their work externally accredited.
- The curriculum for English is good.

##### **Commentary**

57. Pupils' achievement is good. Some, including those pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, achieve very well compared to their prior attainment. Pupils make good progress when measured against small steps in learning and half of the pupils exceeded their learning targets last year. The quality of teaching from the Reception class to Year 6, use of assessment, tracking of progress, and behaviour management have all improved. The National Literacy Strategy is fully in place.
58. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well taught and lessons are appropriately matched to individual pupils' needs. In Reception and Years 1 and 2 most pupils achieve well enough to move onto the Year 1 objectives of the National Literacy Strategy; all of this is still planned at individual levels. This attention to detail is having a good impact on standards by the end of Year 9. There is a good emphasis on reading, punctuation, spelling and grammar and the school is now appropriately extending the range of reading and writing opportunities drawn from Key Stage 2 programmes of study. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a limited range of accreditation opportunities.
59. Pupils and students achieve well in their skill of communication. Pupils learn to use sign language, sing songs and effectively use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Teachers encourage pupils to contribute ideas, ask questions of visitors and talk about their work. Pupils from some classes address an audience, such as in assemblies. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy performing dramatic scenes such as 'The Lookalike'. Pupils talk of their hopes and fears about taking part with a local secondary school in a dramatic

production of 'The Tempest'. Those who regularly mix with pupils in local schools tend to be more confident communicators.

60. There is very good emphasis on developing reading skills and about a quarter of the school have regular individual reading sessions in addition to group reading for all in literacy lessons. The detailed records of reading kept by the highly skilled teaching assistant who manages the programme show good progress by all of those on the reading programme. The range of texts is varied, age appropriate as far as is possible and pupils and students show good commitment, enjoyment and ambition. The small library area has a sufficient range of reference books selected by the students, some of whom have responsibility for managing the book returns.
61. Pupils and students make good progress in developing writing skills and by the end of Year 9, those of higher attainment write sentences independently in response to questions about a text. With support pupils write poetry, letters and reviews. Computer generated symbols are used to good effect in order to help written communication. Computer software is also used well to help pupils develop spelling, reading and writing skills. Although word processing is used by pupils, the outcomes tend to be laborious because they lack the basic skill in keyboard recognition.
62. Teaching is good overall; it ranges from very good to satisfactory, but mostly it is good or very good. A very good feature of teaching throughout the school is the positive encouragement and engagement of pupils by teachers and teaching assistants; the management of lessons is also consistently good. A feature of the most successful lessons is very good planning closely related to precise individual education plan targets. Teaching assistants are well informed and using their considerable expertise, give very good support within lessons and to individuals. All of these features lead to good learning and concentration and, in Years 7 to 11, some very good independent and collaborative work. Digital photography is used well to recap and record experiences. Teachers also plan well for mixed attainment groups but at times in the introduction to lessons there is insufficient use of real objects to support learning, especially for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
63. Coordination of English is good. The subject leader, a relatively recent appointment, has made a good start in tackling the most appropriate areas for development. She also manages well the monitoring of teaching and tracking of pupils' achievements and progress. In addition she is planning collaboratively with the subject leader in the new partner school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

64. Provision for pupils to extend their literacy and communication is central to the work of the school. Teachers ensure that each individual's skills are used and applied well within other subjects of the curriculum. In art, for example Year 1 pupils talk about colour shades in terms of darker and lighter. In Year 10 higher attaining pupils ask questions to clarify their understanding of Sikh symbols. Post-16 students talk and write about their experiences at the leisure centre for inclusion in their ALL portfolio. There are good quality displays of work around the school, which are neatly captioned; however use of symbols to explain these is not always evident.

### **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and this results in pupils achieving well.
- Planning is very good and closely linked to individual education plans.
- There are insufficient accreditation opportunities in Years 10 and 11.

- Subject leadership is very strong and has been instrumental in raising standards.

### **Commentary**

65. Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 to 6; in all other year groups their achievement is good. A strong feature of pupils' learning is the enjoyment they derive from well-planned practical activities provided for them. PMLD pupils are fully integrated into classes and because they are very well supported they too achieve well.
66. Teaching is consistently good, and some very good teaching was observed. The best teaching was observed in Years 1 to 6. Strong aspects of the teaching in these lessons were the explaining of learning objectives to the pupils at the beginning of lessons and the effective use of plenary sessions to reinforce these objectives. This practice is also evident in other Years, such as Year 10 where a very good recap reinforced the concept of 'larger' and 'smaller' when pupils were looking at and handling different shapes.
67. Very strong curriculum planning underpins the teaching. Since the last inspection, the school has adapted and modified the National Numeracy Strategy well; this has provided much needed structure to the teaching of mathematics. There is a weakness in the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 in that they do not follow an accredited course. The use of ICT is developing satisfactorily, but in some classes this requires further emphasis. There is insufficient age-appropriate software, especially for the older pupils. Teaching assistants are skilled and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They know the pupils very well and are confident when working with small groups.
68. Effective use of pupils' individual education plans provides clear evidence of pupils' progress. These plans are used effectively as a basis for target setting. Assessment has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is now good. Pupils' portfolios of work indicate good gains in learning as they become older and progress through the school.
69. Subject leadership is very good. Staff training and the monitoring of teaching and planning have been instrumental in raising teachers' expectations, and ensuring the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and these are used well for practical work. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

70. Mathematics is used regularly in other subjects. In a music lesson pupils were able to decide whether they wanted to play loudly or softly, and to sequence how sounds could be played in different order. At registration pupils counted the numbers present and worked out how many were absent.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is consistently good and they work hard during all lessons.
- The organisation and management of the subject are of good quality.
- The lack of appropriate accreditation opportunities for pupils at the end of Year 11 diminishes the effort they put in to learning.

### **Commentary**

71. Throughout the school all pupils achieve well in science. There are no substantial differences in the achievement of boys and girls, nor between groups of differing attainment. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 know of the differences in living things – often consolidated through visits to local farms. In Years 2 to 6 pupils have a good understanding of the solar system resulting from the work they have done about ‘the earth and beyond’. From this they have understood why day and night occur and that the sun is the source of light and energy which enables plants to grow. Older pupils in Years 7 to 11 have developed their scientific thinking in devising and carrying out simple investigations. Teaching is particularly effective here because it has developed the naturally inquisitive attitudes shown by pupils. These experiments included removing all but one leaf from a plant to see if it continued growing (it did) and matching the outcome to a control plant which was allowed to grow normally. Other experiments related to grouping of materials, such as considering their porosity or their consistency when subjected to heat.
72. Since the last inspection teaching has improved in quality and consistency. It is now good throughout the school. This has resulted from better subject leadership by a science specialist. Her expertise has put in place a subject plan, backed up by a scheme of work that non-specialist teachers of the subject have found very helpful. This means they plan lessons with a better focus on science issues and provide strategies and activities that enable pupils to achieve well. Throughout the school the tasks given to pupils are closely matched to attainment.
73. The management of the subject has improved and is now good. The coordinator has brought better cohesion to what is taught as well as the ways in which it is taught. Senior management colleagues have enabled the coordinator to better monitor the quality of provision throughout the school by providing time in which this might be done. This enables the coordinator to identify the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Consultation with the local subject adviser, as well as staff within the school, has provided a solid base from which the subject has developed. Weaknesses within the provision have already been identified by the coordinator. Among these is the lack of appropriate accreditation opportunities at the end of Year 11. The coordinator is also considering, for older pupils especially, some grouping by attainment so that work can be even more rigorously focused.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and management by the subject leader are strengthening the provision.
- Good staff training has increased awareness of how ICT can improve communication.
- More age-appropriate software is required for older pupils.
- There is insufficient technical support.

### **Commentary**

74. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and there is good evidence that standards are rising because pupils are starting to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, post-16 students were observed using their word-processing skills to send an e-mail to a former pupil in Canada.
75. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. In the discrete lessons observed during the inspection teaching was good and this impacted well on pupils' learning. The impact of recent training was clearly evident in the teaching observed. There has been a significant improvement in the use of ICT since the last inspection. Teachers use ICT effectively as part of their professional duties - for curriculum planning, lesson preparation and captions on displays. The teachers and teaching assistants are now more confident in guiding

and helping pupils in the use of the new technology such as the Internet and digital photography. Digital cameras are extensively used to record achievement. Although the school has a satisfactory range of software there is a need to ensure that the content is suitable and age-appropriate for older pupils. Communication aids are used satisfactorily, for example, switches and a symbol vocabulary; however, there is a need to explore further means of communication by keeping abreast of the latest technology. The school receives the help of a technician for half a day each week; this is inadequate to ensure that the computer network, peripheral and communication aids are maintained effectively and do not disrupt pupils' learning.

76. Subject leadership is good. The coordinator is knowledgeable, confident and able to give effective help and support. She is clear about how the subject is to be developed and is able to direct the school in the right way; for example, ensuring that ICT is used as a tool to support pupils' learning. Since the last inspection a great deal of work has gone into planning, improving resources and the training of staff. Planning and the quality of teaching are monitored regularly and this is raising the expectations of staff and helping improve their confidence and expertise. However, assessment is an aspect of the work in ICT that is under-developed and needs further emphasis. The move to the new school is being carefully planned and money has been earmarked to ensure that facilities in each class will be of a high standard. For instance, each class is expected to have an interactive whiteboard. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Weaknesses such as a poor curriculum and scheme of work, as well as a timetable which was not followed, have all been successfully addressed by the present coordinator. However, the improvements that have been put in place have not yet fully impacted on teaching and pupils' achievements because of the limited facilities available.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

77. The use of ICT is developing satisfactorily, but more opportunities for this are required in other subjects. A particularly good example was seen in a Year 3 science lesson when pupils were learning about different materials. The use of the interactive whiteboard encouraged them to use 'drag and drop' skills to place materials accurately in a Venn diagram.

### **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected individually and is reported on in full below. Inspectors also saw one lesson in history but none were seen in geography.*

78. In the Year 6 **history** lesson, the pupils were learning about Ancient Greece. The teacher had prepared well to make history come alive. Two pupils dressed as Greek children and this helped the class to compare the different periods in history. Good teaching helped pupils to have a better insight into school and home life, for example, group work consisted of writing on wax boards, moulding clay dolls and making a set of knucklebones. There is no coordinator for the subject who also teaches – this role is currently undertaken by the head teacher.
79. Scrutiny of planning and other evidence indicates that a suitable **geography** curriculum is in place, but needs to be reviewed in order to give increased emphasis to other cultures and communities.

### **Religious Education**

The provision for religious education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of artefacts to bring the subject alive.
- Visits to church, synagogue and temple add significantly to pupils' understanding of different faiths.
- There is a good programme of collective acts of worship.
- There are good cross-curricular links with literacy and other subjects.

## Commentary

80. Pupils' achievement is good. Teaching and learning are also good. Subject planning reflects an understanding of pupils' learning needs and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This shows progression and continuity in knowledge and understanding. The whole school celebrates special religious festivals from a range of faiths; these are further enriched by visits to places of worship of several faiths. There are good quality displays about world religions.
81. By the end of Year 10 pupils have experienced and taken part in festivals and recognise symbols associated with Christian celebrations and other religions. In a Year 10 lesson pupils learned about the symbolism of a wedding ring in Christianity, handled it and tried it on. They then wore bracelets from the Sikh religion. Higher attaining pupils are confident to ask questions about things they do not understand. They begin to develop their understanding about key symbols, and learn the terms for the five K's in Sikhism. They develop an awareness of the broader moral and ethical issues, such as the differences between right and wrong. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in learning because of skilled teaching. This ensures everyone takes an active part in lessons. Post-16 students think about their home as a special place and identify their feelings about their favourite place in the home and why this might be so.
82. Religious education and collective worship are linked well to personal and social education and this has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. This link enriches pupils' understanding of and builds well on their interpretation of the social and moral codes within the school and the wider community. Assemblies complement work in religious education, well encouraging reflection and thoughtfulness for others.
83. The coordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject, and has worked hard to produce very good improvement since the last inspection. Planning is monitored well and good support given by the leadership team. Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is informal but there is an appropriate action plan with good record of action taken. There are good resources, including a range of artefacts related to different religions to support the programmes of work. Recent helpful additions include CD-ROMs related to places of worship.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*Art and design, music and physical education are reported in full. Work in design and technology was sampled.*

84. The evidence in **design and technology** came from photographs, displays and samples of pupils' work. Where possible pupils are offered opportunities to make decisions and choices about their creations. Evidence from records of P-levels indicates that most pupils make good progress over time. One lesson was observed – for students in the Post-16 group. This involved making an object which could be used. Most students chose either a key-ring or bird box. The lesson was successful because the quality of teaching was good and students were motivated by seeing a purpose to what they were doing. They learned different skills, such as gluing pieces together and sandpapering their finished article; higher attaining pupils used a jigsaw with some skill and confidence.

85. The coordination of the subject is good but outcomes are restricted through lack of appropriate facilities – this is particularly so for older pupils and students. The last inspection judged progress for pupils and students as generally satisfactory. This has now improved. The subject also now has a clearer identity, rather than being confused with science.

## **Art and Design**

Provision for art and design is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the work they do.
- The curriculum content is rigorous and challenges the pupils well.
- Pupils have too few chances to use ICT within the subject.

### **Commentary**

86. Pupils' achievement in art and design is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The work they are expected to undertake is challenging for all pupils and by the time pupils get to Year 11 they will have a good understanding of the work done by famous artists, such as Monet, van Gogh and Mondrian. For example, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 were expected to complete a work in the style of Monet. The quality of teaching impacted well on the outcomes as the pupils tackled this challenge. The picture they produced was approached in stages; first they used books to consider the original work and then built up their own picture by completing the sky, then the background and finally the poppies. In doing this the pupils showed a good ability to mix colour. This encouraged their creativity and developed a sense of adventure to what they achieved. Similar good work is continued through Years 2 to 6.
87. Teaching of the subject is good throughout the school. Teachers are good at identifying methods to encourage pupils' artistic natures. They use resources well and reinforce understanding by visits to places such as the Weston Museum. The planning is also of good quality. For example, a teacher of pupils in Years 7 to 9 planned a lesson which was then taught by a teaching assistant. This plan was clear because it identified what the outcomes should be and provided individual strategies for each pupil. The plan was made more effective in its execution through the skill of the teaching assistant.
88. The curriculum shows good opportunities for progression in learning and it uses a range of different media in order to achieve this. Digital photography is used very well to record pupils' work and the resultant pictures form a good record of what pupils have achieved. Through this teachers can identify progress over time. There was also good use of a PowerPoint presentation which enabled teachers provide a greater range of images for the pupils to consider. In general however, ICT opportunities, as used by pupils, are few and this represents an under-used aspect of pupils' capability.
89. Coordination of the subject is good. It is planned well and this has brought better consistency to the provision since the last inspection. Resources are satisfactory but an increase in the range of these would widen the range of media available to pupils.

## **Music**

Provision for music is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and this contributes to their good achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Music is used in many situations throughout the school.

## Commentary

90. Pupils have a very good range of opportunities through which they develop their musical ability. These start with good teaching which encourages pupils to be adventurous in their composition and performance. Assemblies are a time for singing – always done enthusiastically. During lessons pupils listen and synchronise actions to the beat of the music. Pupils with some dexterity tap out the rhythm of a beat whereas others nod their head in time to this beat. Pupils were involved in deciding whether they would play music loudly or softly and the outcomes indicated they clearly knew the difference. A very good lesson used a PowerPoint presentation to show how sounds could be placed in different sequences in order to produce a variety of final sounds. Pupils made references to what they had previously learned and this is evidence of the good progress they have made.
91. The provision also includes music therapy for those pupils with additional needs. One lesson was observed and the outcomes were very good. Challenging behaviour was managed very successfully through keeping a tight focus on what was being learned as well as the quality of challenge offered to pupils. The expertise of the teaching assistant was instrumental in the success of the session.
92. Coordination and leadership of the subject have improved and are now good; planning is better and this enables teachers to provide more coherent and challenging lessons. The quality of provision and teaching has also improved since the last inspection, particularly in the way in which pupils' progress is assessed and recorded as well as the increased range of opportunities for pupils to experience music in different situations.

## Physical Education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Detailed planning of the curriculum ensures good achievement and progress of all pupils.
- The poor and non-existent facilities severely restrict the range and quality of what can be taught.
- The school makes very good use of community facilities and uses these as a vehicle to develop pupils' physical, personal and social skills.
- The school looks outward to develop its provision and this significantly enriches the curriculum.

## Commentary

93. Achievement is good throughout the school. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, particularly for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Standards could be higher but the poor accommodation depresses and restricts the range and quality of what the school is able to provide. Despite this the school has provided a very good quality hydrotherapy pool which is extensively used by younger pupils to develop their physical capability and confidence in water. Older pupils use local community swimming pools. The wider opportunities for pupils' physical development are good because the school has also provided age appropriate activities such as aqua aerobics for older pupils and lunchtime as well as after-school clubs for football and gymnastics. The good achievement of pupils is evidenced through awards such as ASA Swimming certificates, Funfit Gymnastic awards and Shine Athletics awards.

94. Younger pupils make good progress in gaining confidence in water and by the time they are in Year 2 many have gained independent swimming skills. Children in the Foundation Stage showed good gymnastic skill in their control of fast and slow movement which they developed into a sequence comprising a balance, a rocking movement and finishing with a forward roll. These children showed sophisticated skill by taking part in their own assessment – the majority knew and could describe what they had done well. Older pupils, who join with their peers in mainstream schools, also make good progress in skills such as throwing a ball with increasing accuracy and developing this to the more demanding skill of bowling a cricket ball at a wicket. The most significant achievement of these pupils is in their social and emotional development, brought about by the work they do alongside their peers.
95. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and taught with enthusiasm. Where teachers may feel less confident about the subject the coordinator provides sound advice. This includes offering feedback as a result of lesson observation as well as monitoring the quality of lesson plans and programmes of study.
96. Since the last inspection the general standard of provision has improved because of better planning as well as monitoring of teaching quality; this is the result of better coordination and leadership. The school has continued to work in spite of the accommodation issues and provides a wide range of good quality experiences for its pupils. The subject leader has formed active links with mainstream schools and these are a significant factor in the raising of pupils' achievements.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision includes many planned opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- Post-16 students do not have access to an environment in which they can develop as young adults.
- Pupils and students do not have enough opportunities to formally express their views.
- Teachers use extensive community links to develop the social capability of pupils.
- Pupils are aware of their role as citizens within their local community.

### **Commentary**

97. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is planned well and provides many good quality opportunities for pupils and students to increase their decision-making capability and understanding of their life in the community. Pupils achieve well and make good progress over time. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The school has also successfully addressed issues such as a clearer focus for activities as well as identification in other subjects of opportunities for personal development.
98. The school has nurtured strong and effective links with the community through visits to diverse places such as local museums and the local re-cycling amenity. Teachers are adventurous in exposing pupils and students to any situation felt to be safe and appropriate to assist their personal development.
99. In addition to discrete lessons, where the quality of teaching is very good, opportunities such as tutor periods and lunchtimes are used well to enable pupils to exercise choice and develop their concept of independence. Post-16 students are served less well in this regard because of the limitations of the facilities they have. Although no lessons were seen for this group, discussion with some students indicated that they knew what being a citizen means as well as the importance of life as a member of a community.

100. Pupils and students have no means, such as a school council or class groups, to formally express their views and make a direct contribution to the life of the school. However, individual students do attend the occasional meetings of the local youth parliament. The school management is aware of the weakness in its provision and has plans to form such groups in conjunction with their partner school, once the move to new premises is complete.

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES FOR POST-16 STUDENTS**

The provision for post-16 students is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The accommodation for post-16 students is unsatisfactory.
- Students are provided with a good range of activities from which they make good progress in personal development.
- Staff carefully consider individual needs of all students and ensure these are provided for.

### **Commentary**

101. This provision was not reported separately at the last inspection.

102. The school in general places good emphasis on skills of literacy and communication and this provision is continued for post-16 students. Methods such as a challenge to devise and create a dramatic character are used to enable students to speak to their peers about the character they have thought of. PSHE development is helped by this. Students were given an item either to wear or hold and asked how they felt about the character that might have used these. Responses such as 'happy', 'bossy', and 'Bob the builder' suggested that they moved fully into role. There are good opportunities for students to obtain external accreditation at Entry Level through "Accreditation for Life and Learning" (ALL) and National Skills Profile (NSP).

103. Lessons have a practical slant where possible and this engages the students more completely in what they do. These are made more effective by use of tasks identified through IEPs. The impact of this is that students learn well and enjoy what they do.

104. Teaching is generally good but where individual sessions did not match this standard students were left uncertain about what it was they had learned, or the type of questions they were asked did not require extended thinking. Generally, however, planning of both the curriculum and lessons is of good quality; a strength is the manner in which opportunities for development of literacy and numeracy skills are inter-woven with other lessons. Coordination and leadership of the provision are good because students are provided with a good range of opportunities through which they can develop personal and social skills. By the time they leave school these students are prepared well for their next stage of learning.

105. Students' use of ICT is satisfactory. Higher attaining students were more successful with this where the requirement to read was more in evidence. This enabled them to use a keyboard more effectively. They are taught to use facilities such as e-mail or retrieve from file and print pictures of themselves. Unfortunately the excitement of receiving an e-mail, from a former pupil now moved to Canada, was curtailed because of a failure in the software.

106. Students have opportunities to attend sessions at the local college – this in part compensates for their own poor accommodation and helps in their personal development. These sessions are valuable because they allow access to better opportunities for learning as well as challenging students to operate in a more adult environment. Discussion with some students suggests they enjoy this level of challenge.

107. The provision for PSHE is good. Students are given appropriate and sympathetic information about the misuse of drugs and they consequently have a good understanding of these issues. Sex education is included within the PSHE curriculum and this contributes effectively to their mature attitudes on this subject. The support, advice and guidance they receive is very good because it is supplemented through the work of the Connexions service and full involvement of parents. This partnership results in additional personal development opportunities for these students.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	6	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	4	3
The effectiveness of management	4	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*