

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **CHAPEL ROAD SCHOOL**

Attleborough

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121260

Headteacher: Mrs Karin Heap

Lead inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 September 2003

Inspection number: 258884

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:	3 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	61
School address:	Chapel Road Attleborough
Postcode:	NR17 2DS
Telephone number:	01953 453116
Fax number:	01953 455931
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Landamore
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chapel Road is a special school for 61 pupils from three to nineteen years. Pupils have wide ranging special educational needs, including severe, profound, moderate learning difficulties, complex needs and autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. A very small proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The vast majority are from a White British heritage, and a very small number has English as an additional language. Approximately ten per cent of pupils start or leave during the school year. Pupils travel long distances from across Norfolk to attend the school and all have transport provided. Pupils come from broadly average circumstances socially and economically. Chapel Road School also provides an outreach service to primary and secondary schools in the area, and a programme of activities whereby some pupils are included regularly into local mainstream schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, Citizenship, English as an additional language
14066	Gillian Hoggard	Lay inspector	
1358	Glyn Essex	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, physical education, special educational needs
18206	Elizabeth Mildner	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, Religious Education
1224	Graham Todd	Team Inspector	Science, design and technology, information and communication technology

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

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**Chapel Road is an effective school, with many strengths.** Pupils achieve well because the good teaching enables them to learn effectively, and make good progress over time. Pupils achieve well regardless of their individual differences or backgrounds overall. Students' post 16 achievement is only satisfactory as the curriculum has aspects that are underdeveloped. The school is led and managed efficiently, and the governors, headteacher and senior managers have a sharp focus on raising standards. Resources are used prudently, and the school provides good value for money. Since the previous inspection, all key issues have been addressed effectively, with the exception of the accommodation. Despite the school's best efforts, this is yet to be resolved in conjunction with the local education authority. The poor accommodation and limited resources hinder the pupils' learning. The school's strengths have been sustained.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management provide clear direction and vision and set high expectations for continued improvement.
- The good teaching and learning and the very effective contribution made by teaching assistants lead pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils achieve very well in their communication skills, enabling them to access other subjects of the curriculum more readily.
- The strong emphasis upon including all pupils and wide links with the community mean that pupils have rich opportunities, both academically and socially.
- The very good relationships between pupils and with adults mean that pupils enjoy school, want to learn and are happy and at ease in the process.
- The very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage ensures they have a very positive start to school life.
- The poor accommodation and limited resources are a severe restriction; pupils have too little space and there are no specialist facilities in science, design and technology and ICT to help their learning.
- The curriculum provision for students post 16 is underdeveloped, and resources are unsatisfactory thus restricting their independence and capacity to move on from school life fully.

### **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>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>
Year 11	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Year 13	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

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

**The pupils' achievements are good overall.** Children by the end of the Foundation Stage achieve very well. They make very good progress in relation to most of the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception, with the exception of their physical development. This is hindered by lack of outdoor space for them to develop and practice their physical skills. Pupils by the end of Year 2 achieve well and they make good progress in their personal and social education. They learn good work habits and routines that assist as they move through the school. Pupils by the end of Year 6 achieve very well due to the high quality teaching, high expectations and very effective development

of their language and communication skills. This in turn helps pupils to access other subjects more readily. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve well and demonstrate an increased confidence and maturity. By the end of Year 11, pupils achieve satisfactorily rather than well, as teaching is sound rather than good. Expectations for the pupils are not always high enough and the pace of progress is hindered as a result. Students by the end of Year 13 achieve satisfactorily. They have experienced significant change at the beginning of term with a new teacher, new routines and different expectations. The changes are positive overall, though students at the time of the inspection were not familiar with the new regime and their personal and social skills reverted to some immaturity and inappropriate behaviour. Pupils throughout the school achieve particularly well in their language, speaking, listening and communication skills due to the very effective teaching strategies. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics rather than well in Years 7 to 11 as there are missed opportunities for them to use their mathematical skills across other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils' achievements are hindered in some subjects such as design and technology, science and information and communication technology due to poor accommodation and lack of facilities.

**The pupils' attitudes and personal development are good, and the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps them to contribute to the school community, grow in understanding, confidence and maturity.** Pupils develop positive attitudes towards school life and understand the importance of effort and hard work. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive punctually.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides good quality education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall and as a result pupils learn effectively, make good progress and achieve well over time.** Teaching and learning are particularly effective in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 due to the high expectations, detailed planning and very effective emphasis upon developing communication skills. Pupils learn to communicate with growing ease and fluency using a range of tools and techniques. Teaching and learning in Years 10 to 13, whilst satisfactory overall, has scope for setting higher expectations, more efficient use of time, and a closer match of work to the pupils' wide ranging needs. The curriculum is enriched by additional activities linked to mainstream schools, for example using specialist facilities. The strong partnership between home and school means that pupils are supported fully in their school life.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The good leadership of the school ensures clear direction, vision and purpose, and sets high expectations for continued improvement.** The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior managers make a strong and effective team. They lead the school by setting very positive examples in their own professional practice for others to follow. The governing body is led very ably, and governors have relevant and useful skills that assist the school. Governors hold the school to account rigorously, and have an appropriate balance between support for the school and challenging its work. The inclusion and outreach service is led very effectively and schools report huge benefits from their links with Chapel Road, and the expertise is valued highly.

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

**Parents** express a high degree of satisfaction with the school, though remain justifiably concerned and frustrated about the poor quality accommodation. They are particularly pleased that the school involves them so fully in their children's education and keeps them informed about school life. **Pupils** were able to complete simple questionnaires and said how much they enjoy school and like lessons.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that pupils have suitable accommodation with appropriate resources to support their learning.
- Develop the curriculum for students post 16 so that it prepares them more fully for adult life, providing facilities and accommodation that enable them to have an education that is distinct and separate from their previous school life.
- Improve the quality of teaching overall in Years 10 to 13, and in mathematics in Years 7 to 11, and ensure more practical links are made for the pupils in the their understanding and use of the subject.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils achieve well overall at Chapel Road School and regularly reach, and sometimes exceed, the targets set for them.

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

- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage as their needs are identified swiftly, and programmes devised and modified carefully to match those needs.
- Pupils' achievements are very good throughout the school in their language and communication skills; they express their views and ideas more easily as a result.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in mathematics and their skills used practically in day to day situations.
- Pupils achieve well in science throughout the school as the curriculum is modified carefully; pupils are hindered from achieving very well due to lack of facilities and resources for the subject.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve satisfactorily rather than well in mathematics as there are insufficient opportunities for them to use those skills practically.
- Students post 16 achieve satisfactorily, but no better because aspects of the curriculum are underdeveloped at this stage, and facilities are poor.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in art and design, information technology and physical education; their achievements are hindered due to poor facilities and very limited space to carry out any practical work.

#### **Commentary**

1. Trends in standards indicate that pupils achieve well even though the pupils referred to the school have increasingly complex learning difficulties.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. They are assessed rigorously in order to identify individual targets, and activities are matched closely to those targets. All adults know the children thoroughly, and therefore understand what they must do to assist in their learning. The children achieve very well in all areas of learning with the exception of their physical development. This is hindered by the lack of a suitable and discrete outside playground. Staff work hard to overcome these obstacles in order to provide for the children's physical development, though the hall is similarly cramped and unsuitable for its purpose.
3. Pupils achieve particularly well in their language and communication skills throughout the school as this aspect has been the focus and emphasis for development in the school's recent history. All staff have been trained in using alternative forms of communication, and pupils develop those skills systematically as they move through the school. The curriculum is planned to ensure pupils use their communication skills across all subjects, and the strong emphasis upon developing literacy skills enables them to access other subjects more readily.
4. Pupils achieve well in mathematics in Years 1 to 6, as the curriculum is planned coherently to develop and use mathematical skills in a variety of practical situations. Pupils therefore learn the purpose and value of mathematics in everyday contexts and grow in confidence and independence. They understand for example the purpose of counting money, recognise numbers to tell the time, and the importance of sharing food as equally as possible. This practical emphasis is not developed fully as pupils move through the school and therefore achievement is only satisfactory for the older pupils in Years 7 to 11.

5. Pupils achieve well in science throughout the school, and the additional opportunities organised at the local college ensure useful practical and scientific investigations take place in specialist rooms, particularly for the older pupils. Pupils could achieve very well, but are hindered by the lack of specialist facilities and resources. Classrooms are cramped and often have no facilities or proper storage for their enquiries and investigations. Pupils achieve well in science at this stage, including those with profound and more complex learning difficulties. This is due to the high quality teaching, and excellent use of signs and symbols to assist communication skills. Their achievements are compromised by poor quality accommodation that in turn limits what type of investigations they can pursue.
6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school in subjects such as art and design and information and communication technology (ICT). They would achieve better, for example, in ICT if resources were more recent, and hardware and software matched more closely to individual needs.
7. Students post 16 achieve satisfactorily overall. As the inspection took place at the very beginning of the term, with newly appointed teaching staff only just developing an understanding of what the students were able to achieve, the students did not always do as well as they might in other circumstances. Students post 16 achieve satisfactorily rather than well as the curriculum for this stage of their education is not fully developed. In addition, the accommodation for post 16 students is situated in the most cramped of conditions, with few facilities for developing independence or maturity. Students have little sense of moving on from their time in the main school in such poor circumstances. Currently, the students are learning new routines and adapting to new staff. This inevitably means a period of adjustment, learning and adaptation to the students' needs, as new staff are in the process of identifying strategies that will best challenge students in order to achieve their best. Students are confident and sociable, though the lack of appropriate facilities for them to socialise and develop their independence skills is a hindrance. There is scope for students to pursue courses that are nationally recognised that in turn would impact further on their achievements. The location of post 16 provision is cramped, and there are few facilities or resources for them to use.
8. Pupils with more complex and challenging behaviour achieve very well overall. This is because the school has very detailed and practical individual education and behaviour management plans matched closely to their needs. There are very effective and consistent strategies for teaching those pupils, whereby the barriers to their learning are minimised where possible, and best use is made of time and resources to focus on the pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils with more profound learning difficulties benefit enormously from the very effective communication strategies such as the Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECS), that in turn enable them to achieve more readily in subjects across the curriculum.
9. The school is able to demonstrate clearly the pupils' achievements, through maintaining systematic records of what the pupils could do when they first started and by recording key milestones in their learning and achievements over time. Teachers and support staff recognise when the pupils have reached their targets and are quick to identify new goals and revise others when required. These strategies reflect the effective management strategies and good assessment of pupils in order to ensure that they achieve well overall. There is much evidence, both of the pupils' recorded work and in photographs of how they achieve and progress over time, that is linked directly to their targets. Staff have a very thorough knowledge of their pupils and this, together with the leadership's focus on raising standards, ensures a sharp focus on strategies for further improvement.

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

Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, except in the sixth form where they are satisfactory. The school develops well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest and involvement in the main school are good.
- Very good relationships exist at all levels.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations of all staff.
- The development of independence is severely curtailed by the poor accommodation.
- Attitudes and behaviour in the sixth form are less good.

## Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are generally positive and they show interest and involvement, particularly in Years 1 to 6. Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving very well in their personal and social education goals and have appropriately modified targets. Parents and carers also feel strongly that their children are happy in school and free from harassment. Communication is a strong feature of all teaching, and relationships at all levels are very good, both between pupils and between pupils and staff. In turn this develops confidence and self esteem. The small number of pupils who speak English as a second language, or who have more profound needs, are well integrated and actively included in school life by staff. Where possible they are willing to take on small responsibilities such as carrying registers to the office, but often the poor accommodation actively prevents such steps to independence. If the opportunity arises - such as choosing and paying for their own lunches on visits - pupils are clearly happy to take it.
11. Pupils show their enjoyment clearly. For example, the Year 7 to 9 class were tired and hot after returning from swimming, but quickly settled to listen to a story for the last 20 minutes of class, smiling and clapping at the parts they recognised. Teachers and assistants set high expectations for good behaviour, which pupils respond to fully, encouraging their peers to do what is required. For example, on a visit to a local high school pupils showed they did not like the outburst of temper shown by one of their classmates, but calm efficient management routines meant they did not themselves become agitated, and the majority behaved very well.
12. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development well. All staff, especially those in the Foundation Stage, are quick to draw pupils' attention to things that will interest them. Older pupils are encouraged to give their own responses, whether by talking, signing or smiling. A well planned series of assemblies are sensitively organised to interest and involve pupils, and wonderful singing offers a joyous experience here and in lessons. Moral and social values are woven into the fabric of everyday school life: staff are excellent role models and use every opportunity to guide and encourage pupils to work in harmony. For example, they sit with junior pupils at lunchtimes in the canteen to promote a family atmosphere, although the limitations of the buildings mean that older pupils are forced to eat in their classrooms. Through local visits - for example to the Norfolk coast - pupils learn something of their own culture, and the assembly program looks at other faiths, for example Hanukah and symbols in Sikhism.
13. Behaviour and attitudes in the provision for students post 16 are not as good as the rest of the school, although they are satisfactory. One key factor is the poor accommodation which severely limits independence and opportunities to take responsibility - for example, students have nowhere separate to socialise or make drinks for themselves. On visits out of school, behaviour is noticeably better; on a visit to a local high school to use the design technology facilities, two sixth form students acted as guides and mentors for younger pupils and clearly enjoyed the independence of buying their own lunch.
14. Inadequate record keeping has left the new teacher with insufficient information to judge the students, aptitudes and abilities: as a result many students show signs of boredom and restlessness in lessons, and there is some inappropriate touching, calling out and unhelpful chat among the boys. There are clear strategies for addressing and improving these areas of weakness that have been identified by new staff in conjunction with the headteacher.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	11.8
National data	11.5

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.2

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

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides good quality education for its pupils. The leadership and management ensure a sharp focus on raising standards further. The poor accommodation compromises the quality of education, with a lack of space, poor quality resources, and in some instances no proper facilities for learning.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good overall and as a result, pupils learn effectively and achieve well over time. Teaching and learning are very effective in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, and good in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 7 to 9. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and for students post 16. The programme for including pupils within the school and in other local schools is very well organised, and makes a very useful contribution to their education. The outreach is similarly very effective, providing high quality teaching expertise and learning support to pupils with special needs in mainstream schools locally.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very effective teaching in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 leads to the pupils achieving very well and making rapid gains in their learning.
- Very effective teaching in communication skills throughout the school leads to pupils using signs and symbols readily, and being able to access other subjects more confidently.
- The teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning.
- Good teaching in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 enables the pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge practically; thus developing further their independence and personal and social skills.
- Good teaching in science is hindered by poor quality accommodation and lack of facilities and resources.
- Teaching in ICT is only satisfactory as resources, hardware and software are so old and not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' wide ranging needs.
- Teaching in mathematics in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory and not good as there are insufficient links made to the practical use of pupils' mathematical skills.

### **Commentary**

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is strong and effective. Teachers and support staff work as a very cohesive team. They are thoroughly well organised and know what each other is doing in lessons. No time is lost, and every minute used working closely with the pupils and supporting their learning. The curriculum is planned carefully and therefore children's skills are developed systematically. Resources are used creatively to ensure the children relate their learning to real life situations. Children are assessed on entry to the school, and this forms a clear benchmark and starting point to measure their achievements over time.

## Example of outstanding practice

**In excellent teaching in the foundation stage, children were learning what happens when clothes are washed.** Meticulous attention was paid to individual physical needs, ensuring they sat comfortably, could see clearly and access resources more readily. The practical emphasis whereby children first sorted clothes by colour before seeing what happens when soap is added to water was hugely successful in sustaining their interest. Teaching included a wide range of language and scientific vocabulary, woven in very skilfully as the activity developed. Children were helped to peg the washing out on the line outside, and gradually realised the changes that happened to wet clothes as they dried in the sunshine over the day. Children were enthralled and absorbed throughout the lesson, experiencing first hand the feel of wet and dry clothes, soap and water, and the concept of changes to materials over time. The children's learning was most effective due to the careful adaptation of the curriculum, excellent use of resources that made the activity relevant, and strong teamwork to assist everyone fully.

16. Teaching is very effective in developing the pupils' language and communication skills throughout the school. There is a very consistent approach as pupils learn signs and symbols, and language skills that in turn help them to communicate more readily and confidently in all areas of school life.
17. The highly effective teaching in English in Years 5 and 6 resulted in the pupils buzzing with excitement and a gaining a real sense of achievement in their literacy work. Pupils were encouraged successfully to read a big book together, with assistance from staff; they completed sentences accurately and used signs, symbols and control technology such as switches to indicate their preferences and ideas. The excellent use of time to summarise the learning ensured that all pupils were able to recap the main point of the lesson most effectively.
18. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the pupils' learning. In very good teaching in a history lesson in Years 3 and 4, the exceptionally efficient team work by teaching assistants ensured maximum time was used for the pupils' learning. The lesson was unavoidably interrupted when half the class were either unwell or required personal assistance. All staff worked discreetly, providing sensitive assistance, dealing with practicalities and causing minimum disruption - thus enabling the teaching and learning focus to be re-established as swiftly as possible. The very well established routines, known and used by all adults, assisted this situation hugely.
19. The good and sometimes very good teaching in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 helps greatly in the pupils' practical understanding of the subject in everyday situations. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics is linked closely and creatively to everyday life. A life size "Postman Pat" and his sack caused great excitement as pupils were encouraged to sort parcels and letters from the post. There was much useful numeracy and mathematical language used in the process of sorting, counting and ordering the parcels in preparation for their delivery. Some pupils were able to count items beyond 20, whilst others counted between one and three parcels. All tasks reflected closely the pupils' individual learning targets and the organisation of group work ensured that everyone was challenged. The good teaching could be developed even further with better organisation of furniture and lay out of the room, particularly when moving from whole class activities to group work, where time was lost moving furniture.
20. The good science teaching is hindered by poor quality accommodation and resources. Good teaching in a science lesson in Years 7 to 9 included detailed planning, helping pupils to distinguish between solids and liquids and understand the concept of dissolving. The activity was restricted by the lack of proper facilities for heating liquid, demonstrating how the accommodation for science is entirely unsuitable for senior pupils and hinders their learning and achievements.
21. The teaching in ICT is hampered by poor quality resources and equipment that is faulty and works only intermittently. The accommodation is limited with computers in two rooms, causing difficulties supervising pupils and ensuring they have appropriate access to the computers.

22. In otherwise satisfactory teaching in mathematics in Years 7 to 11, there were missed opportunities to relate the mathematical learning to practical situations for the pupils. For example, when learning to count and sort money, and buy items. There is scope to ensure that the theoretical understanding is more rigorously linked with everyday life situations where mathematical knowledge and numeracy skills are used.
23. The leadership and management monitor the quality of teaching systematically, identifying strengths and areas for further development. They also model very effective teaching themselves for others to follow, and understand first hand some of the challenges posed by individual pupils, and the strategies required to assist their learning. This approach is highly supportive of staff and ensures that pupils' and students, needs are known thoroughly.
24. Teaching, including the most effective practice, is hindered by such poor facilities and so little space. This is seen most starkly in practical activities such as science, design and technology, including food technology and ICT. It also poses limitations on the teaching in physical education with too little space either outside or inside to conduct certain physical activities properly.
25. The activities including Chapel Road pupils at a nearby high school for science and design and technology are very effectively organised and make a strong impact on the pupils' learning and achievement. There is close and effective liaison between staff of both schools to maximise the learning for individual pupils. The very effective teaching in food technology, using appropriate facilities to make fruit crumble, ensured pupils could access the equipment independently, work co-operatively and produce very good results.
26. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress. These are clearly understood by staff and are used uniformly throughout the school. Assessment is closely aligned to the medium term planning that provides the objectives against which the teachers assess.
27. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the 'P' Scales- small steps for pupils with more severe learning difficulties, and these are being used effectively to set targets and measure any small gains in learning. ICT is being used effectively to record pupils' achievement and the school has developed a system to track the progress of individual pupils over several years. However, they are aware that further work and staff training is required to moderate levels of work.
28. Individual education plans are reviewed annually and set very clear targets particularly in English, social and independence skills. Progress against the targets is reviewed termly and the information feeds into annual reviews. Individual education plans are very effective and are used rigorously to track pupils' progress. Where possible pupils are involved in discussing their targets resulting in higher attainers have a satisfactory understanding of the progress they are making.
29. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	8 (20%)	17 (42%)	10 (25%)	2 (5%)	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 satisfactory overall with very good features in the Foundation Stage. There is sound progression for pupils as they move through the school and a wide range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. Poor accommodation and unsatisfactory resources severely hinder the overall quality of the curriculum

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

- Consistent subject planning gives pupils a good foundation for further learning.
- The very effective curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage ensures activities are relevant, practical and matched closely to their wide ranging needs.
- The curriculum for students post 16, whilst satisfactory, is in need of further development.
- The school provides a good range of extra activities.
- Accommodation is poor and resources unsatisfactory.
- Innovative inclusion opportunities enrich the curriculum; strong links with other local schools enhance the curriculum greatly for the students at Chapel Road.

### **Commentary**

30. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 11 gives pupils a secure foundation for further learning and a good breadth of educational experiences. All National Curriculum subjects are taught as is religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Hence statutory requirements are ensured. The school has rightly given a priority to communication and literacy and developments in these areas are successfully enabling all pupils to participate as fully as possible in their lessons and other school activities. Both literacy and numeracy are planned on the guidance of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies so that there is a progressive plan to the learning. The school has successfully implemented a balance of the other National Curriculum subjects and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
31. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very well planned, and resources used most effectively to support their learning. There is a strong and highly effective team, whereby all adults work seamlessly to assist the children, and thus enable them to learn very well throughout the day. The children's individual and personal needs are attended to sensitively and discreetly, whilst at the same time ensuring the focus remains firmly on their learning.
32. Planning for all subjects is consistent through the school with class teachers having the flexibility to write termly plans which whilst covering content requirements can be adapted to the specific interest, needs and capabilities of the pupils in their group. Focused targets in Individual Education Plans ensures that all pupils, whatever their unique needs, are supported to make progress in each subject. Close monitoring and evaluation of teachers planning ensures progression and challenge as pupils move through the school.
33. Curriculum provision for pupils who have additional special educational needs is very good. There is a significant and increasing number of pupils with difficulties on the autistic spectrum. The school's very effective development of alternative communication strategies has been of particular benefit to these pupils. Detailed and practical individual education plans and behaviour management plans have also played a major part in meeting their needs. A very effective programme of training for all staff has helped to create a very consistent, whole-school approach to their particular needs. These pupils make very good progress as a result, both in their communication skills and in their social development. Provision for the smaller number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is good. Despite the restrictions of the poor accommodation, they are very well integrated into the life of the school and teaching assistants provide a very high but unobtrusive level of care.
34. The curriculum for students post 16 is satisfactory and covers National Curriculum requirements. The poor accommodation means facilities for many subjects, for example, science, design and technology, ICT and PE are not of the standard to extend the educational experiences for the students in this age group. The school has yet to take full advantage of the

flexibility allowed for pupils in Years 10 and 11 nor to establish accreditation courses for them. The curriculum and assessment systems for students in post 16 are underdeveloped. However, work in PSHE, citizenship and the mini enterprise scheme is helping pupils gain an awareness of social issues and gaining confidence in taking responsibility and expressing an opinion.

35. The school works successfully to widen pupils' experience and understanding for their locality and community with a range of visits out of school and visitors into school. These have included sporting activities such as a cricket road show, a football fun day and for older pupils a course in kayaking and canoeing. Musicians and theatre groups have visited the school and students participated with a float in the Attleborough Carnival.
36. Accommodation is poor. The school site is cramped with a range of adapted permanent and temporary buildings with little space between. This is a severe restriction and hinders both the pupils' learning and their social development. There is no designated space for science, design and technology, art or music. There is a small hydrotherapy pool for younger pupils and those with poor mobility but changing facilities are poor and unsatisfactory for the purposes of maintaining the pupils' privacy and dignity when changing, as the cubicles are too small for their purpose. The hall is unsuitable for indoor games and a local field hired by the school is poorly maintained. Despite the school's best efforts the lack of storage space means learning resources are often not readily accessible and the school is hindered from acquiring larger items. The outside play area for all pupils up to Year 11 is very small with uneven asphalt or concrete and rough grass. It is in no way conducive for either group games or relaxation socially. There is neither play space designated for the youngest pupils, nor outdoor leisure space for the oldest students. Moving the more fragile children, including wheel chair users, from one building to another, particularly in inclement weather, is fraught with problems including manoeuvring around vehicles in the car park. Due to the smallness of the hall senior pupils eat lunch in their classroom. This means some pupils may not leave their classroom at all during the day.
37. Resources are unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to upgrade furniture and classroom decoration but much of the furniture is old and unsuitable with, for instance, few adjustable tables. A proportion of books and teaching resources are well used and are now tatty and past their usefulness. The computer suite is divided between two rooms and its design is entirely unsuitable for the purposes of supervision by teachers or access for pupils.
38. The school has sufficient staff, both teachers and assistants to meet the needs of the curriculum. All staff are well qualified and together have a wealth of experience in working with these children. Many pupils have difficulty in communicating their needs and the exemplary teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers ensures that the unique needs of each pupil whether they be academic, social or physical are quickly understood and shared. The leadership and management of the school are working hard to address areas of relative weakness in the curriculum and governors are making every effort to lobby for improvements in the accommodation and resources.

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

The school offers a high standard of care and support to all its pupils, and pays great attention to ensuring the pupils' health and safety is a priority. The pupils are offered appropriate advice and guidance, and their achievements, including personal development are tracked systematically. The poor accommodation is a significant negative feature.



## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Caring dedicated staff with a very good knowledge of their pupils.
- Pupils' views are always sought and there is good integration of all pupils, regardless of their individual needs.
- Child protection procedures are high profile and well organised.
- There is no medical room despite many vulnerable children, or space for therapists to use on visits.
- Inadequate space means pupils cannot all socialise or enjoy recreation at break times; staff are constantly diverted to work around the problems created by the accommodation.
- Poor accommodation restricts the development of independence for older pupils and students.

## **Commentary**

39. Pupils' health, safety and welfare is given a very high priority, and staff are absolutely dedicated to the children in their care. For example when the foundation class visited a local town, helpers actively involved all the children, getting them to touch and feel clothes and shoes, and smell the fruit they were buying. Support staff meet regularly and are very willing to train and try out new techniques which may help the pupils, whether educational or behavioural.
40. However a key feature working against high standards of health and safety is the poor accommodation: pupils of secondary age share the same playground space as infant and juniors; they are forced to eat lunch in their classrooms; and independence and responsibility are severely limited by practical constraints - for example, there are no clear passageways between classrooms, buggies are impeded and pupils must be escorted everywhere. The hall is too small to hold the whole school for assembly and must be used as a through route. The field, used by the local community and its dogs, is more of a health and safety liability than a recreation area.
41. Child protection procedures are run very efficiently by the head teacher as designated officer and another member of staff. There is regular training and new members of staff are inducted using the staff handbook. The close level of support and communication means that any concerns are very quickly picked up.
42. Such warm and close relationships ensure that pupils are carefully tracked and monitored, and their achievement noted. However, as pupils get older and move into secondary education, careers guidance is less effective than it should be. Few pupils in Years 9 to 11 have college placements and there is little guidance on other options than staying at school, although this is slowly changing with the attachment of the Connexions service – a local careers resource.
43. Induction procedures are well organised: parents are invited to visit and the school is open to them at any time. Staff also visit the homes of new pupils: one boy who started school only on the day of the inspection seemed happy and at ease in his new class, and staff had a great deal of information about him to help his transition. Arrangements for integration visits to other schools, and dual placements, where pupils spend some time at Chapel Road and some time in a mainstream school, are equally well managed and organised to ensure pupils can benefit as much as possible.
44. The school is active in seeking pupils' views and where possible acting on them. Even the youngest or pupils with the most profound learning difficulties are given choices and asked their opinion. The school recently gave pupils a questionnaire using both English and symbols; where they were unable to talk staff painstakingly interpreted their responses and transcribed them, often in considerable detail.
45. Although staff are equally dedicated and caring towards the older students, it is here that the effects of substandard accommodation are seen most obviously. Students have no space for

socialisation or recreation at break times and the one classroom is too small for the needs of the large group who use it. This has severely affected the development of independence and responsibility. Some students have college or work experience placements, but not enough is being done to actively prepare these young people for independence and adulthood. Although students have been asked their opinions via questionnaires, and indeed some are able to offer them, little can be done to change their dismal and depressing daily environment. This has a clear effect on their motivation and behaviour.

46. The leadership and management set a very positive climate where the pupils' well-being is central. Their individual needs and circumstances are taken into careful consideration. Senior staff know the pupils very well, and have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of their needs as a result.

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

The school works very well with parents and carers and has good links with the community through its very effective inclusion programme and support services.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide variety of information is provided for parents and carers, both formally and informally, and the school actively seeks their views
- The headteacher is very willing to provide help, support and contacts for parents and carers; she is very open to ideas
- The integration and outreach program is well planned and managed and appreciated by the mainstream schools
- There are few links with colleges for sixth form students

### **Commentary**

47. Parents and carers are generally very happy with the school, and feel strongly that the headteacher and other staff are approachable. In fact the school goes out of its way to involve parents and carers and to seek their views: staff write quite detailed reports on younger pupils in the home-school diaries, and they are invited in for regular reviews of their children's progress. There is also extensive informal contact by telephone, and a recent questionnaire asked parents for their opinions. Partly as a result of this process the school is setting up a support group for parents and carers of all pupils, to offer practical help and suggestions. Parents with special needs children also attend from the wider local community. Parents and carers of older students are also seeking help and guidance about options for their children after school: they are less well catered for but the new Connexions advisor is beginning to tackle these sensitive areas.
48. Links with the community are good and an area the school is always developing. Pupils go out on visits - for example to Wells on the Norfolk coast and a local swimming pool - and visitors come in to use the facilities: an integrated playgroup, for example, is held in the school every week. A small number of older pupils gain work experience at the local day centre. In a recent charity initiative Chapel Road pupils distinguished themselves by collecting a record number of old Yellow Pages for recycling.
49. The school is justifiably proud of their outreach program, which involves around a dozen local schools, both primary and secondary. Dealing with special needs children in a mainstream school can be difficult without specialist help: the co-ordinator is a skilful and experienced teacher who has successfully shared her expertise with appreciative colleagues, though better funding would enable more frequent monitoring.
50. Integration with other local schools is also a strong feature of the school: some pupils in Years 1 to 6 spend part of their week at Chapel Road and part in a mainstream school; others go for

shorter periods primarily for social reasons. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 visit a local primary school for sports activities, and secondary pupils go out to partner schools for the science and design technology impossible at their own school.

51. Accommodation also limits the reciprocal visits that mainstream classes can make. Some students post 16 have college placements, for example in agriculture, and some do local work experience. However, this is an area in urgent need of development, both to prepare these students for life after school and relieve pressure on the overcrowded and limited space they must use at Chapel Road.
52. The leadership and management of the school make every effort to build strong partnerships with the parents and carers. The strong emphasis on including pupils and developing support and outreach services to local schools is a direct result of the leadership's vision and passion for extending opportunities for the pupils beyond the boundaries of Chapel Road School.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school has good leadership and management that ensures clear direction and purpose.

Management of the school is efficient and effective. The headteacher's leadership is good and there is a clear vision for the school and its future direction with high expectations for continued improvement. The deputy headteacher has complementary skills to those of the headteacher, and together with other senior teachers, make a strong management team. The governing body is led very ably and governors hold the school to account for its work rigorously. The school's development is severely hindered by poor accommodation and limited resources for the wide age range of the pupils. Despite the best efforts of governors and senior staff, progress in this area is slow.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and senior managers provide very strong role models in their professional practice for others to follow.
- The senior management team are deployed efficiently, and subject leaders have a clear understanding of the priorities for further improvement.
- Governors have broad and relevant expertise that assists the school; they both support and challenge its work very effectively.
- The school has a systematic approach to monitoring its work and evaluating the impact of its actions in the drive for further improvement.
- There is a very strong emphasis upon including pupils both within the school and in local mainstream schools in order to benefit their overall education.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not established securely for some subject leaders.

### **Commentary**

53. The headteacher provides inspiration and motivation to staff, pupils and parents alike in striving for further improvement. The school's strategic plan demonstrates high aspirations, and staff understand clearly what is expected. There is a strong and united team of people who work coherently to the overall benefit of the pupils, and everyone's efforts are valued. The curriculum is led effectively and subject leaders understand what they must do in order to improve their areas further. The headteacher places huge emphasis upon including pupils and ensuring they have the best opportunities and access to meet their educational needs. This aim is hindered by the poor quality accommodation and this means that some of the principles of equality of opportunity are compromised. Some pupils, for example, are unable to join their friends for lunch as the accommodation design means they have to stay in their classrooms, particularly when the weather is bad. The headteacher is relentless in the drive to improve provision for pupils and students alike throughout the school.

54. The governing body are involved fully in shaping the school and its direction. They are able to reflect comprehensively on the school's strengths and areas for further development, and are very well linked with the local and wider community. This brings much useful local knowledge to decision making, and ensures that the school is very well integrated into the community. Governors ensure that their statutory duties are fulfilled and work hard in promoting an atmosphere that includes pupils. The governing body manage to achieve an appropriate balance of support for the school, whilst maintaining objectivity and rigour in challenging its progress.
55. There is a systematic cycle of monitoring the school's progress and tracking pupils' achievements over time. The headteacher and senior management have a good overview of how well the pupils are learning, and what strategies must be deployed for further improvement. Staff are supported consistently and their work monitored regularly with areas identified for further improvement. There are good opportunities for staff to continue their own professional development, both within the school and through visits and courses elsewhere. Financial management is effective and the school applies the principles of best value well in its effort to get the very best deal for pupils' education, in order to make the most of the limited resources currently available.
56. The headteacher's leadership has a clear and positive impact upon the school. There is huge energy and drive for improvement and high expectations for pupils and staff alike to do their best. The headteacher teaches regularly and this ensures a sharp understanding of the issues facing staff, and the challenges posed by the pupils. This in turn enables management decisions to make a difference for the better, and directly impact upon the quality of education and standards achieved by pupils. Governors are fully involved in the school's direction and understand clearly its relative strengths and weaknesses. They have very relevant expertise that assists the school directly in its work and decisions. The governing body contains, for example, an architect, business people and parents with first hand experience of children with complex learning difficulties. These skills are used very effectively to improve pupils' education. Governors are working tirelessly for improvements in the accommodation, and seeking support and clarity from the local education authority about the future shape of special schools across the area in the process.
57. The leadership and management have developed a very positive atmosphere for learning across the school, where everyone is valued and respected regardless of their individual differences. The headteacher has forged and built upon the many links with local primary and secondary schools, for the overall benefit of the pupils. As a result, many pupils are included in specific activities in other schools during the week.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	745,155	Balance from previous year	-24,380
Total expenditure	742,620	Balance carried forward to the next	0
Expenditure per pupil	12,200		

58. The school has used its budget fully for the purposes of making the best of the accommodation. This takes a disproportionate amount of the school's funds currently and means that there is little left to replace resources and equipment.

## **INCLUSION AND OUTREACH PROVISION**

The school makes very effective provision for including all pupils and there are many opportunities for them to learn alongside other pupils in mainstream primary and secondary schools locally.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outreach and support services to local primary and secondary schools are highly valued; pupils manage to stay in mainstream schools due to the expertise, advice and guidance provided by Chapel Road School staff.
- The inclusion and outreach provision is thoroughly well organised, and close professional links between staff of different schools ensure seamless provision for the pupils.

### **Commentary**

59. There are numerous examples where staff from local primary and secondary schools have been supported very effectively by the expertise of staff at Chapel Road School. The advice and guidance is both practical and realistic, and pupils stay longer in their mainstream schools as a result. There are many mutual benefits to the pupils at Chapel Road, as some of the schools provide part time places for them during the week for specific activities. This in turn enriches the school's curriculum and minimises some of the weaknesses in the school's facilities for science and design and technology for example.
60. The school has been spurred on by the lack of facilities, and through a determination to ensure a richer curriculum, the school has developed a valuable range of inclusion contacts with other schools. A small number of younger pupils maintain a link with their local school through part time placements of one or two days per week. This ensures they have equality with their siblings and local friends. Teachers in both schools liaise very effectively to ensure continuity of experiences. Groups of pupils are able to, for instance, experience learning science in the lab at Wymondham College whilst a second group are having regular session in food technology at Old Buckenham High School.

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

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children have a very positive start to school life and develop very good routines and work habits that assist their learning. All children starting at the school have a wide range of very complex learning difficulties. Their individual needs are assessed efficiently and targets identified for future learning. These are precise and measurable and shared with all staff. Children achieve very well because the teaching is very good, and has excellent features. The very good curriculum provides a wide variety of challenging activities, and tasks are matched closely to the targets. The provision is managed very effectively, and the strong team work ensures that the children's individual needs are very well met. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved from good to very good since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is very good, with outstanding features, and the children learn very effectively as a result. Children achieve very well in all areas of learning, with the exception of their physical development that is only satisfactory due to the lack of space and outdoor facilities for developing such skills. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed and there is a clear sense of purpose and direction to the provision overall.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

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

- Teaching ensures that children are encouraged to become as independent as possible within the limitations of their special needs.
- The very positive relationships between children and adults mean they are at ease in school, enjoy their learning and are willing to learn, thus promoting their social and emotional development very effectively from an early age.

#### **Commentary**

61. Teachers and support staff create a very positive atmosphere for learning, and set clear expectations and helpful routines from the very beginning. This means that children learn good work habits and understand that there are certain expectations for them in school. From the very start of the school day, children are encouraged to take note of their surroundings, find their names if possible and sit appropriately ready for the start of lessons. This routine sets a very positive tone to the day and ensures that children listen carefully to instructions and learn for example to greet one another by singing good morning and saying one another's names. Such activities ensure that everyone is made to feel a special and valued part of the group. In other activities across the curriculum, children work and play together, for example in sharing equipment in PE and playing happily in the role play area.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

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

- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure there is a strong emphasis upon developing the children's language and communication skills in all activities.
- Parents are helped with strategies that promote their children's language and communication skills. The home school diary books assist in helping parents to talk with their child at home about the school day.

## Commentary

62. The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure many opportunities are created to use language and help children communicate with one another and adults. Whilst developing their knowledge and understanding of the world in science, children were encouraged to notice and name the objects and equipment they were using and helped to describe whether or not the clothes were wet or dry. The very good teaching is focused and precise in its approach, helping children to identify new words, and indicate their preferences if they have limited language. Teachers and support staff are very observant in noting how children communicate, and observe carefully the children's responses. In some instances, children may only be able to blink an eye as an acknowledgement or indication of their needs and preferences. All adults ensure they take time and care for children to respond and communicate as best they can.
63. Children listen to stories attentively and enjoy the props and actions to bring the characters to life. The teaching ensures that there are useful links for example with role play. The focus during the inspection was the story of the three bears, and the role play corner had been set up as the house of the three bears with chairs, plates, bowls and spoons of different sizes. Children make simple marks on paper and write for purposes such as shopping lists and recipes. The writing table is very well organised and an inviting place for the children to sit and use pencils, crayons and chalks to make marks.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good planning for children's mathematical development and teachers and teaching assistants use opportunities across other areas of the curriculum to count, measure and include simple numbers into activities.

## Commentary

64. The daily activities are very well organised and assist the children's sense of time and sequence of events. They realise the end of one activity and look forward to what comes next. Timetables are displayed clearly using signs and symbols. These strategies help the children to make sense of the day, and gain some idea of the passing of time. Children use ICT equipment such as large switches, touch screens and mathematical programs to assist in their recognition of numbers and objects. They sing number songs and rhymes with actions that help their understanding of number and its purposes. Daily registration is used as a learning opportunity to count how many children are in class, and to identify how many are absent if any. During the school day, staff take every opportunity to involve the children, for example in counting the correct number of drinks for break time and how many aprons are required for lunchtime. These are very useful and practical activities for the children.
65. Teaching is very effective in developing the children's mathematical vocabulary, for example when they change their clothes for PE, children are encouraged to identify their clothing and where it should go on their bodies. Their socks are matched and shoes found to make a pair. In the role play area, there are clothes of different sizes for the dolls, and when children play in the sand area, there are buckets and spades of different sizes to make comparisons and note differences.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have very good learning opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world that are relevant to their own lives.
- The regular weekly outings provide a very good basis for further learning in school, and children explore a wide variety of different environments in the process.

## **Commentary**

66. The teachers and assistants plan very effectively the activities and weekly visits to the local and wider areas. They visit shops, houses and the countryside as well as churches and this helps them to talk about what they have seen heard and enjoyed. The visits are planned for different times of the year, and thus changes are observed, for example in the seasons. Photographs are used very effectively to link children to their past, for example by looking at themselves when they were babies and recognising family members.
67. There are many opportunities for children to show curiosity, develop an awareness of change and understand other cultures. They celebrate different special days such as Diwali, harvest time and Christmas, and make special food for specific occasions such as pumpkin cake and firework biscuits for bonfire night. Children understand the importance of healthy and hygiene, for example in washing hands before touching food and wearing aprons. The classroom is organised very effectively to promote the children's wider understanding of the world. There are numerous objects for them to explore such as whisks, pumps, sieves and kaleidoscopes. In addition, children are encouraged successfully to sort materials and objects according to different criteria such as smooth, rough, shiny and soft.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good but the children's learning is hindered by lack of outdoor space for physical activities and very limited space in the school hall.

## **Commentary**

68. Children move happily to music and begin PE lessons by warming up appropriately, following instructions and moving different body parts to the rhythm. Children are helped where possible to move independently and negotiate their own space. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilful in helping less mobile children to gain a sense of freedom in their own movement, for example when using a large round sphere, several children were helped to move with the rolling motion, gaining a sense of momentum, whilst still being held safely by staff in the process. Children understand certain instructions and realise that the tambourine indicates that they should stop at different times.
69. Children develop satisfactory control over their bodies, but the opportunities to move more freely outside are limited by the lack of space and no discrete area for such a purpose. Children do have some opportunity to roll, kick and throw a ball and occasionally use tricycles and climbing equipment within a very confined, shabby and poorly surfaced area. They have good opportunities to use the hydro pool and enjoy moving in the water and experiencing the warmth and freedom to blow bubbles, and grow in confidence in allowing their faces to become wet.



## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

70. There was insufficient first hand evidence to make an overall judgement but scrutiny of the children's work and photographs indicated the following: Children love to join in with musical activities, join in simple songs and explore instruments. They make their own instruments and realise how sound can be created through hitting, banging, shaking, strumming and blowing. Children take part readily in songs, rhymes and tunes, including coloured paper, sponges, roller paints, brushes and pipettes to make pictures, prints and images of themselves, the seasons, food, their homes and animals. There are regular opportunities for children to take part in free paint, selection their own colours, brushes, paints and tools.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4

### ENGLISH

#### English

Provision in English is **good** overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching makes very good use of alternative forms of communication.
- Literacy is developed well across other subjects, thus consolidating the pupils' reading skills throughout the curriculum.
- Assessment and individual target setting are carried out very effectively, and pupils' achievements are tracked carefully.
- Leadership promotes very effective team work in the subject.
- Teaching is consistently good or better and leads to the pupils achieving well in literacy over time.

#### Commentary

71. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve well in English. Their speaking, listening and general communication skills show very good development and they make good progress in their reading and writing.
72. The very good progress shown by pupils, particularly those with communication difficulties, in Years 1 to 11 in their speaking and listening skills owes much to the school's very effective development of alternative communication methods. The use of symbols, signing and a variety of visual and sensory resources has been enthusiastically adopted by staff. The youngest pupils are introduced to the idea of exchanging symbol cards for different objects and activities. They rapidly develop their confidence and understanding in the use of these methods and, by Year 6, pupils with complex communication difficulties are initiating communication and using "task boards" for a wide variety of purposes. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 go on to master an increasingly sophisticated range of symbols to support their work, for example, in Life Skills and in their personal, social and health education. The success of these methods is particularly noticeable for pupils on the autistic spectrum whose confidence and social skills show remarkable improvement with their growing ability to communicate not only one-to-one but also within their whole class group. An excellent example of this was observed in a lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils, in which pupils on the autistic spectrum were asked to show their classmates what they had achieved in their individual work. At the same time, higher-attaining pupils talk with increasing confidence and fluency as they move through the school. By the end of Year 11, they listen well and respond appropriately in a variety of situations, both in and outside the classroom.

73. The use of symbols also makes a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. The "Writing with Symbols" computer program, for example, provides both the motivation and the means for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing, with connected sentences. This is one of several ways in which information and communication technology is very effectively used by staff in the teaching of literacy.
74. Pupils enjoy reading. They respond very well to "Big Books", with lots of props and role play adding to their enjoyment and understanding. Their assessment records show good progress through activities such as matching objects with pictures, recognising individual words, matching letters with sounds and talking about characters and events in stories. They make steady progress through the reading scheme used by the school and tackle an increasing range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction. By the end of Year 11, some of the higher-attaining pupils are achieving National Curriculum levels in their reading.
75. A particular strength of the teaching of literacy is the way reading and writing activities are closely linked so that, for example, in Years 10 and 11 each pupil keeps a book in which new or more complex words from the reading scheme are recorded together with their answers to questions about the text. As with their reading, records show good progress by pupils in writing throughout the primary and secondary classes. From the development of greater control and precision in pre-writing activities by the youngest pupils, to the achievements of the higher-attaining pupils in the secondary classes, who are using punctuation, spelling common words correctly and composing sentences with increasing independence in subjects across the curriculum, there is a picture of consistently good progress.
76. There are several important factors which contribute to these high standards. Teaching is predominantly good or better throughout the school. The staff's knowledge and expertise in the teaching of literacy and, in particular, of communication skills, are of a high order and teaching assistants make a very strong contribution here. Planning, assessment and target-setting are used with great precision. There is a high level of awareness of the importance of English in the teaching of all subjects of the curriculum. The dissemination of information and expertise in the use of alternative communication methods has been very successful and collaboration with the speech and language therapist highly effective. All of these factors provide evidence of the high quality of leadership in the subject.
77. The good standards in English reported in the last inspection have been maintained but, in addition, there have been significant improvements in several areas of the subject. Progress in reading, which was judged to be satisfactory, is now good and resources for reading are much improved. Literacy across the curriculum now has a much higher profile. Better use is made of information and communication technology and, most noticeably of all, there is now very good practice in the use of signs and symbols as a major factor in the very good progress achieved by pupils in their communication skills.

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

78. The pupils' language and literacy skills are developed effectively across the curriculum. Opportunities are planned for carefully and systematically. Their language and communication skills are particularly effective and consistent.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in mathematics.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and plan effectively to meet the particular needs of each of them.

- The mathematics curriculum for pupils in Years 7-11 is insufficiently focused on the practical use of mathematical skills.
- ICT is insufficiently integrated into mathematics.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their number skills across other subjects of the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

79. Younger pupils in Years 1 to 6 are achieving well in their mathematics. All are interested in their number work, follow directions carefully and persevere with their tasks. The more able pupils can count accurately to 20 and some can write their answers neatly. A group of young pupils could efficiently sort and count letters and parcels from Postman Pat's bag whilst older pupils making towers out of blocks had to consider adding on and taking away to make a tower of a required size. This practical application of number knowledge, entwining many aspects of maths such as counting, measuring, sorting and estimating into one activity is the key to the good progress made by these younger pupils. This is not developed so well for older pupils and achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. There is a wide range of potential in these classes and the more able gain a broader experience in maths. These pupils can count confidently and complete simple addition and subtraction sums. They can also recognise 2D and 3D shapes and are beginning to tell the time. A small group of higher attainers work regularly together and they can complete a shopping list for a packed lunch and add up the cost using a calculator. Less able pupils are able to recognise and match numbers and count articles on request.
80. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6, and satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Teachers and teaching assistants have good levels of expertise in supporting pupils to learn because of their precise knowledge of each pupil (both in academic terms and in social strengths). This knowledge contributes effectively to each pupil's maths and learning skills targets. In good lessons there is effective and imaginative planning, linking overall learning expectations with individual pupil needs. Assessment is good. In one class, short notes were jotted down continually by all the staff to be fed later into pupil records for planning the next lesson. In those satisfactory lessons seen- these were mostly in the senior part of the school- whilst work was matched to the pupils' level the pace of lessons and the challenge were limited. Activities became a task to be completed rather than an exploration of learning. All pupils however worked diligently and some are beginning to be aware of how they are learning and how they can improve. This is sometimes talked through in the lesson plenary, summarising the learning, but often this time is too short to really develop links with their learning across other areas of the curriculum amongst the pupils. Some pupils have used their computers to make pie charts and bar graphs to record data but overall ICT is not sufficiently developed in mathematics.
81. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The new subject co-ordinator has the vision and a list of appropriate priorities to raise standards. These include further development of ICT in all aspects of the pupils' mathematical learning, an audit of resources which are currently barely adequate and working with all class teachers on consistency in moderation of 'P' scales and National Curriculum assessments. There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement levels have been maintained and there is now consistent planning across the school backed up by recording of pupil achievement based on 'P' scales. Monitoring of this planning is systematic and useful.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

82. There were few examples of pupils using their number skills in other curriculum subjects. This contrasts with the very successful whole school developments in encouraging literacy and communication. Some older pupils doing food technology in a local high school were able, with support, to identify weights and weigh ingredients and pupils in history are beginning to realise the concepts of before and after in time. Overall, however, mathematical skills were not practised in the many ordinary activities and routines of the school day.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and assessment are good.
- There is a good curriculum adapted and modified to meet the needs of the pupils.
- The strong inclusion links with Wymondham College have been maintained.
- The accommodation is very poor and restricts learning opportunities, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 11.

### Commentary

83. The pupils achieve well and make good progress with their learning. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed, apart from the accommodation. Pupils are achieving well because of the consistently good level of teaching that is based on a practical curriculum with many opportunities for them to investigate. Very good sensory opportunities are provided for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Outstanding teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. Pupils gathered excitedly around a tank of water, and each waited their turn as the teacher asked them to predict which objects would float and which would sink. Excellent use of a symbol vocabulary was used for non-verbal pupils with autism. This helped them to participate fully in the lesson, share their ideas and accurately record the results of the investigation.
84. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 were observed learning about liquids and solids and comparing water and ice. As the lesson progressed they enjoyed dissolving different substances such as coffee and salt in water. Despite the good teaching, the investigation was compromised because of the very poor accommodation - no science laboratory to show pupils the effect that heat can have on this process. By way of contrast, Year 10 pupils integrating at Wymondham College, were able to do simple experiments using iodine and bromine; a level of practical experience not possible at Chapel Road.
85. In the lessons observed, teaching assistants made an extremely strong contribution to the positive learning experiences of pupils. They had clearly identified roles, engaged pupils exceptionally well and were confident when working with small groups. They knew the pupils well and displayed a high level of care for them.
86. Science is well managed. The co-ordinator has taken a strong lead in the training of staff. This has ensured that they have become far more confident in teaching science. Teachers' planning is good and learning objectives are clear with the wide range of pupils' needs being well met. Assessment is carefully structured, enabling each individual pupil's progress to be tracked. The use of ICT is good and includes, for example, use of the Internet for research, recording of work using a symbol vocabulary and digital photography to record achievement.
87. An area for improvement is to continue the development of Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) for each unit of work. To raise standards further, time is needed for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school.
88. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good staff training, which has led to an increased awareness of how ICT can improve learning opportunities for all pupils.
- The very effective use of ICT as an aid to communication.
- Good teaching and assessment procedures that enable target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- Poor accommodation and the need to extend and improve existing and ageing hardware.

## **Commentary**

89. Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in addressing the key issues in the report. The sampling of pupils' work in Years 1 to 6 and lesson observations show that the school is making good use of its existing technology. Younger pupils had used word processing, clip art and simple pictograph programs. For example, graphs of favourite colours and food were displayed in classrooms and seen in portfolios of work.
90. The progress made as pupils move through the school was evidenced in the quality of the work of higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11. They could combine text and graphics, and work displayed showed how a database and spreadsheet had been used to collect evidence and express their views about the school. The oldest pupils had been involved in using the Internet and developing multi-media presentations. In one lesson observed, very good questioning, helped the pupils to think about designing a greeting card. Questions such as, "What graphics would you import?", "What will the card say?" and "How are you going to ....?" challenged them to improve their work.
91. The use of ICT for pupils with communication difficulties is very good. The sensory rooms are used very well and equipment such as bubble tubes, fibre optic lights, touch screens and switches help to stimulate movement in pupils with the most severe disabilities. Teachers and support assistants make extensive use of a symbol vocabulary as an aid to communication.
92. The management of ICT is good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and has ensured that staff are well trained. He has made a strong personal contribution to training, to the extent that most staff are now knowledgeable about a range of software and communication devices. Overall teaching is good; teachers use ICT extensively for planning, setting targets and recording achievement. The school development and improvement plan accurately identifies the priorities; for example, the purchase of interactive whiteboard's. These would aid teaching considerably by improving teacher demonstrations - currently they are carried out in front of a small screen.
93. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; however, the monitoring of the teaching is not yet firmly established.

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

94. The use of ICT in different subjects of the curriculum is developing well, but needs more emphasis in mathematics, design and technology and music.

## **HUMANITIES**

Religious education is reported below in full. History and geography were sampled. No lessons were seen in geography but inspectors looked at pupils' work. One lesson was seen in history.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a relevant and enriching RE curriculum.
  - Pupils show respect and appreciation for the beliefs and values of others.
95. The religious education (RE) curriculum is clearly based on the locally agreed syllabus which ensures that over their time in school all pupils will have been able to experience and think about a wide range of issues.
96. Achievement is good throughout the school. Much of the work of the lessons revolves around discussion and activities. There was insufficient teaching observed to make an overall judgement on its quality, however in the one lesson seen younger pupils were entranced by opening parcels containing precious personal photos and this led on to their opening a box containing a Bible, hence understanding the 'special ness' of this book for Christians. Other pupils had, over the year, made costumes and decorations to share with the rest of the school in the celebrations of fest days such as Divali and Chinese New Year. Senior pupils had been very affected by their studies of the Holocaust and explained in an article for the local newspaper how hearing the story of Anne Frank had made them understand and empathise with her situation.
97. Assemblies are not always religious in character but those seen during the inspection successfully developed the concept of symbols and in this case the symbol of the cross for Christians. Pupils showed in their answers and participation not only an accurate knowledge of the meaning of symbols but also an appreciation and respect for articles which others may consider holy.
98. The richness of these experiences and the skilful way teachers introduce difficult ideas to pupils underpin the very good pupil attitudes of tolerance and concern for others. Connections are frequently made between studies in RE lessons and those in Citizenship. One of the RE modules for older pupils is on war and peace. This is paralleled with work on conflict resolution enabling pupils to reflect from their personal experience on the dilemmas of world events.
99. The subject is well led and managed. Class teachers have the flexibility to adapt work to the potential of their class and careful monitoring ensures consistent delivery of the subject and support to achieve its aims.

### History

Standards have been maintained in history. There is consistent planning throughout the school which covers National Curriculum expectations. In the lesson seen with younger pupils good use of resources, including a video of the 1953 coronation and role play enabled pupils to realise the role of Queen Elizabeth II.

### Geography

Standards have been maintained in geography and as with history, planning is effective in giving pupils a broad experience in the subject. Teachers are inventive in how they present the topics. One class of pupils with complex needs had visited the sea side and recorded their impression with a collage of shells, stones and sea weed they had collected on the beach.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Two lessons were seen in design and technology, one lesson in art and design. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement in music.

### **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, one was at Chapel Road and the other at Old Buckenham High School (OBHS).

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievement was judged to be good - on the basis of the work sample, discussions with teachers and lesson observations.
  - Planning has improved since the last inspection.
  - Inclusion for resistant materials and food technology at local high schools.
  - Very poor teaching accommodation for pupils in Years 7 to 11.
100. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching because insufficient lessons were observed. However, the Year 9 pupils working and supported by pupils at OBHS made very good progress with their learning when making a fruit crumble. The quality of the facilities and opportunities contrasted sharply with the food technology lesson at Chapel Road. Years 9 and 10 pupils were making fruit scones, but the poor facilities and accommodation impacted adversely on the learning experience. For example, there was only one sink in the room. Pupils were unable to make choices and select tools and utensils from cupboards and drawers, and the scones had to be taken to another mobile classroom to be cooked. Despite this the staff worked tirelessly together to provide a good learning experience. The design technology lesson at Hartismere, a nearby mainstream school, provided very effective opportunities for learning new skills with appropriate equipment otherwise not available at Chapel Road.
101. The management of design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short period and this has not been one of her priorities. The development of ICT, especially the design aspect of the work, is a priority for her to develop. There is also a need to monitor the quality of teaching across the school.
102. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### **Art and design**

There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement of the quality for art and design. Only one art lesson was observed during the inspection. This was for Year 2 pupils and involved printing patterns on rolled clay. Pupils enjoyed the activity and responded well to the challenge of using an unfamiliar technique. They showed confidence and imagination in their work. Skilled, specialist teaching very effectively promoted their appreciation of pattern and texture and their ability to talk about their work. Classrooms displayed a good range of artwork on the walls. Examples of collage with a variety of materials, painting and sketches, needlework and weaving, simple printing, work produced using computer programmes and references to the work of well-known artists all indicated a lively and varied approach to the subject. Photographs of other work by pupils reinforced the impression of good progress made in recording from observation and in expressing ideas through a good variety of materials and processes. Visual aids and resources are used to very good effect throughout the curriculum and the subject clearly makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural awareness through its use of art and artefacts from other cultures.

The limited evidence available would seem to indicate that the good standards in art reported at the last inspection have been at least maintained and to lend weight to the school's own view that pupils make very good progress in the subject. There are however limitations in the accommodation for older pupils in particular, and there are no proper art facilities in the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for PE is hampered by poor accommodation; this severely limits the range and quality of what can be taught.
- The school makes good use of its contacts with the community and other schools to enrich the curriculum.
- There is a very good plan for the development of the subject.

### **Commentary**

103. Achievements in physical education are satisfactory. Accommodation for the subject, however, is poor and severely restricts the school's ability to extend the range and quality of physical activities offered to the pupils. The school does very well to provide a programme which, in addition to swimming and games throughout the year, includes elements of gymnastics, athletics, dance and outdoor pursuits.
104. Swimming takes place at the school and, for older, higher-attaining pupils, at a larger pool in the community. Progress in confidence and in the various levels of water skills is good and higher-attainers make steady progress through the "Duckling" and "Waterskills" awards operated by the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in games, ball-skills and music and movement activities. A significant number have difficulties in physical co-ordination and in activities requiring precision and control, such as throwing a beanbag or ball at a target, but they persevere and their attitudes to physical activities are good. Teachers and teaching assistants cope well in the difficult environment of the school hall. This is a very small space, made even smaller by the equipment which is stored at one end of it. As a result, activities are limited, with older pupils unable to use a full range of gymnastic equipment, for example. There are no outdoor facilities on the school site but an adjacent field is used for athletics in the summer term.
105. Despite these difficulties, the school manages to field a football team which plays matches with other special schools and to provide experience of dance, orienteering, cricket and other activities through its links with other schools and clubs in the community. A very similar picture was presented at the last inspection. Planning for the subject has been much improved since then but accommodation problems continue to hamper progress. Provision is satisfactory but improving and a very positive action plan has been drawn up to raise the profile of the subject with the intention of achieving the "Sports Mark" (bronze).

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are systematic opportunities planned for pupils to develop their personal and social skills.
- Pupils develop a growing understanding of the meaning of good citizenship as they move through the school.



## Commentary

106. There is a good, well-planned programme of personal, social and health education which achieves a good balance between all three areas. It contains a strong element of citizenship. Sex education and attention to drug misuse are provided. In addition to the discrete lessons in the subject, tutor periods and lunchtimes are well used to promote personal and social development and there are very effective links with individual education plans and the assessment scheme to set targets for pupils and to measure their progress in these areas. The provision is led and managed effectively and the good teaching ensures that pupils learn well as they move through the school.
107. Although there was limited first hand observations of citizenship being taught, discussions with pupils and students provided useful additional evidence. There is a clear and coherent plan for teaching citizenship. Many older pupils and students understand the basic meaning of good citizenship and realise that people across the world live very differently from themselves. They are beginning to make links and realise that we need one another to live and thrive, and make links with the school community and the importance of making a contribution to one another's everyday lives.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

The provision for post 16 students is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Their curriculum contains an adequate range of activities.
  - There are, however, some significant aspects which require development and the accommodation for the unit is unsatisfactory.
108. Personal, social and health education and citizenship provide good opportunities for students to study various aspects of the wider community and they make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of areas such as the roles of the media and of the courts in society. They are also widening their appreciation of the global community and its interdependence, through a current topic, for example, on the implications of the banana trade for the third world. Personal care and issues such as conflict resolution also feature in their programme of personal, social and health education and their folders include evidence of satisfactory development of their independence in various "Life Skills". There is sound provision for the continuing development of their numeracy skills for practical purposes and the newly introduced "Personal Finance Education" topic promises to make a very relevant addition to this area of their work.
109. In English, the range of reading which students experience is very limited and their writing often focuses on repetitive tasks which hold little interest for them, such as recording their "weekend news". As a result, although their achievements in both skills in other elements of the curriculum are satisfactory, the variety of purposes for which they read and write in English itself is not. Their speaking and listening skills show unsatisfactory progress. Their ability to listen in a group situation and to contribute sensibly to oral work and discussion is often poor and they are given few opportunities to learn how to use more formal language when required. These shortcomings reflect the immaturity apparent in students' attitudes and social skills.
110. Work-related education is provided but is underdeveloped in several respects. Work experience, for example, does not include placements in actual workplaces. Students' folders contain little evidence of a coherent careers programme. Careers resources are not well organised or easily accessible to students. An "Enterprise" project, in which students make and sell their own products, is operated. A variety of visits to and "taster courses" in local colleges of further education are reported to take place but evidence of students' response to these or of follow-up work is lacking, as it is in other areas of off-site experiences. In general, assessment and recording are a weakness in the unit. Assessment follows the general pattern of the main

school scheme and does not address the specific needs and curriculum of these students. There is an external scheme of accreditation in operation but, as it is currently operated, it is not effectively integrated with the curriculum and there are plans to replace it.

111. The accommodation does not provide sufficient facilities, either for the development of a distinct ethos for the unit or for practical and physical activities. The nature of the accommodation is a contributory factor to the unsatisfactory development of the students' maturity and social skills.
112. The quality of provision for post 16 students has deteriorated since the last inspection. The newly-appointed coordinator has a clear vision of the developments needed, particularly in the use of the wider community and in opportunities for work-related education, to prepare students more effectively for future employment or further education.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

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

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