

INSPECTION REPORT

Forest Way School

Coalville,

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120354

Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Slinger

Lead inspector: Mrs Kathy Hooper

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th May 2004

Inspection number: 258899

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	107
School address:	Cropston Drive Coalville Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE67 4HS
Telephone number:	01530 831899
Fax number:	01530 814069
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Eddie Henderson
Date of previous inspection:	18-22 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Forest Way is a special school for 107 boys and girls aged 3-19 who have severe learning difficulties. At the time of this inspection, there were no children under 5. As is the case in similar schools nationally, there are more boys than there are girls in the school. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Pupils' learning difficulties make it inappropriate to compare standards in national tests and examinations with other pupils nationally. Since the last inspection, the school has almost doubled in size and is now larger than similar schools of its kind. Approximately two out of three pupils have additional special needs such as those on the autistic spectrum, or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils have regressive medical conditions. Pupils are mainly from White British families. However, about five percent are from ethnic minority families and two pupils are from families whose mother tongue is not English. About one in four pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Most pupils travel in to school on local authority transport from all parts of the county and beyond. A minority of parents bring their children to school. The school is very popular with parents. The school has achieved the Investors in People Award and two School Achievement Awards. Since the last inspection, there have been extensions to its accommodation, mainly in temporary buildings. The school is subject to re-organisation.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2971	Kathy Hooper	Lead inspector	Art Personal, social and emotional development and citizenship Design and technology
13762	Norman Shelley	Lay inspector	
2480	Christine Gilder	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	Science Geography History Music Physical education
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Mathematics French Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Forest Way is a good school with some very good features. It is very popular with parents and their children. The teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. The school is well led and managed and it is very well supported by the local community. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good in most subjects and they communicate very well
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; the school's very good ethos helps pupils to develop self-confidence
- Teaching is good and ensures that most pupils develop very good attitudes to learning
- The leadership and management of the school are good and the school is highly regarded in the local community. Whole school development planning requires greater focus
- The curriculum is well tailored to the needs of pupils in Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and post-16. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation in Years 10 and 11
- There is very good provision for the support and guidance of pupils. Parents are very confident of the school's ability to meet their children's needs
- The opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum are too limited
- The accommodation limits pupils' achievement in some practical subjects

The school is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is better monitored and measured. The quality of teaching has been very much improved. There is a good understanding of the individual learning needs of pupils and the demands of the National Curriculum. The pupils' ability to communicate is very good; their achievement in reading and writing have improved and is now good. Mathematics was unsatisfactory and is now good. Religious education is taught to all pupils well. There is a better pupil-adult ratio. Learning resources have been improved. Although the accommodation had been improved, it still presents significant constraints, particularly with respect to specialist accommodation for science, design and technology, art and physical education. Although provision for information and communication technology has improved, it remains unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	Good	Good
Year 6	Good	Good
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good
Year 14	Good	Good

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

Pupils' achievement is **very good** in English in Years 1-9 and music. In English in Year 10 and 11 and post-16, mathematics, science, religious education, physical education and their personal, social and health education and citizenship, pupils' achievement is **good**. Pupils' achievement is **unsatisfactory** in information and communication technology.

Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and they enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is very good in lessons and at break and lunchtimes, and they develop supportive relationships. Pupils' personal development is very good and contributes to the school's strong sense of community. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, but opportunities for independence are limited for older pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides **good** quality of education. **Teaching and learning are good** in English, mathematics, science, religious education, physical education and personal and social education and citizenship. Teaching and learning in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. In other subjects, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is good, particularly at Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and post-16. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has too little emphasis on vocational aspects and pupils have no opportunities to gain accreditation. Pupils are very well cared for whilst at school. The school's excellent relationships with parents support pupils' learning and their personal development very well. The community links are wide and used effectively to develop pupils' personal and social skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management are **good**. The school has a very good ethos because the staff and pupils are very well supported. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They hold the school to account and receive good information from the school's monitoring systems.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Every parent returned a questionnaire. The vast majority of parents and pupils view the school very favourably. Parents are particularly appreciative of the amount of self-confidence that the school gives their children. Almost all parents believe that their children are benefiting fully from the school's provision. The pupils enjoy being at the school and feel trusted by staff. The inspection team agrees with the positive perceptions of parents and pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Review the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 to make it more distinctive and offer more opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation;
- Ensure the extension and development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology as they move through the school;
- Focus whole school planning more sharply on the priorities identified through the evaluation of evidence gained from monitoring pupils' progress and achievement across the school;
- Work with the local education authority to address the limitations of the accommodation

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Judgements on achievement takes account of prior attainment, records and reports of progress over time, analysis of pupils' work and their performance in lessons. Progress for many young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties is in very small steps.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent work in communication is a key factor in enabling all pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders, to achieve well.
- Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress and are able to focus on the next steps for individuals.
- Achievement in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 14.
- There are not enough opportunities for the highest attaining pupils to gain external accreditation during Years 10 to 11.

Commentary

1. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior ability levels. Records show pupils make good progress in meeting their individual targets. They achieve standards that relate well to their ability level whilst being well below those expected for pupils of their age.
2. Overall, pupils in Years 1 to 11 and students post-16 achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education and personal and social education. A major factor in pupils' good achievement across the school is the very competent way in which pupils are taught to communicate using signs, symbols and communication equipment. As a result, there is no significant difference between the achievement of verbal and non-verbal pupils or in that of pupils with additional special needs such as profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is little difference between the achievement of pupils at the end of any one key stage. However, the lack of opportunities for pupils in Year 10 and 11 to achieve any accreditation, results in lessons that occasionally lack sparkle and challenge. Post 16 students achieve a good range of certification in externally validated modules.
3. In English, all pupils achieve very well throughout the school in speaking and listening. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is good. Although these differences in achievement between the different elements of English were apparent at the time of the last inspection, the quality of each has significantly improved. Achievement appears to slow down for many pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is no external accreditation for higher attaining pupils, some of whom have difficulties on the autistic spectrum. Nevertheless, post-16 achievement improves again and is good.
4. Achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school because there is a clear structure to enable pupils to build their understanding. They make particularly good progress in their number skills. Post 16 students become increasingly competent in their ability to manipulate numbers in a good range of relevant contexts, such as shops and college visits.
5. Pupils' achievement is good in science. They learn about a good range of materials and processes. However, the lack of specialist facilities considerably reduces the range of practical investigations and experiments that the higher attaining secondary age pupils can take part in.

6. Although there has been considerable improvement to the facilities and equipment for information and communication technology, pupils are not yet achieving as much as they could. The use of communication technology to aid pupils unable to speak is very good. However, the provision for discrete subject lessons for Years 7 to 14 is too short. The curriculum is not sufficiently developed to ensure that teachers are planning to cover the core skills systematically. The problem is made worse by the lack of an area big enough to accommodate groups of pupils for computer work designed to match their abilities.

7. Pupils' achievement in music is very good because the subject is taught enthusiastically and capably by a music specialist. Their achievement in design and technology is satisfactory. It is good in food technology, but limited in Years 7 to 14 by the lack of specialist accommodation for resistant materials. In physical education, pupils' achievement is good because pupils succeed well in a wide range of activities in timetabled lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Through good knowledge of individual strengths, weaknesses and circumstances, the school strives for the full inclusion of pupils. Pupils whose home language is not English make good progress towards their individual learning targets because teachers plan for them very individually. Almost all the parents believe their children make good progress.

8. The lack of specialist accommodation particularly affects the achievement of more able, older pupils in science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils like school very much and enjoy the various activities
- Behaviour is almost always very good
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good

Commentary

9. Pupils want to come to school. They arrive in a positive frame of mind and do their best in lessons according to their capabilities. They participate in activities with enthusiasm and interest.

10. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and very effectively and consistently applies a wide range of positive strategies that bring about standards of behaviour that are almost always very good. There have been no exclusions. Bullying scarcely ever occurs. Generally pupils get on well, are tolerant and often mutually supportive.

11. Pupils make choices and try to take responsibility for themselves. For example, pupils have class responsibilities, take the register to the office and the most articulate contribute to the school council. Older pupils learn how to dial a number and answer a telephone unaided and make snacks for themselves. Overall, the pupils make sound progress towards becoming independent. Some pupils received public recognition for their courage and perseverance.

12. Attendance was very good last year but the extended illness of a few pupils has brought it broadly in line with the national average. Absence only occurs because of illness or hospitalisation. Pupils are always ready to be collected to come to school. Lateness only occurs in the event of traffic congestion.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.5
National data	8.5

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.5

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

13. Pupils' achievements in their personal development are very good because there are very good links with the community and a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils experience a range of sporting activities beyond the taught curriculum. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 and post-16 students have a residential experience each year. There are theatre trips, performance workshops and musical performances that all pupils take part in. The school develops very good spiritual awareness in its pupils. This is achieved through experiences such as taking part in performances, the special nature of assemblies, and good religious education. A sense of discovery often provokes spiritual awareness through the multi-sensory experiences that teachers create for pupils. For example, science teachers create experiences that can enhance and extend the world beyond the everyday.

14. Through observing the actions and listening to adults who care for them, pupils acquire a very good awareness of right and wrong. In play and other social occasions as well as in classrooms they demonstrate a very good capacity to tolerate and accept the feelings of others. Playtime in particular is characterised by very good relationships between pupils. They are very well supported to share equipment and are taught to play with each other very well.

15. The social development of pupils is very good. In the school assemblies that close each school day there is a real sense of community as the school celebrates the achievements of pupils or as they sing and pray together. The school council makes a very good contribution to the social development of the pupils who are on it and helps them toward an understanding of ways in which individuals can influence their community.

16. Pupils' understanding of their local culture is well promoted by visits to events such as the Ashby Statutes Fair and also the annual visit to the pantomime. There are many opportunities like this to become involved in and to learn about local culture. The curriculum is broad and gives pupils good opportunities to learn about a range of cultures from around the world. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures through activities, visits and visitors.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. **Teaching and learning are good**. The curriculum is good. Pupils' are very well cared for whilst at school. The school's excellent relationships with parents support pupils' learning very well. The community links are wide and used effectively to develop pupils' personal and social skills.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication strategies are well used and reinforced
- Very good use is made of multi-sensory resources and relevant contexts to make the learning purposeful
- Very good teamwork between teachers and assistants maintains pupils' engagement and involvement in the best lessons

- Teachers manage pupils' challenging behaviour well
- Assessment is good but sometimes there is insufficient detail kept in on-going records of pupils' progress

Commentary

17. Overall the teaching and learning across all years is good. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when 18 percent was unsatisfactory. There is a consistently high level of practice throughout the school as a result of the effective monitoring procedures carried out by senior staff.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	24 (42%)	26 (46%)	7 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

18. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach because there is a developmental approach to the review of all subjects on the curriculum. All adults are aware of the individual learning needs of pupils because of regular monitoring and assessment of their progress. As a result, pupils learn well and often very well because teachers are very confident. In the best lessons, adults are flexible and modify activities to match the needs and demands of individual pupils without compromising the overall aim of the lesson. They reinforce literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills in a range of contexts. The extension and reinforcement of information and communication technology skills is less secure and tends to be planned as an optional extra. All adults have very good skills in signing, as a result of regular training. The use of signing alongside symbols and technological communication aids ensures very good communication at all levels. As a result, many pupils sign fluently and pupils' ability to communicate is very good. Occasionally, the signing is too complicated for some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

19. Teachers have sensitively adapted the national guidance on curriculum planning and used the best practice recommended to ensure that learning is well tailored to the short attention spans of the pupils. In the best lessons, the change from one activity to another is barely perceptible and the pupils' attention is, therefore, skillfully maintained. In the majority of lessons, teachers are careful to ensure that the context for learning is relevant to pupils and the activities allow each pupil to be involved at an appropriate level. Where the learning is best, activities are highly relevant to pupils, for example, in some design and technology lessons using food and in post 16 where students are making puppets for children they know. The good quality of the planning is evident in way in which pupils' attention is maintained throughout the lesson, which was not the case at the last inspection. Lessons are well designed to be inclusive, for example, pupils in wheelchairs are expected to join in team games. Pupils with challenging behaviour are well managed. In the best lessons, adults very skillfully distract and re-engage pupils who threaten to disrupt or turn their attention away from the activity. Pupils whose home language is not English receive good support from teachers and classroom support staff who know them well.

20. Where the learning is not of a high quality, though still satisfactory, there are three broad reasons. Occasionally the purpose of the activity is not clear. This makes pupils unnecessarily dependent because adults have to give pupils too many very directive clues to ensure a successful outcome. In other lessons, the match of the activities to the needs of the pupils is insufficiently close. As a result, some pupils become frustrated and lose interest or the activity does not challenge pupils and they lose confidence in their own abilities. Very occasionally adults do too much for pupils. For example, when preparing food with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, adults were showing pupils how to carry out some tasks rather than using hand over hand techniques.

21. Teachers manage learning well because they have a clear understanding of individual targets for pupils. In the best lessons, teachers use an element of surprise and their timing is superb. For example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 began to tire of using hand whisks, the electric mixer was introduced. As a result, the value of the mixer for saving time and energy was well made. Many teachers are confident about tailoring questions to the abilities of the pupils and giving them time to make a response. This clearly boosted their self-confidence. The very good use of activities that allow all pupils to experience the curriculum through all their senses ensures optimum learning at all levels and makes the experiences exciting for pupils. A lot of real, everyday resources are well used to promote understanding for pupils who frequently lead a very sheltered life. In the best lessons, the teachers capitalise on the school's excellent partnership with parents to make sure that pupils' learning in school is reinforced at home. For example, a post-16 student was working on *one more* with her father.

22. Pupils' learning is successful because of the good teamwork between assistants, teachers and other professionals such as speech and language therapists. Nursery nurses teach groups of pupils very competently. Assistants including learning support assistants and nursery nurses maintain good levels of concentration among pupils who might otherwise be passive or cause a disturbance in lessons.

23. Assessment is good. There are very clear procedures that ensure pupils' progress is regularly reviewed. The use of baseline tests and the standardised system for levelling pupils' work help to make the assessments increasingly robust. However, on occasions, opportunities are missed to log pupils' sometimes minuscule achievements in lessons. Some assistants and teachers rely too much on their memory, despite frequent team meetings.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The learning resources are good, but the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the curriculum is good and, at post-16, it is distinctive.
- Very good support staff help pupils to access the curriculum.
- Many good additional activities enrich pupils' education
- There are no opportunities for pupils to achieve accreditation in Years 10 and 11
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory

Commentary

24. In Years 1 to 11, pupils have a broad curriculum that includes all of the required subjects. The school places its main emphasis on English, mathematics and personal and social education. There is a highly appropriate focus on communication skills of all kinds, including signing and the use of the electronic aids to supplement pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing. As a result, every pupil is able to access the curriculum according to their particular needs. The other National Curriculum subjects are taught, but have less time. All pupils have been disapplied from learning a foreign language. However, French is occasionally taught to some of the older pupils. At the time of the last inspection, religious education was not taught, but now, statutory requirements with regard to religious education, sex and relationships education, alcohol and drug misuse are fully met. The school positively acknowledges those pupils whose home language is not English and helps other pupils to become aware of the cultural riches and diversity through many lessons and celebrations, especially in religious education.

25. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is limited. There are no lessons at local colleges, nor any opportunities to take part in work experience. The advice that pupils get for their

future life is limited. There are no courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Pupils are not as well prepared for their future life as they could be, whether they remain in school or move on.

26. The post-16 curriculum is different and distinctive. Students all have work experience and they work alongside staff in school. They work with the site manager, office staff, teachers and classroom support staff. All students have good advice from visiting staff about their futures, especially their career prospects and possibilities, and how to use their leisure time. Many of the courses that they follow are set by national organisations, and lead to recognised certificates. Whilst they are very appropriate for many students, they are not always sufficiently challenging for the most able students. The basic English and mathematics courses are well linked to life and living skills such as shopping, banking, budgeting, and home management skills.

27. There is a good number of teachers; they are well experienced and qualified to provide a good curriculum. There is a generous number of very capable support staff and they give very effective support to all pupils. They are very well trained, for example, in manual handling, autism, first aid and signing. The site manager and office staff have had first aid and signing training, and are fully involved in the life of the school. Speech and language staff, physiotherapists and occupational therapists give high quality advice and support.

28. There are a great many ways in which the school extends the basic curriculum. At lunchtimes pupils can take part in a swimming or football club, or join the choir. Pupils are well supervised and encouraged in the playground or the adventure play area. Pupils have coaching in rugby and football by local professional players. Other sporting activities include taking part in swimming galas, tournaments and *have a go* days for games such as basketball, football and gymnastics.

29. There is a residential visit for older students to experience life away from home. Visits for pupils to theatres in nearby cities extend their awareness of life in the broader community. Pupils' confidence is boosted by taking part in week-long workshops to create their own production which they then perform for parents. There are many visitors who help pupils' artistic and cultural development, including drummers and dancers, a trombonist and an auto harp instrumental musician. Groups from an orchestra perform and run workshops. Visitors perform stories from other religious faiths, such as the story of Rama and Sita.

30. The links with other mainstream schools support the social development of many pupils each year. Pupils take part in lessons such as mathematics, art and physical education alongside their mainstream peers. Post-16 students have valuable links with two colleges when they mix with other students in the lessons and in the canteen.

31. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school has made good use of available space and has achieved a stimulating and attractive environment through very good displays of pupils' work. Most classrooms are adequate for general teaching purposes, but there is no room for specialist provision apart from a food technology room. The curriculum, therefore, is narrow in science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and physical education. The hall is too small to hold all the school comfortably. Arrivals and departures of pupils at the beginnings and ends of days are well organised, but time consuming because of the limitations of the unloading area, the small foyer and narrow corridors.

32. The school's resources are good. There are well-equipped physiotherapy and sensory rooms. Outside play areas have been very well developed with soft surfaces and structures for guided exercise. These areas are very well supervised and pupils use the equipment well as a result. Some resources, for example, for religious education and personal, social and health education, are very good. The school manages the education of pupils whose home language is not English well, and has obtained specialist electronic speech equipment for some pupils. However, the number of computers is low and pupils' achievement is limited as a result.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every effort is made to meet the needs of all the pupils, at all levels
- Pupils are extremely well supported and cared for and are well-involved in the school
- Assessment is used very well to target for improvement and to determine supportive strategies
- Post-16 students are well prepared for the next stage of their education

Commentary

33. The most careful attention to the personal needs of all of the pupils and the positive manner of all adults in the school towards them form the basis of the school's ethos. Pupils feel totally safe and valued by the way they are treated and this is reflected in the results from their questionnaire. The pupils trust their teachers and helpers. Parents are right to regard this aspect of the school's provision as excellent.

34. The induction of new pupils is very carefully and sensitively carried out. Visits to previous schools and care centres are made to obtain information and to see the arrangements in place for the welfare of each pupil. Home visits are conducted and parents and sometimes other relatives stay with the child in school for as long as it takes for the pupils to be able to cope. The pupils' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Their preferences and views are regularly sought, through questionnaires and the school council, and, where possible, acted upon. The pupils' own *communication passports* are used very well to give all pupils an opportunity to contribute.

35. The procedures for child protection and children in care are fully in place and all members of staff understand them. Health and safety procedures, in and out of school, are very well implemented. The very good standards of personal care owe much to the expertise and commitment of the support staff. Specialist education and health agencies are effective. Although some parents point to the lack of therapy provision, therapists work effectively with staff in supporting pupils. The school goes to considerable lengths to help parents decide about the next stage for their children when they are to leave school at 19.

36. Assessment of pupils' academic and personal development is thorough. Targeting to improve learning is comprehensive. Pupils' progress is frequently reviewed and supportive strategies are evaluated and adjusted accordingly. Parents are kept fully informed and the school provides advice, guidance, support and feedback to parents daily and more formally each month and annually.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between school and parents is **excellent**. Links with other schools are good and with the community are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents place great value on the school's work and are very supportive
- Parental involvement in their children's learning supports pupils' achievement very well
- The community contributes very well to pupils' learning and personal development
- Links with other schools extend pupils' learning and social experiences well

Commentary

37. Links with parents are excellent. Parents have the highest regard for the school and have great confidence in its capacity to meet the needs of their children. Almost every parent is extremely pleased with the standards of education and care that are provided. They have very few concerns. Only a very few parents were not so positive about all aspects of the school's provision.

38. Annual school reports are of a high standard, providing detailed information about pupils' achievements and developmental targets. Communications with parents are prompt and comprehensive. The daily diaries are used very well overall to keep parents in touch with developments. Almost all parents attend the annual review meetings and those who do not have a home visit. A very helpful review of their child's education plan is sent to each parent.

39. The school goes to considerable lengths to help parents support their own children and parents appreciate this. Monthly workshops for parents are well attended and highly valued for the quality of the guidance and coaching they receive from teachers and specialists. Parents demonstrate their strong support for the school by arranging social and fundraising events on their own initiative. They also make valued and unsolicited donations to the school.

40. Links with the community are very good. Local employers and large organisations donate equipment and products and help financially. Visitors include dancers, theatre groups, public services, musicians, local councillors and voluntary speakers. A wide range of visits extends the curriculum and pupils' awareness of the world. The Rotary Club arranges annual outings for all the pupils. Local facilities, such as a leisure centre, are well used and a residential visit is arranged at an outdoor centre for older students. Pupils also learn to contribute to the community, for example, through their support for charity and by distributing harvest produce to senior citizens. Arrangements with other schools support pupils' personal and social development well.

41. There are good links with other schools and colleges. Arrangements with other schools enable pupils to benefit from specialist teaching and facilities in some subjects. However, the benefits are mainly social, involving interaction with other pupils of a similar age. Reciprocally, the partner schools use the school's facilities. The school liaises very closely with relevant colleges of further education in order to provide smooth and staged transition for the students. Older pupils attend vocational and recreational courses at local colleges for which they receive accreditation. These provide valuable opportunities for pupils to assume a more independent role.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **good**. Governance and day-to-day management are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has developed a very effective leadership team
- The school's commitment to inclusion is widely admired by parents and carers.
- Firm and informed management by the senior staff and governors has led to good improvements since the last inspection
- There is effective recruitment, training and retention of expert staff
- Improvement planning is insufficiently focused on priorities identified through monitoring.

Commentary

42. Very good teamwork is a hallmark of the school. Each member of the senior management team has complementary strengths. The school has been enriched by the professional approach of its extended leadership team. Members of the team present good role models for the leadership of subjects across the curriculum. There are good systems in place for management. The regular monitoring and advice to colleagues by subject leaders is well established and valued as a way of

improving provision. The school is well placed to develop this strategy further by placing more emphasis on evidence of success in terms of pupils' learning, rather than teachers' intentions.

43. The knowledge and expertise of the team is widely admired by parents and carers. At the exceptionally well attended parents' meeting, there were many examples given of the leadership team's care for families *over and beyond what we could expect*.

44. The governors are extremely committed and supportive. They work effectively with the school to make sure that necessary improvements take place. Their efforts to improve accommodation have resulted in the maximum use being made of the limited space available. Statutory requirements are fully met. They have a good over-view of health and safety and monitor this well. They contribute to the annual school development plan meeting. They review of the school's progress through reports and visits. With the increase in the school roll, the governing body has increased in size, too, making committee work more effective. Meetings are professionally managed: there is pertinent questioning and discussion of issues.

45. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The system for monitoring classroom practice has improved the quality of teaching and learning considerably. Monitoring by the senior management team is complemented very well by effective induction, peer lesson observation, performance management and professional training. On-going weekly training on signing for the whole staff, grouped by ability, is led extremely well by the deputy headteacher. Staff are confident and enthusiastic and keen to help each other. For example, they show real pleasure when one of their number recalls the obscure sign for a vegetable! They outline topics for their coming lessons and the specialist vocabularies for these are practised. The effects of the strong teamwork are apparent throughout the school. The involvement of support staff in planning is a key factor in their ability to function confidently. For example, the progress of individual pupils is reviewed monthly in class groups.

46. There is a shared understanding of priorities and staff, parents and governors value the process of whole school development planning. Everyone is invited to take part in a meeting where the past year's targets are reviewed and they focus on the next. The analysis of pupils' performance and progress is well-established using the school's own approach. As a result, data analysis is becoming more robust and includes the moderation of the school's performance with other similar schools. However, much of the planning at present describes the management processes rather than the priorities. The priorities for improvement are, therefore, insufficiently based on an analysis of the information collected through monitoring.

47. Financial management is very good. There are very efficient systems for accounting and forward planning linked to the performance management processes. The last audit report was outstanding and identified no major concerns. Governors understand the need to implement principles of best value. They are vigilant about purchasing services at the best price. The head teacher and her team have improved practice considerably within the school. She and her senior management team have considered issues concerning a possible plateau of older pupils' achievement through discussion with other schools. The school has grown significantly in popularity with parents. Nevertheless, the lack of evidence linked to outcomes limits the efficiency of the process. The pupils' achievement, overall, is good as a direct result of good and often very good teaching. The leadership and management have put in place good systems for monitoring and review as a result of which the school has thrived. The best use has been made of the limited accommodation. The school provides good value for money and is in a strong position to develop even further.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1352,500
Total expenditure	1309, 500
Expenditure per pupil	12,826

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	162, 553
Balance carried forward to the next	217,488

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

English and French

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening because of the school's emphasis on communication
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection and pupils' achievement in reading and writing is now good.
- Teaching is very good for pupils In Years 1 to 9
- Literacy across the curriculum is not sufficiently reinforced

Commentary

48. Pupils' achievement overall is very good for Years 1 to 9; it is good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' achievement is best in speaking and listening because of the school's very strong emphasis on communication. Improvements since the last inspection have been good. Pupils' achievement is now good in reading and writing. There is a better balance between developing writing skills and writing practice. Teachers exploit every opportunity to encourage pupils to become more purposeful about the marks they make on paper. They provide regular opportunities for practice in copying by writing over and under words. As a result, more pupils are able to write down what they want to say. The higher attaining pupils who have difficulties on the autistic spectrum speak well. Because they are able to concentrate intently on signed speech, it is easier for them to interpret what they hear. The teachers' very good understanding of the need to teach turn-taking to these pupils further promotes their ability to communicate. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make very good progress.

49. Achievement appears to slow down for many pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is no external accreditation for the higher attaining pupils, some of who have difficulties on the autistic spectrum. There is not enough of a difference in the work planned for these pupils to reflect their age or to exploit their developing interests and extend strongest abilities. There are several pupils who are working within National Curriculum Level 2, and could gain an award for their learning.

50. Overall, teaching and learning is good and much better than at the time of the last inspection, when it was only satisfactory. The best lesson planning makes clear what it is each pupil should achieve and is well referenced to pupils' individual targets. There is very good teamwork between teachers, nursery nurses, support staff and therapists as a result of joint planning. As a result, pace and challenge are good and activities meet individual needs very well. Many members of staff use their voices very well to emphasise key words and instructions. The high quality of communication at all levels encourages pupils to sign accurately, too. As a result, their achievement in communication is very good. In the best lessons, pupils with very complex difficulties, make excellent progress. This is due to the sustained repetition of activities and encouragement on the part of the staff and their careful analysis to pinpoint the factors that helped the pupils to achieve.

51. Where lessons are less successful, in Years 10 and 11, there is insufficient focus in the lesson planning and in the introduction. In occasional lessons, pupils do not have sufficient support in some of the activities. For example, when too much is read aloud at once, some pupils are not able

to follow. This is because support staff do not have enough opportunities to explain and check for understanding. Vocabulary is used at times without sufficient explanation. The lack of individual copies of some of the books being read as a class, on occasions, denies some pupils the extra clues they might use to help them understand the story or poem.

52. Assessment and recording of pupils' work is very good overall, with very clear annotation on work to show important signs of progress. The school uses its own system to monitor the least able pupils whose progress is not fully captured using the pre-National Curriculum levels.

53. The shared leadership by a team of four is excellent and has a clear impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in communication. The management of the subject is very good. However, there is not enough monitoring of teachers' records of pupils' achievements in reading and writing to ensure that the small steps in progress are captured. Although there are very good staffing levels, opportunities are missed to develop a rolling programme of detailed individual pupil observations and recording to enrich the records of pupils' achievement and progress.

Modern Foreign Language (French)

54. Pupils are formally disapplied from learning this subject. However, pupils in Year 6 and above have some lessons that allow them to experience French language and culture, such as food and music. They learn to distinguish the colours of the flag, and some French words. The main focus of lessons is on understanding and speaking some French words, such as "Bonjour", "Je suis ..." and "Je m'appelle...". The work is planned in topics to cover such things as myself, my family, greetings, pastimes and sports. It is not possible to judge the quality of provision. No lessons were being taught during the inspection and pupils' work is almost all spoken, leaving few written records.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The school's very good communication results in pupils using language very well throughout the school. Pupils and staff talk and listen to each other very well through very effective use of signing. There is a good emphasis on developing the vocabulary needed for learning in subjects and the related signs. Pupils' very good communication is very well supported by the individually tailored strategies. All pupils have their own symbol reading book that is appropriate for their age. Pupils who are on the autistic spectrum and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very effectively supported by a *communication passport* that helps others to communicate effectively with them.

56. Pupils' use of literacy is satisfactory. Although attention is consistently paid to handwriting and accuracy in English lessons, there is not always enough use made of writing in other subjects for higher attaining pupils. Some pupils who write short sentences and phrases in English books, use symbols cut and pasted in other lessons, for example, in science. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to read in class and to write in ways appropriate for their ability.

57. Nevertheless, displays of work are well captioned with words and symbols and books are displayed well in classrooms and in the small, but inviting, library area.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- The teaching is good, with some very good features
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology

- There are no opportunities for Years 10 and 11 to achieve external accreditation

Commentary

58. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Pupils' best progress is in their number skills, and in the way they learn to use and apply the mathematics skills they have learned. By the end of Year 11, for instance, the higher achieving pupils add numbers up to a hundred, multiply by twelve, and add and take away ten per cent of an amount such as £1. Teachers' own assessments confirm pupils' good progress. Pupils with additional special needs, for example, autism or profound learning difficulties, achieve equally as well as others. Similarly, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make good progress, including those pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared and teachers use good resources well to help pupils to learn. Pupils' behaviour is very well managed, and pupils are very well motivated to pay attention, join in with teacher-led activities, and concentrate when they have to do their own work. Teachers and support staff work effectively with individual pupils. Staff emphasise the key words, use clear speech, and use signing consistently well to make sure that pupils understand. Staff understand how to teach pupils with different kinds of learning difficulties, such as those with autism, or who have profound learning problems, and they adjust their planning and teaching accordingly. Teachers accurately assess how well pupils are making progress, and they use this information to plan individual or group activities. The organisation of pupils into ability groups for mathematics is effective and ensures that lessons are challenging for all pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to practice and broaden their communication and literacy skills. Teachers expect pupils to speak clearly in response to questions, or to sign, or use symbols, or use picture sequences and timetables. Support staff are very effective in encouraging pupils to listen, to respond, and to join in.

60. In lessons that are satisfactory, but not good, teachers do not explain what the lesson is about very clearly at the start, or do not finish with a clear review of what has been learned, or pupils have to wait their turn for quite a long time. In these lessons, the pace of learning is slower as pupils lose their concentration from time to time.

61. The high quality of leadership and management are shown in the very good improvement since the previous inspection. At that time, the teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Since then, the co-ordinator has regularly monitored planning and teaching and, as a result, standards have been raised significantly. The subject meets statutory requirements. The quality of assessment has improved, and the information about pupils' progress is used to plan for their future learning. There is scope for developing this further to ensure that development planning is firmly based on priorities derived on the evaluation of pupils' achievement. The guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy have been well adapted, and are well established throughout the school. They give teachers a firm and consistent framework for their teaching. Although computers are used more purposefully than previously, they are not used sufficiently to promote pupils' learning. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to achieve accreditation.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Pupils measure temperature and weights, for instance in science lessons. On the computers they create simple graphs and spreadsheets of surveys they have carried out. In physical education pupils count how many times they can bounce a ball, how many goals they score, or how many times they run across the hall in games. Although it is satisfactory, there is scope for extending opportunities for reinforcing mathematics in other subjects.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement is good and pupils are well motivated
- Teaching is good
- There is no accreditation in science in Years 10 and 11
- There is no specialist accommodation and this restricts the pupils' experiences

Commentary

63. The achievement of pupils in science is good in all years and across the range of ability. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to describe the differences between light and dark through their experience on a blindfolded walk through school. Year 6 pupils are increasingly able to record their observations, such as the weather. Year 9 higher attaining pupils apply their learning to everyday life, for example, when identifying the electrical hazards about them. Pupils in Year 11 investigate the properties, for example, of a good sock. However, the lack of a specialist area leads to a less stimulating curriculum and limits the ability of pupils in Year 7 to 11 to develop their skills of investigation and experiment.

64. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and that engage the attention of all their pupils well. In a particularly good lesson, the teacher introduced a touch sensitive electric globe into a lesson about electricity. Pupils were amazed and fascinated by the electrical charge responding to a pupil's touch. Lessons are well structured. The introductions make links with earlier lessons so that pupils successfully build on the learning that has gone before. The main activities are varied and well suited to individual needs. Closing sessions test understanding as well as reinforce learning. Questioning is well used to promote literacy and communications as well as individual and group learning. The management of pupils is very good. Teachers make accurate assessments of the needs of individuals. Communications between teachers and pupils are very good. Signing, symbols and language are all effectively used to ensure the inclusion of all pupils in the learning. Teachers have good assessment records and use them well to shape future learning. Teachers, support assistants and the other adults work very well together. However, there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning. Teachers help pupils to apply their learning well, for example, when discussion about the dangers of electricity are related to the conditions pupils may experience at home.

65. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. Schemes of work are well written and provide a clear framework to guide other teachers. Apart from the under use of information and communication technology, resources are good. The effective and regular monitoring of lessons has led to good improvement since the last inspection. There are no opportunities for pupils to achieve external accreditation in Years 10 and 11. Development planning is not clearly based on the evaluation of pupils' achievement across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computer equipment and technical support have been much improved.
- Staff do not plan enough use of computers because the scheme of work is inadequate
- There are no opportunities for accreditation for higher achieving pupils
- The leadership of the subject has been considerably disrupted and the pace of change has been limited

Commentary

66. The steady development of facilities has improved computer use in the school greatly. The appointment of a part-time specialist technician and further training for one member of each class team in day-to-day troubleshooting support pupils' achievement well. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to use computer programs to practice their literacy and numeracy skills each morning. Teaching, and support staff, guide and support pupils to use the software correctly.

67. During the inspection, there were few instances in which the potential of computers to enrich learning was seen. Nevertheless, some higher attaining pupils of all ages use computers confidently and independently. Many of the enthusiastic pupils who chose to use computers during break and lunch times concentrate hard for long periods. Some Year 1 pupils already use a roller ball and an ordinary mouse very accurately to move text and icons. They use sorting and matching programs in mathematics and classify creatures that have wings correctly in science. However, those who do not arrive in school with these skills or experience are not able to develop them in a planned way over time. Topic outlines are provided for teachers. However, these do not provide enough guidance to help teachers to gradually develop pupils' information and communication technology skills.

68. There have been three changes of co-ordinator since 1999 and this has had a significant effect on the quality of teaching and learning. The current co-ordinator took up the subject in September 2003. A draft scheme of work is in outline, but draws too much on guidance designed for the more able pupils. There is insufficient time for pupils in Years 7 to 11 to make the best use of computers. The co-ordinator intends to extend opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation.

69. Leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Monitoring has not identified the weaknesses in staff interpretation of the topics. There is no dedicated space for group teaching and teachers' planning and organisation are inadequate. In one lesson, it was planned that eight pupils should use the two available computers. Those waiting in a circle for their turn, rapidly lost interest in the task set which was to identify parts of a computer,

70. The scheme of work is insufficiently detailed to help teachers. There are no opportunities for higher attaining pupils to achieve accreditation. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement, given the constraints.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in full and is reported in detail below. Work was sampled in history and geography, as not enough teaching was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

71. In **history**, teachers use a good range of stimulus material to engage and challenge pupils. Learning is very often through direct experience. Teachers plan activities that are responsive to the ways in which pupils see the world and then they build on their interests. A Year 2 boy's interest in car registration numbers was encouraged by a visit to the school car park to look at new registration numbers and to learn ways in which things change over time. Year 6 pupils discovered how they and their friends had altered by looking at photographs taken at intervals over time. These were effective ways of teaching chronology. Through drama, they explore the lives of people from the past as well as developing their literacy skills. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is now a co-ordinator who has developed good schemes of work that follow the guidelines of the National Curriculum well. There is effective monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum that includes observations of teachers.

72. In **geography** lessons, pupils learn about the locations of different places. There is good reinforcement of signs and symbols with the younger pupils when logos of a fast food chain are identified on a trip to the shops. Year 6 pupils learn about waterways when making boats for canals.

Mapping skills are improved when older pupils work with an aerial photograph to recognise features of the landscape. Year 9 pupils work with co-ordinates as they study a map of an island. By Year 11, pupils' knowledge of the world about them is well taught through visits into the local and wider community. The subject is well co-ordinated. There have been sound improvements since the last inspection.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good because good teachers have effective ways of presenting complex concepts
- The leadership and management are good.

Commentary

73. Pupils' achievement is good across the school. They learn well about a number of different religions. They learn that some things are special to religions, such as the clothing, the food, ways of doing things, and the precious books that tell important stories or say what each religion is about. Pupils learn some of the stories from different religions, especially the Christian stories such as about Noah, Jonah and Jesus, and the parables that Jesus told. More than this, however, pupils learn *from* the different religions. They learn the lessons that Jesus and other religious leaders teach, about sharing, and being kind to each other, not bullying, looking after other people, animals and precious things. Pupils learn much about right and wrong from some of the stories, and are well taught to apply what they know in the classroom and the playground. From the many celebrations and special days that they take part in, pupils gain a very good sense of spirituality, and of being special themselves. These occasions also teach pupils about the richness of other cultures and faiths, through the dressing up, the food, prayers, music, or visits to other places of worship.

74. The teaching is good because it is based on clear planning and good preparation. Teachers assess how well their pupils are learning, and adapt their plans well for future lessons. They use a lot of well chosen resources to make the lessons more exciting and to help pupils to remember their experiences of lessons. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils shared out little open sandwiches in a picnic when playing out the story of Jesus feeding five thousand people. Afterwards, they thought of other ways they could share, including sharing the tape recorder, and the bikes in the playground. Teachers and support staff use signing very well to make their messages clear, emphasising the most important words, and getting pupils to respond as well as possible using speech, or signing, or writing, or an electronic switch.

75. The good leadership and management have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. The subject meets statutory requirements. The scheme of work addresses the Locally Agreed Syllabus and is being taught well. The scheme of work is well organised and relevant to the needs of the pupils. The resources have been built up well; they are well organised and accessible. The special days and festivals that are organised for the whole school, such as Christmas, Diwali, Holi, Easter, Harvest and Chinese New Year, are a great contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music and physical education are reported in full. Art and design and technology were sampled. In art, three parts of lessons with pupils in Years 1 to 6 were observed. In addition, pupils' work and teachers' records were examined and analysed. Design and technology is reported in full.

75. In **art**, the evidence from lessons and pupils' and teachers' records indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 explore a range of media to make collages and bubble prints. The higher achieving pupils name basic colours and some shades through colour mixing.

The lower achieving pupils enjoy finger painting and recognise that they have made marks. Year 6, higher achieving pupils apply paint and colour with increasing accuracy when painting in the style of well-known artists such as Mondrian. Pupils are encouraged to observe differences. Years 7 to 9 recognise differences sufficiently to paint good portraits of their friends. By the end of Year 11, some higher achieving pupils are independently selecting colours and their work shows a very sensitive appreciation of colour. When drawing and painting, their work shows increasingly good attention to detail.

76. In the best lessons, teachers made good use of communication aids to ensure all pupils understood. There was very good insistence on eye contact and tracking in the Year 1 class. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 with difficulties on the autistic spectrum are often well engaged by their own work and that of others. In the best lessons, teachers' planning was well focused and the activities for all abilities were clearly related to the purpose of the learning. For example, those with less control of brushes were using their fingers in the manner of aboriginal arts, whilst others painted in the style of Mondrian. The outcomes were compared during the plenary. However, in a less successful lesson, occasionally, activities for pupils were not well matched to individual needs. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were not occupied during introductory activities and higher achieving pupils were given tasks that were insufficiently challenging. Pupils' work is assessed well using the school's systems, but is not always related to pupils' individual targets.

77. There has been much development since the last inspection. There is an appropriate scheme of work for art that is based on the National Curriculum. Although planning is regularly monitored, the outcomes are not used to identify priorities for improving provision. Pupils' achievement is limited by the lack of specialist accommodation and storage.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Food technology is good and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social skills
- The lack of specialist accommodation limits the achievement of older pupils

Commentary

78. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6, is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils use junk to make a bus with axle and wheels. They learn to use a range of small kitchen equipment when making snacks and cakes, making use of labour saving equipment such as electric whisks with support. By the end of Year 6, pupils increasingly solve problems, such as how to prevent models for a fairground ride from tumbling over. They chop and grate food independently when making simple snacks. Lower achieving pupils enjoy exploring food through all their senses and construct towers of bricks with one to one support. Pupils with challenging behaviour are very well engaged by the activities and sometime demonstrate high levels of concentration. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties become excited and maintain good eye contact when exploring foods and equipment with hand over hand support.

79. By the end of Year 9, the higher attaining pupils learn to be independent according to their abilities, when helping to carry out tasks, such as spreading butter onto rolls and clearing up. They work with a range of materials, such as those used to make houses and masks. By the end of Year 11, the higher achieving pupils have competent fine motor skills and they tidy up well at the end of practical tasks. They create their own design for decorating a flower-pot, make models and, after discussion, they can modify their designs. They learn to order their thoughts and actions when making snacks and drinks. The range of materials and activities is limited by the lack of specialist accommodation for resistant materials.

80. Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons, the activities are very well matched to each pupil's abilities. For example, a pupil on a special diet was very well engaged by chopping fruit and vegetables with hand over hand support whilst the others made hot dogs. All the pupils were given tasks appropriate to their ability. As a result, pupils' confidence was boosted because they contributed to their own snack. Teachers make very good use of signing, symbols and multi-sensory resources to help pupils to understand concepts and instructions. They encourage pupils to sign, too, to adults and to each other. Very good questioning enabled pupils to make decisions and solve problems. In some lessons, but not all, there were opportunities to use information and communication technology, but this was generally as a reward or filler, rather than an activity that contributes to the aim of the lesson. Teachers encouraged pupils to take as much responsibility as possible. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, but planning tends to be in terms of tasks rather than skills and understanding. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work, even in Years 1 and 2. Food work is well used to support the learning of pupils who need a highly sensory experience. Teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to the pupils' learning by teaching groups and sometimes classes of pupils very competently.

81. The leadership and management are good. Samples of work are beginning to be collected to support assessments. Lessons are observed and feedback is given to teachers. However, the development planning is not clearly based on the evidence of outcomes from learning. Although the relationship between food technology and resistant materials is still not entirely clarified, good progress has been made in developing the subject since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Music is very well taught by a specialist
- Very good opportunities for pupils to learn and appreciate music outside of music lessons
- Pupils' attitudes to music are very good and they achieve very well

Commentary

82. Pupils' achievement in music is very good. In Year 2, as in all years, music constitutes an important part of communication. Year 6 pupils sing well in rounds. Year 9 pupils use percussion instruments effectively to express the sounds of weather. After listening to some music, pupils in Year 10 and 11 replicate what they hear using a variety of instruments. The school responds to individual needs very well, for example, by giving one-to-one tuition to a pupil who enjoys a particular kind of music. During these sessions the teacher promotes very good achievement through understanding the stimulus needed for individuals to make progress

83. Teaching is very good. The teacher is a music specialist. She has very good relationships with the pupils. She uses signing and symbols very well to communicate with pupils. They are clear about what they have to do in lessons. Planning is very detailed and well delivered. Lessons have clear structure and very good pace. They build well on previous learning. Adults are very effective in encouraging pupils' participation. Pupils' learning is, therefore, very good. There is a high level of enthusiastic participation in lessons.

84. Teachers work well with a variety of visitors to offer pupils a rich musical experience. For the assembly at the close of the day, music is well chosen to set a mood. For example, 'What a wonderful world' was chosen to reflect the celebration of the pupils' good work during the day. The school choir has a membership that includes a substantial proportion of the school population. It includes pupils from all years. The choir makes a significant contribution to pupils' confidence in their own ability to communicate through song and related actions. Pupils' responses to music are

very good. Good schemes of work are in place. The good leadership and management of the subject have led to good improvement since the last inspection

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good and pupils enjoy the subject
- Teachers provide a good range of activities to ensure all pupils are involved
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory

Commentary

85. Achievement in physical education is good in all years. The youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2 are familiar with the need to warm up and cool down before and after any strenuous activity. By Year 11, pupils compete in games such as Unihockey. They develop their skills of trapping, passing and hitting the ball very well despite sometimes considerable physical difficulties.

86. Teaching is good. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils have experiences that become increasingly challenging. Teachers are well aware of individual needs and plan activities that are well matched. As a result, all pupils are well included in all activities, including, for example, those in wheelchairs. The teacher makes effective use of music to create an appropriate atmosphere for the activity. Teachers and their assistants work closely with individual pupils to ensure that each is fully engaged and enjoys the lessons. Pupils, therefore, develop very good attitudes to the subject. A good range of visitors contribute very well to pupils' learning, including coaches from an internationally recognised rugby club. The sessions set a very good level of challenge and pupils' response is good.

87. Provision has been improved since the last inspection. There is now an effective co-ordinator who leads and manages the subject well. Well-conceived schemes of work have supported improved achievement for pupils and statutory requirements are met. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The size of the hall restricts the nature and scope of activities. The lack of a suitable grassed area results in ball games such as rugby being played on tarmac.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in developing their personal and social skills
- Insufficient vocational opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 limit their understanding of citizenship

Commentary

88. By the end of Year 2, the higher achieving pupils have learned a range of independence skills. They dress and undress themselves easily and make sensible choices about food. Lower achieving pupils use symbols with increasing confidence to exchange for food at break and lunch times. By the end of Year 6, pupils have become much more independent and sociable. The higher achieving pupils enjoy a joke. Lower achieving pupils with more complex learning difficulties have increased concentration and make choices from two options. Pupils with difficulties on the autistic spectrum

make good progress. They learn to consider others through the co-operative activities at breaks and lunchtimes.

89. By the end of Year 9, the higher achieving pupils have often learned appropriate behaviour in a good range of settings. The most able pupils use a knife and fork correctly at lunchtime. They carry on conversations with others and work as a team with support. They take part in fund-raising activities, sometimes suggesting appropriate activities. By the end of Year 11, the highest achievers have developed good friendships. They learn how to keep themselves safe by using public telephones. They begin to manage their time by considering the order of the activities involved in making a drink. They develop an understanding their own strengths and those of others. Parents believe that their children make considerable progress in becoming more mature as they move through the school. The most able are selected by their peers to be part of the school council and are beginning to be more assertive. They are aware of issues relating to bullying. Each pupil has targets for their personal and social development and records indicate that they make good progress in achieving them.

90. Teaching and learning are good. Daily routines are well used to reinforce and extend pupils' independence in a wide range of situations in Years 1 to 6. The school's strong emphasis on communication and decision making support pupils' learning well throughout their school career. Very effective use is made of the pupils' *communication passports* to ensure that they can all communicate. Pupils are given responsibilities as soon as they are able to carry them out. Pupils have very good support from adults to play productively and to help those less able than themselves. There are monthly reviews of the progress of each pupil. Pupils are regularly assessed. However, some inconsistent practice with respect to day-to-day assessments reduces the effectiveness of assessments. The school's very good support from parents helps to reinforce pupils' good independence skills. Parents know what their child's targets are and many work productively on them at home too. Careers advice, a good range of visits out of school and visitors into school are very effective in helping pupils learn about the world of work. Adults are very good role models. Opportunities for independence are limited for older pupils because of the joint curriculum for Years 7 to 11 and the lack of accredited courses for Years 10 and 11. As a result, opportunities are missed for older pupils to practice their citizenship skills in adult settings, for example, in the work place.

91. The part time subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She has good oversight of pupils' progress. Overall, there is a broad and relevant curriculum, particularly for Years 1 to 9 that includes appropriate strategies for sex and drugs education and citizenship. There are regular reviews of the curriculum, based on planning, observations of lessons, pupils' questionnaires, feedback from work experience and pupils' progress on their feeding plans. As a result, there has been much improvement since the last inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN POST 16

At the time of the inspection there were 16 students in the post-16 provision. Students follow basic skills courses in literacy and numeracy, as well as studying other curriculum areas for which they gain accreditation. All the students attend a local college for part of their week. The provision made for English, mathematics, religious education and personal and social education is reported in full below. Information and communication technology, vocational and careers education, design and technology and history were sampled.

Within the school-based aspects of the provision, there are strengths as follows:

- There are good relationships and students enjoy school
- Students gain good personal and social skills, however, there are limited opportunities to develop independence skills
- The range of the curriculum is good and enables students to gain experience of the community and the world of work

- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology

The quality of teaching and learning provided within school is good and this, in turn, leads to students' good achievement. Students consolidate their basic skills and gain a secure and thorough grasp of phonics, reading and writing, and the use and application of their number skills.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students continue to make good progress and achieve well
- Adults and pupils make very good use of communication aids

Commentary

92. Students' achievement is good. The higher achieving students speak clearly and listen well to adults and each other. They speak confidently in familiar situations and follow instructions accurately. They write sentences that have full stops and capital letters and then read them back. They enjoy books. As part of a project, they read books to very young children to find out their favourite ones. They chat with their peers about topics that interest them without support. More able pupils at the end of Year 14, write their name and address in full with varying amounts of support. Some pupils fluency is better than their understanding. Lower attaining students with profound and multiple learning difficulties make choices from two options by eye-pointing and make their enjoyment of activities clear from their body movements. They are beginning to understand how to give and take objects from another person. Their understanding is very well supported by the use of signing, symbols and multi-sensory resources. Some students without language make good use of switches.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because lessons are well structured and learning is reinforced very well
- Good use is made of homework to reinforce learning

Commentary

93. Students' achieve well in mathematics. The higher attaining pupils achieve external accreditation in number skills. They add two single digits together accurately and count to 100. They tell the time using digital and analogue clocks, and know the days of the week. Lower attaining students sequence numbers and shapes with support. They count to five but have difficulty in understanding *one more*.

94. Lessons are well structured and develop well from the concrete activities to exercises to practice the skills, followed by worksheets using symbols. The very good use of communication aids is a strong factor in promoting student's understanding. Students are helped to apply their learning by practising skills of counting at home with their parents.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good curriculum that ensures students have a good understanding of the major faiths
- The lessons contribute very well to students' personal development

Commentary

95. Students learn about the major faiths through a good range of activities that help them to appreciate the main similarities and differences between them. For example, they take part in celebrations of Shabbath and birthdays. They learn about special places related to different faiths. They link this with things that are special to them as individuals. Records indicate that, although much of the work has been repeated lower down the school, students continue to make good progress in their developing awareness and understanding of religion. The work on values, such as valuing friends and being kind to others makes a good contribution to students' own personal development.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students develop a good range of independence and communication skills
- Students' learning is good because they practise skills in relevant contexts
- Students are well prepared for the next stage of education

Commentary

96. Provision for students' **personal and social education** is good. Links with further education colleges and work experience support their understanding of **citizenship**. On these occasions, they mix with other students and adults and learn about life after school. The most able buy drinks from a coin operated vending machine. In school, students learn about personal grooming, changing and washing. They have appropriate sex education and develop a good understanding of road safety

97. The most able students are becoming more assertive and taking more initiative. Students increasingly take responsibility. They run assemblies and contribute to the School Council. They organise drinks and choose and start the music centre at break times. Working with the youngest pupils very effectively stimulates their interest and motivation. Nevertheless, students are still very dependent on adult direction. The lack of a student common room limits opportunities for them to begin to take responsibility under their own initiative.

OTHER COURSES

98. Preparation for the next stage of education is well promoted by **work experience and careers** education and advice. These experiences are well supported by the Connexions adviser and provide intensive opportunities to consider options for the future. Some students have experiences in a residential college. These provide very good preparation for life after school and support their citizenship skills well.

99. Students make effective use of **information and communication technology** to write reports of what they have done, to identify their own strengths and to use a job finder program in

careers. In other lessons, learning is reinforced using appropriate programs. The internet is used, for example, to look at other old houses. However, all of these activities are heavily supported by adults. The lack of hardware limits opportunities for students to become independent when using computers.

100. In **design and technology** lessons, higher attaining students were making puppets of characters from the favourite story books of young children. They had read the stories and remembered the titles. Through this activity, students were extending their communication skills very well. Both adults and students made excellent use of signing and symbols to follow instructions and consider problems as they arose during the construction. With varying degrees of support, they worked out how to make their puppets and sequence the activities. Some students were cutting felt shapes very accurately and carefully, other needed hand-over-hand support. In food lessons, the most able plan their own menus, shop for food and make simple meals and drinks without support. They extend their management and social skills very effectively when they invite parents to share their meals. The students with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience a wide range of different foods. Students are very well motivated by these practical lessons. They are well challenged by the activities and very proud of their achievements.

101. In a new module on **history**, students were achieving well. As a result of a visit to *an old house*, the higher achieving students know that people prepared food differently and slept in different kinds of beds. They were beginning to recognise that rich people lived in a different way from that of poor people. They handled and understood the function of a range of different equipment from the nineteenth century and compared them to modern equipment. The lower achieving students, with more complex learning difficulties, have a good range of relevant, multi-sensory experiences, matching artefacts to different rooms in the house.

102. One of the college links is for **physical education**. All students, including those in wheelchairs, have a fitness programme and take part in team games. This helps students to take part in a good range of activities that promote their physical and social development very effectively.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
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).