

INSPECTION REPORT

GROVE PARK

Crowborough

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114688

Headteacher: Christine Moody

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th May 2004

Inspection number: 258911

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	53
School address:	Church Road Crowborough East Sussex
Postcode:	TN6 1BN
Telephone number:	01892 663018
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Richard Partridge
Date of previous inspection:	26.01.1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school caters for up to 56 pupils and students from the age of 2 to 19. At present, there are 53 on roll of whom one is a part time nursery child and one other is of reception age. All the rest are of school age except fifteen who are students in the Post 16 provision which is situated on two different sites. Year 12 pupils are taught at Meadway, which is an adapted house, and Years 13 and 14 are taught by Grove Park staff on the site of the local community college, where they share facilities. All pupils and students have a statement of special educational needs. The majority of statements are for severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, although a minority of pupils are also autistic and two have moderate learning difficulties. All enter the school with attainment well below average. The largest group of pupils are of white British heritage with six being of other ethnic groups. Only one pupil is at an early stage of English as an additional language and 20 percent of pupils are looked after. The school is involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and has an award for careers. It is heavily involved in inclusion initiatives and wishes to move all pupils from the age of 11 onto the college site. However, the request for funding has been turned down but is due to be resubmitted. The school is subject to reorganisation as another local special school is closing and Grove Park is due to increase numbers and admit pupils with a wider range of complex needs. Most pupils and students come from a wide area of East Sussex. Pupil mobility is low but there have been significant changes recently in teaching staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	Citizenship French Geography History Personal, social and health education
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	English Religious Education Design and technology Foundation Stage Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school with some very good features. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to successfully implement developments despite significant staff changes. Pupils and students achieve well because teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. There is very effective personal development and care. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and senior management team have an excellent commitment to ensuring that all pupils receive an education matched to their needs in the most appropriate setting.
- Individual needs are met because teachers plan very effectively for them.
- The arrangements for students in Years 13 and 14 to be taught on the site of the local community college, together with a very effective curriculum, prepare them very successfully for life after school.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result from the very successful relationships they form with all staff.
- Some aspects of accommodation adversely effect learning.
- Although there has been a clear improvement in subject co-ordination, not all subjects are co-ordinated as well as they could be.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. For example, schemes of work are all in place and modified to take account of pupils' and students' needs. Behaviour has improved due to more effective and consistently used management strategies. Good teaching has led to better achievement. School priorities are costed, ensuring that they can be successfully implemented. Although there has been improvement in the role of the subject co-ordinator, more still needs to be done. There has been improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) where there is now a scheme of work and assessment in place. However, this has recently slowed due to several changes of co-ordinator.

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	Very good
Year 6	Good	Very good
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good
Year 14	Very good	Very good

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

It was not possible to make judgements on achievement for Foundation Stage children as there are very few children in this stage at the moment. However, their progress in lessons is very good.

Pupils' and students' achievement is good overall. Pupils enter the school with attainment well below that of others for their age. Nevertheless, whatever their special educational need, they all make good progress and achieve well over time. By the end of Year 14, students achieve very well in communication and their vocational work. This is due to an exceptionally well designed curriculum and relevant awards and certificates which focus on the life and independence skills needed for adult life. Achievement in English, mathematics and science is good for pupils of school age, and often

very good for those in Year 11, due to planning matched to their age and needs. Pupils achieve well in communication across a range of subjects when using signs and symbols. For younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 this is crucial in helping them gain basic language skills. Achievement is satisfactory in ICT where there have been staff changes, though the subject does not yet support pupil and student achievement across subjects as well as it could. Pupils and students achieve very well in personal, social and health education. This is due to a wide range of activities that motivate them and raise their personal, social and citizenship skills.

Pupils' and students' personal qualities are very well developed and those for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils and students positively reflects the very good school ethos. They enjoy school, work hard, are enthusiastically involved in routines and feel that staff value them. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is consistently good and very effectively planned. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together so that pupils have the support they need to confidently complete tasks. There is a good range of activities for pupils and students which are relevant to their ages and requirements. Although the school is well resourced, there is a lack of specialist science and design and technology accommodation for older pupils and problems with access for some Post 16 students. This means that there are a few times when they cannot have access to the full range of experiences. Nevertheless, the school works hard to minimise this. Pupils and students are cared for very well and experience a range of beneficial school and community links.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Statutory requirements are met. Governors have a good overview and are very involved in the proposed plans for older pupils and students to share a mainstream site. The headteacher has a very good vision for the school which has been crucial during the staff changes and planning for the co-location of part of the school. She is exceptionally well supported by those with major responsibilities and an enthusiastic staff. The school is well managed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that their children are happy to attend school and are expected to work hard. They are pleased with the progress their children are making and pleased with the encouragement provided for pupils to gain maturity and independence.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all subjects are effectively monitored and co-ordinated.
- Improve accommodation and resources for Post 16 students, particularly for wheelchair users.
- Improve specialist accommodation in science and design and technology for secondary age pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well below average compared to those for pupils of the same age. However, all pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, looked after pupils and those with additional special needs achieve well. By the time students leave in Year 14 they are achieving very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement in the achievement of pupils and students is well supported by analysing pupil data and setting targets for improvement.
- Achievement in English, including communication, mathematics and science is good throughout the school due to very well planned work.
- A comprehensive range of improved accreditation successfully supports the increasingly very good achievement of older pupils and students.
- Achievement in personal, social and health education is very good because activities are carefully designed to teach relevant skills throughout the day.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to use numeracy and ICT across the curriculum to support achievement in other subjects.

Commentary

1. Since the last inspection, when progress was satisfactory, there has been a marked improvement in pupil and student achievement. While it is not possible to comment on the achievement over time of the two Foundation Stage children, one of whom has just joined the school part time, progress in lessons is very good. This is due to very good planning which is a feature throughout the school. It successfully takes into account pupils' individual needs ensuring they make good gains in lessons. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties are particularly well included in lessons and staff work very hard to ensure they make good progress. As a result, there are no differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils and students. This improvement has also been aided by the use of school targets which are set using pupils' individual targets. Progress is analysed at the end of the year and further targets set. Any developments arising from this analysis needed to further pupil achievement, such as staff training, rewriting schemes of work or ensuring targets that are specific and measurable, are put in the school improvement plan. This is then acted upon and has had a positive effect on pupil progress.

2. In English, carefully adapted work ensures that pupils and students gain a good range of basic skills. Younger pupils are helped, in a variety of ways, to develop communication skills and they make good progress in this area. Speaking and listening are well supported across the curriculum. This is accomplished by the consistent use of signing and symbols. These are used regularly and routinely throughout the day, along with frequent opportunities for discussion work for higher attaining pupils and other strategies, such as the use of switches, for those who need them. This helps pupils to know what is expected of them. It also gives pupils, whatever their needs, the confidence to make every effort to communicate. The planned use of symbols also assists pupils in gradually expanding their understanding of reading and the development of good writing skills. This is because symbols help to reinforce work in a practical and visual way which pupils enjoy. In mathematics, good achievement is the result of time spent on developing the scheme of work, particularly the way the school has adapted the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. This is supported by teachers' references in their planning to individual targets, further enhancing and extending achievement opportunities. In science and in mathematics pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and behave well. This is because they are motivated by the practical nature of lessons. Lessons are well designed to keep them interested and they make good gains in their understanding of prediction when doing investigations.

3. Pupils and students from Year 11 upwards greatly benefit from the good range of accredited ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) courses, such as the Transition Challenge, Towards Independence and the Life Skills Qualification, appropriate to their age and needs. For higher attaining students there is also the opportunity to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Year 11 pupils especially benefit from awards because it is not long since awards were started for them. Very well planned programmes in basic and vocational skills challenge pupils and students. As a result, they complete a very good range of work, taking a pride in their presentation. They are keen to do well, particularly when working on independence skills such as those for home management in Years 13 and 14. This is supported by expert teaching of a wide range of skills and very practical activities such as learning about voting, using transport, healthy foods and opportunities for work related activities. By the time they leave in Year 14, students have a good range of awards, are confident and have made very good gains in a variety of skills they will need when they leave school.

4. Personal development is very well supported by personal, social and health education and citizenship where, from the moment they enter the school, pupils begin to learn skills of choosing, turn taking and building relationships through activities such as circle and snack time. By the time they are in Years 10 to 14, pupils and students progress very well in skills for life. Apart from personal, social and health education lessons, activities such as lunch time experiences range from feeding programmes to older students shopping for, and cooking, their own meals. Visits into the community and an after school club reinforce social, personal and life skills in a more practical setting. Parents feel that independence skills are promoted particularly well and that this helps their children gain self esteem.

5. Although the use of communication across the curriculum is good, opportunities to support achievement in other subjects through the use of numeracy and ICT are often less effectively planned. As a result, the skills achieved are not always reinforced or used to support work in other subjects. There are instances of younger pupils using counting rhymes and counting the steps in sequences in physical education and of older pupils and students making simple graphs in citizenship and science, and shopping and weighing out ingredients in food technology. However, this is not undertaken consistently and opportunities to add to the pupils' overall good achievement are sometimes lost. Although achievement in ICT has improved for school age pupils since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, insufficient use is made of ICT in areas such as presenting data in mathematics and science and for older students in their accreditation work. There is improvement in the use of written symbols by pupils. Although switches are not used as much as they could be, resources in the sensory room help to stimulate pupils with the most severe disabilities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. Pupils' and students' personal qualities are very well developed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with social and moral development being very good. Pupils display very good attitudes to work and learning and have very good standards of behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils and students are highly motivated by school activities and, in lessons, try very hard and show a real desire to learn.
- The school is an orderly environment where unacceptable behaviour is consistently and effectively managed.
- There is very good improvement in pupils' and students' personal development as they move through the school.
- Pupils' and students' enjoyment of the school is reflected in the good level of attendance and the lack of unauthorised absence.

Commentary

7. Attitudes and behaviour have significantly improved since the last inspection and are a major factor influencing achievement and development. Through a consistent approach, which values pupils equally, all staff successfully create a positive, happy environment where pupils are trusting and motivated to make the most of the experiences that are provided. On arrival at the school pupils are excited at meeting staff and friends and enthusiastically get involved in routines. In most lessons, pupils show high levels of interest, persevere well with tasks and activities and try hard to improve. Discussion with pupils and students often uncovers a real pride in their achievements. For example, Post 16 boys glowed with satisfaction when describing how they had taken orders, bought food and prepared a meal for their class mates.

8. The school works hard and effectively to promote acceptable standards of behaviour and deals well with any incidents of bullying or harassment. Pupils and students do occasionally become frustrated or disturbed with their own difficulties and disabilities but staff manage these situations in a very caring and consistent manner, ensuring minimum disruption to others' learning. In lessons, behaviour is very good. It is significantly helped by the very constructive relationships pupils and students enjoy with teachers and teaching assistants. They contribute freely and politely to proceedings. The positive use of humour is a common feature in many lessons and helps pupils and students to feel that learning is a positive experience. At break and lunchtimes on the school site, pupils interact in a polite and orderly manner. The behaviour code is clearly understood and respected and pupils are delighted to engage adults in conversation. Inspectors found pupils holding open doors and being both delighted to answer and keen to ask questions.

9. Pupils' levels of personal development improve as they progress through the school due to the strong relationships they have with staff. They willingly take on responsibilities whenever offered. Post 16 students have responded well to the new School Council and it is planned to extend involvement to include younger pupils. Younger pupils take the register and help staff put equipment away at the end of lessons. The very good moral and social development assists pupils and students in having a clear understanding of right and wrong and they show an increasing social awareness as they get older. For example, when a student became angry and upset, another student showed considerable understanding and a high level of social skill whilst comforting and persuading the student to rejoin the lesson. Pupils and students learn to respect and value each other regardless of ability or special need. The school ensures that they have good opportunities to enhance their understanding of the world around them. Pictorial evidence shows spiritual moments of discovery on outings to garden centres and when pupils first experience touching animals. This year the school celebrated Chinese New Year and pupils had the opportunity to try Chinese food. They took part in a procession with a paper dragon that they had made. In French, older pupils sample French culture. The African drum group is widely supported and enjoyed by pupils of all ages.

10. Attendance levels are good and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils and students enjoy attending Grove Park and can become upset if they are unable to attend. The school monitors attendance effectively at an individual level and immediately follows up unexplained absence on the rare occasions when reasons are not known. Sensitive support is made available to any pupils and parents who have difficulties with attendance. Punctuality to school is good despite being traffic dependent and daily proceedings run to time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	0
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	47	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good because work is effectively designed to meet pupils' and students' individual special needs. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils and students well and work together to make sure learning is a positive experience. There is a good range of activities for them which are relevant to their ages and requirements. However, a lack of some specialist accommodation for older pupils and restrictions on access for some Post 16 students, means that there are a few times when they cannot have access to the full range of experiences. Pupils and students are cared for very well and undertake a range of beneficial school and community links.

Teaching and learning

12. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment is effective throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good for pupils in the Foundation Stage, Years 1 and 2 and for those in Years 13 and 14.
- Planning for pupils' different needs is very good and very effectively supports the learning of all pupils in lessons and throughout the day.
- Teachers consistently manage pupils very well and expect high standards of behaviour and work.
- Teaching is most successful where there are very good relationships and a variety of teaching methods and relevant practical activities are used.
- Assessment effectively supports learning and planning by successfully identifying pupils' and students' next steps.

Commentary

13. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. This is due to good levels of relevant training for both teachers and teaching assistants resulting from consistent monitoring of teaching and effective mentoring of new staff. It has been achieved despite the many staff changes. One area of most improvement has been behaviour management. Staff manage this consistently and very effectively, carefully grouping pupils and students to minimise any problems and ensure they are not distracted. There are high expectations that pupils and students will behave appropriately and work hard. They respond positively to this, settling to activities well. Those who need them have specific behaviour plans. These are well known to staff and carefully implemented whenever necessary. This means that pupils and students with challenging behaviours are managed

successfully and there is a calm atmosphere in lessons. As a result, they feel secure, lessons are not disrupted, little time is lost to work and they continue to make progress.

14. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage and those pupils in Years 1 and 2 is strong because the activities are carefully organised so that tasks are practical and assist their small steps of progress. They are often taught one to one and this helps them concentrate and enjoy their work. Group activities are carefully managed so that school age pupils can begin to relate to each other, such as in circle time where they take turns in deciding who to greet. Lessons are planned so that teaching assistants know what they need to do and are confident in working with the pupils. As a result, new pupils settle in well and quickly begin to learn. Very experienced teaching for students in Years 13 and 14, is successfully aimed at helping them gain maturity and independence. Staff make sure they benefit from a range of practical activities and awards appropriate to their needs as young adults so students feel valued and involved. Work related activities are realistic and well organised to make sure students learn a wide range of skills. This they appreciate as they know they will need these skills when they leave school. Instances of very good teaching were also seen in classes for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and 7 to 9 where some very active and relevant learning took place.

15. A strong feature of the school is the way teachers, even those who have not been in the school long, plan for the wide variety of pupils' and students' needs. This takes a great deal of organising because much work is practical and pupils complete a range of activities aimed at ensuring their individual needs are met. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils and students, whatever their needs, in classes with those of the same age. The planning of lessons and the ways in which these pupils and students are taught ensure that they are full participants in lessons. In addition, individual education plans effectively support the activities taught to individuals by ensuring that planning and expectations are appropriate to each pupil or student. In this teachers are ably assisted by teaching assistants who work effectively with pupils. For example, in a Year 7 to 9 mathematics lesson on capacity, teaching assistants worked well with individuals and small groups using a good range of experiences that utilised touch. This meant that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties could experience full, half full and empty while higher attaining pupils were measuring capacity and completing graphs.

16. In addition to the taught curriculum, staff plan to make the most of every opportunity to encourage school age pupils to learn relevant skills. Lunchtime care plans are carefully tailored to meet pupils' communication, social and physical needs and they are patiently helped to become more independent. For example, pupils with autism learn to communicate using objects of reference. Other pupils are aided in targets to initiate conversations, to negotiate where they will sit, and to say 'please' and 'thank you', while others with motor difficulties are helped to learn to hold and use their spoons correctly. Pupils welcome this and try hard to learn these skills.

17. Learning is effective because staff know pupils and students very well. Very successful relationships help pupils trust staff and gives them confidence to try activities. For example, in one Year 3 to 6 lesson pupils were happy to show their work in developing a sequence on the apparatus. This supported their self esteem and independence. Staff work hard to make sure all can take an active part in lessons. They use a variety of methods and often use very practical resources which utilise taste, touch and smell. For example, pupils playing a scene from Oliver Twist made and tasted porridge. Imaginative teaching methods led to one group excitedly using a variety of physical education equipment for their work on forces in science.

18. Assessment has been well developed since the last inspection, and is now of good quality. The school has introduced the use of a commercial package which breaks down learning into small steps. This enables teachers to see how well pupils are learning. It is used as the basis of setting individual targets for pupils, and also to inform lesson planning. At present it is in use only for English, maths, science, personal, social and health education and ICT, but there are plans to gradually introduce other subjects where assessment is not as detailed. Staff have had some opportunities to discuss their judgements about the levels, to ensure that all are working on the same basis, and further work on this is planned. A recent improvement has been the addition of comments on pupils' work so that it is possible to see the level of help which they required to complete a

particular task. There is often good on-going assessment in lessons, when staff review with pupils what they have done, offering praise for contributions. Some examples of pupils attempting to evaluate their own work were seen, but this is an area for further development.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3 %)	12 (34 %)	18 (51 %)	3 (9 %)	1 (3 %)	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.

The curriculum

19. The curriculum is good. It provides a broad range of opportunities and activities, relevant to the needs of the pupils and students. Extra-curricular activities and enrichment of provision by visits to the local community are good. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, although resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in curriculum planning, especially in English and mathematics, ensure that all pupils gain a broad range of experiences and progress well.
- The very effective 16 – 19 curriculum ensures activities are relevant, practical and matched closely to students' wide ranging needs.
- The extra-curricular and enrichment provision is good and provides effective opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills.
- Certain aspects of accommodation make it harder for some pupils and students to have access to certain experiences.

Commentary

20. One of the most important improvements since the last inspection has been ensuring that schemes of work are in place for pupils in Years 1 to 11 and are consistently used as a basis for planning. These have recently been reviewed for English and mathematics to make sure that they are modified to take into account the more complex needs of the pupils. They are then used to construct effective and appropriate termly plans from which lessons are prepared ensuring that pupils are taught a good range of basic skills. There is a yearly overview of planning for all subjects to ensure that aspects are covered and nothing is left out. As a result, planning is consistent throughout the school. However, class teachers do have the flexibility to write plans which, whilst covering content requirements, can be adapted to the specific interest, needs and capabilities of the pupils in their groups. The individual record of each pupil's achievements, completed regularly, gives staff further specific information about pupils with which to plan the curriculum. This guarantees that pupils are taught a broad range of experiences which take into account their needs and ensure they have every opportunity to achieve as well as they can.

21. The school has worked hard to implement its vision for the education of students at Post 16 and the school now offers a separate, and very effective, overall provision. The use of facilities at the local community college has clearly strengthened students' links with mainstream education. However, during the inspection there were some difficulties with the use of an ICT facility, where aspects, such as access to the internet and some programs rendered the lesson ineffective.

22. Despite this, the strong, well planned curriculum that has been put in place, now meets the needs of all of the students who are in the Post 16 phase. It continues to build on the key skills of communication, numeracy, literacy, and ICT. The very good range of accreditation helps students to become more independent and includes experiences they can continue with after leaving school,

such as leisure, tourism or horticulture. Students are enabled to achieve so well because the department is very skilfully managed and extremely well led. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of the aims of Post 16 education. As a consequence, the curriculum provided for students is based on a sound rationale – that is for them to become as independent as possible, with the social skills and knowledge for them to function in the community.

23. The school works successfully to widen pupils' experience and understanding of their locality and community with a range of visits out of school and visitors into school which support the curriculum. These have included sporting activities such as football tournaments, and a variety of courses at the local leisure centre. Musicians and theatre groups have visited the school and students participate in after school clubs, such as the Drum Circle club which was very well attended during the inspection.

24. Although accommodation is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection, there is no specialist accommodation for science or the resistant materials aspects of design and technology at Grove Park. This limits the delivery of some aspects of these subjects for pupils in Years 7 to 11. However, during the summer term, use is made of these facilities at the local community college which goes some way towards augmenting pupils' learning in these areas. At Meadway, where Year 12 students are mainly taught, and at the college site, stairs limit the access of some pupils to areas within the buildings and therefore to facilities. The school knows there are issues and, on the whole, works hard, and effectively, to fill any gaps in the curriculum. Governors and the headteachers of both Grove Park and the community school are rightly making every effort to lobby for improvements in the accommodation and resources. This is particularly urgent as there will be an extra Post 16 class next year.

Care, guidance and support

25. Pupils' and students' care, welfare, health and safety are very well provided for at Grove Park. Well informed support and guidance are made available to all as they progress through the school. There are satisfactory procedures for taking pupils' and students' views into consideration.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff show very good levels of care and concern for pupils and students and they work sensitively to build trusting relationships with them.
- Care and support for pupils and students is enhanced through the very effective links with external agencies and specialists.
- Personal development is well monitored; good quality advice and guidance involving outside agencies are effectively helping pupils to develop and to prepare them for adult life.
- Opportunities for pupils to express their views and opinions are starting to develop in the Post 16 provision but are less developed for pupils of school age.

Commentary

26. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place and the school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. Staff know how important effective levels of care are and ensure that day to day activities are carried out safely. Care needs, such as toileting, are dealt with sensitively and promptly, so little work time is lost. Staff have pupils' and students' well being in mind at all times and are available for individual pupils and students which makes them feel appreciated and helps their self esteem. Effective supervision is always provided, particularly at break and lunchtime, where staff often make available stimulating activities and a range of equipment such as bikes for pupils for school age pupils. Good systems ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly eliminated. The school knows that this is important where there are pupils with a range of complex needs. Pupils respond well to the consistent caring approach, are happy at the school and enjoy very good, trusting relationships with all adults.

27. Since the last inspection, the school has developed stronger and more effective links with a wide range of external agencies and therapists. The involvement of the Family Intensive Support Service and Social Services in most annual and transition reviews ensures a broad professional input to the assessment of need and determination of development targets. There is good support for pupils from the speech and language therapist and physiotherapist. They work in the school on a regular basis, and help pupils to achieve their learning goals. The school provides music therapy to enhance self esteem, sharing and self expression. It also buys in additional support to advise on pupils with sensory impairments, to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to meet the needs of these youngsters. There is a member of staff who is co-ordinator for sensory impairment and communication. This is a relatively new role, but the co-ordinator is very clear of the ways in which this can be developed to support colleagues and pupils.

28. Good assessment procedures and the close contact with teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils' and students' academic progress and personal development are continuously monitored. The practice of establishing academic improvement targets for all pupils and students is consistent and teachers intervene effectively whenever targets are not being met. Staff know pupils and students very well and are soon aware if they are distracted or preoccupied. Whenever personal development is at risk, the school is quick to identify individually tailored support and guidance programmes to address difficulties. Behaviour management plans are of good quality and effectively help staff to encourage pupils and students in a consistent manner.

29. Good quality impartial guidance on careers and preparation for life after school is made available to all pupils and parents at transition reviews. The personal, social and health education programme and citizenship lessons provide good opportunities for pupils and students to develop their understanding of the wider world and to support their preparation for adult life. Closely supported work experience placements are organised wherever practical and there are an increasing number of opportunities for pupils and students to visit local employers, to spend time at colleges and to sample further training courses.

30. The school is starting to involve pupils and students more in day to day organisation. Individually they are often encouraged to give views and opinions on their experiences and on aspects of daily routines. However, the school has not, until recently, formally sought to gather views and to involve pupils and students in its work and development. The new School Council provides an opportunity for Post 16 students to express views and make suggestions. This is appreciated by most students and has raised some interesting ideas for changes to routines at the community college site. The school is now rightly planning to extend the School Council to involve younger pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

31. The school enjoys a good, supportive partnership with parents. Good links with the community enrich learning opportunities. There are good links with mainstream schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are strongly supportive of the school and the majority are very pleased with the progress their children make.
- Information given to parents is good.
- Community figures, organisations and facilities are well used to extend and enrich learning opportunities.
- Improving links with mainstream primary schools and the very good link with the local community college are extending opportunities for some pupils.

Commentary

32. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that teaching is good, and that children are expected to work hard. They are pleased with the progress their children are making and are consulted about targets and feel this helps them support their children. There is also positive support for the consistent level of care shown by staff, for the openness and approachability of the school and for the encouragement provided to help pupils gain maturity. However, a few parents said they would like more information on pupil progress and development.

33. The school works hard to develop the partnership with parents and to provide every assistance to aid parental involvement in children's schooling. The information made available to parents on pupil and student development and progress is good. The annual report provides good quality commentaries on what they know understand and can do and gives clear information on how to improve. Well attended consultation evenings provide formal opportunities for parents to discuss achievements in more detail. Day to day information on effort and achievement is effectively communicated through the home school book or by phone. Annual reviews are attended by virtually all parents and provide excellent opportunities to be fully involved in the review of progress and development targets. Parents with worries are actively encouraged to contact school at any time and the school is quick to contact home if there are any concerns. Information on the curriculum topics being studied is regularly sent home. Special sessions for parents on topics like sleep and bed wetting have been organised to assist parents but unfortunately attendance at these meetings is usually low.

34. The school enjoys good links with the local community. The main school building and facilities are used by a few clubs and societies notably the African drum group which is attended by a lot of pupils. Community figures making regular visits to the school include members of local churches, medical professionals, theatre groups and members of the local emergency services. Pupils and students enjoy and benefit from regular outings and trips to local shops, garden centres, the Leisure Centre, the riding stables, farms and local churches. Community interaction has increased since the last inspection and is being effectively used to extend and enrich learning experiences

35. The school has developed a good link with a local infant school. A few carefully selected pupils from Year 2 to Year 4 spend up to half a day a week attending lessons and interacting with mainstream pupils. This has a positive effect on their social skills. The co-location arrangement with the local community college provides much improved opportunities for Post 16 students to broaden their educational experiences and to enhance their social development. The students located at the local college have adapted to the different routines very well and have made friendships with mainstream pupils. To date there is no integration of pupils into mainstream classes, but Grove Park pupils do enjoy some lessons in specialist facilities that are taught by mainstream staff. Transition arrangements for older students are increasingly including opportunities to visit and experience taster courses at a number of local colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

36. The leadership and management of the school are good. Governors are effective in their role. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and those of other key staff good. The school is managed well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent role models provided by the senior management team have been crucial in ensuring that, despite a high turn over of staff, there is a sense of purpose and pupils and students continue to receive a good quality education.
- There is an excellent commitment to ensuring all pupils and students receive an education matched to their needs despite the uncertainty of the bid to co-locate all secondary age pupils.
- Governors support the work of the school well and are very involved in developments for the future.

- Monitoring and evaluation is very good and used to set priorities for the improvement plan.
- The development of some subject, and other middle management, responsibilities has slowed due to the large turnover of staff.

Commentary

37. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. This has been maintained due to the impressive way the senior management team of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have worked together in the face of many staff changes. This has resulted in most priorities identified in the school improvement plan being successfully developed, even if a few are not as far forward as the school would like. The senior management team leads by example. The deputy and assistant headteacher are often in the classroom supporting staff and teaching. This has been particularly important in maintaining consistent routines and the calm management of pupils and students so that there is little disruption to learning. The very good leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the future has ensured that individual needs have continued to be successfully met at the same time as planning to extend provision. As a result, all senior managers have a very good overview and know where developments are needed to further ensure a good education for all. This has stood them in good stead when extra responsibilities have been picked up due to staff changes. Parents overwhelmingly feel the school is well led and managed.

38. Where co-ordinators have been in the school for a while, co-ordination, the overview and developments are either very good, such as in English, personal, social and health education and Post 16, or good such as in mathematics, science, music and geography. Given the changes, the school has rightly prioritised and concentrated on improving those subjects they see as the most important. Although subject co-ordination has developed since the last inspection, for some areas of responsibility it has recently only been possible to maintain improvements through monitoring by senior managers, particularly the deputy headteacher. However, improvements in the curriculum overall have ensured there has been little adverse effect on achievement. Now that the school has a more stable staffing, managers understand that the development of co-ordinator roles is a priority, particularly for ICT, history and religious education.

39. Governance has improved since the last inspection with governors having an effective understanding of strategic planning. There is a good range of committees all of which successfully monitor their particular aspects of the school. This is because the focus of much of their work is on evaluating developments and priorities in the school improvement plan. These priorities are now firmly linked to the school's budget setting process and developments are evaluated for effectiveness, particularly with regard to pupil achievement. Planning ahead means that the school has been able to put money aside because there is need for a further class next year. Governors have been very actively involved in the discussions about the school's future.

40. Monitoring and evaluation is an area that the school rightly considers to be very important if the school is to move forward. Because of this, the headteacher is very involved with the group who are reviewing the county scheme for self evaluation. The headteacher knows pupils very well and carefully tracks their progress. There are rigorous and systematic routines in place so that managers have a very good understanding of the school. Monitoring, particularly of teaching, is developmental and peer observations are in place. This has been particularly helpful for new teachers who are closely monitored and mentored. Although the school feels more could be done in this area, induction procedures have clearly supported new staff in their planning and teaching for a wide range of needs. All evaluation is used to inform the school development plan and relevant professional development for teachers and teaching assistants is put in place and considered a priority. Governors and staff are fully involved in the process and there are an impressive range of staff meetings which are geared to school improvement plan issues. This involvement of staff helps them to be committed and motivated, keeping pupils' needs in mind at all times.

41. There is a strong policy of inclusion within the school with all pupils, whatever their needs, being in classes along with others of the same age. This has not been in place long and has significant implications for pupil management. However, the ethos which ensures that priority is

placed on individual work matched to needs, the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of the experiences they receive, results in high standards for all. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to experience education in other establishments culminating in Year 13 and 14 having most of their education on the site of the local community college. This has proved to be very beneficial to both schools. The school has plans, not only to locate all secondary pupils on the community college site, but to extend links with other schools and agencies for younger pupils. Despite the setbacks, there are plans to extend the number of students on the community school site next year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	745582
Total expenditure	777585
Expenditure per pupil	14671

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	141852
Balance carried forward to the next	98769

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, which is a significant improvement from the time of the last inspection; as a result pupils make very good progress in lessons.
- Children at the Foundation Stage are fully included in all activities in the class which are well matched to the early learning goals.
- Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good
- Communication is being very well developed by means of a range of strategies appropriate to the needs of children.

Commentary

43. At the time of the inspection there were only two children in this age group, who were taught in a class with pupils aged 6 -7. One of the Foundation Stage children had entered the school only recently, and on a part time basis. Because of the small number of children, it is not appropriate to make a judgement about overall achievement. However, they make very good progress in lessons.

44. Teaching is very good because there is a clear understanding of each child's needs and these are well identified in planning and record keeping. A range of very appropriate activities is effectively used to arouse children's interest. Resources provide a variety of sensory experiences, for example, in telling a story, or in helping children to gain meaning from a science lesson. Staff ensure that children are involved in all lessons. They engage them on a one to one basis and encourage them to respond in whatever way they can, for example, by looking at the teacher. Other adults work well as part of the class team, and encourage children to stay in the group and to listen and take part.

45. Children's **personal and social development** is a key feature in the classroom. All adults work hard to help these children to settle into the class routines, and to begin to make relationships with others. As a result, the children grow in confidence and are able to stay as part of the group for increasing lengths of time. Provision for developing **communication, language and literacy** is very good, as adults provide an environment which supports communication. There is consistent emphasis on understanding of language, and on the use of signing and symbols to support this development. Children are part of a class in which story telling and songs help them to become aware of the use of language. **Mathematical development** is well supported by the use of songs and number rhymes, which help the children to become aware of counting activities. Sensory experiences are well used to support learning, for example, one child was feeling large plastic numbers as a counting rhyme was sung. **Knowledge and understanding of the world** is developed as children are made aware of the world around them. For example, in preparation for a farm visit, children were looking at pictures and exploring models and puppets of a variety of animals and were helped to make choices of animal and materials to create a collage. There is a particular emphasis in **creative development** on the use of music. Singing is used on many occasions during the day to reinforce understanding of different areas of the curriculum. Children show interest in music and respond with smiles or gesture to known songs or to opportunities to touch or choose musical instruments. **Physical development** is assisted through different activities including physiotherapy for those who require this. Good support from adults enables children to participate in physical activities, encouraging different types of movement, and supporting attempts to place objects accurately, for example, by putting a bean bag in a bowl.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, 4 and Post 16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

46. Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress in all aspects of English, an improvement from the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- All pupils are fully included in lessons.
- Communication is well developed through the use of signs and symbols; less use is made of objects of reference and switches.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

47. Teachers generally plan very well to meet the needs of all their pupils. They ensure that they have opportunities to take part in all elements of lessons, for example, by carefully targeting questions at individual pupils. Teachers and support staff work very well as class teams. They have very good knowledge of their pupils, understand the ways in which they communicate and learn and so set suitable tasks which enable pupils to respond at appropriate levels. Teachers make very good use of a variety of resources to engage pupils' attention and to help their understanding. This ensures all, including those with the most significant needs, are fully involved, such as in a Year 7 to 9 lesson where all pupils took part in an excerpt from *Oliver Twist*. Most teachers are skilled in managing pupils with more challenging behaviours. As a result they are helped to settle quickly and return to their tasks and continue with their learning. Teaching overall has improved since the time of the last inspection when it was considered to be generally satisfactory.

48. Pupils, particularly younger ones, are helped, in a variety of ways, to develop communication skills and they make good progress in this area. Effective use is made of a variety of strategies to help pupils develop these skills, for example, by the use of signs and symbols. All staff are involved in this so that, for example, pupils are able to use symbols to make choices at lunch times which reinforces the importance of their use. Pupils are also well supported by the work of the speech and language therapist who develops communication programmes for those who need them, and who works with individuals and groups of pupils to support their communication development. As a result of all these experiences, pupils with more complex needs begin to communicate, making choices using symbols or following their timetable through these symbols. Some with the most significant needs respond to their names by smiling, or greet others by pressing a switch, which they also use to make choices. As they move through the school, higher attaining pupils answer questions, follow instructions, share their news and give their points of view, for example, in discussions in personal and social education. They extend their vocabulary and successfully learn to take turns in speaking and listening. Some pupils are assisted to make use of switches to help them to communicate, or of objects of reference to help them know in which activities they are to be involved. At present the use of these is not as well developed as other aspects of communication, and further attention to these could broaden opportunities for some pupils.

49. Pupils gradually develop an understanding of reading, which is well supported by the use of symbols. Many pupils understand how to follow the text when books are read to them, or turn the pages to look at pictures. They begin to sequence stories in words and pictures. Some recognise the names of other pupils or those of the characters in their reading books, while those with more complex needs identify the symbols for the weather or the time table for the day. Higher attaining

pupils read short sentences, follow a reading scheme and begin to read material in different subjects. This is often presented with text and matching symbols, which helps pupils to understand. Higher attaining pupils read aloud confidently in a science lesson on forces, while others follow the text or listen. Skilful teaching enables pupils to learn about a range of different literature, for example, pupils in Year 11 were developing a good basic knowledge of the story of Treasure Island. By Year 14, Post 16 students carefully follow instructions and take part with assurance in discussions on what they have learnt.

50. Writing skills are being well developed with some pupils making marks on paper or in different materials such as sand and paint. Higher attaining pupils begin to copy patterns and then copy under writing which they have dictated to an adult. They answer questions by adding the correct word to a sentence or by writing a few words – again, often with the use of symbols as well as text. They learn that there can be different reasons for writing, for example in a story or poem, in sequencing instructions or in preparing personal statements in preparation for leaving school.

51. The deputy headteacher is responsible for leading the subject. He has ensured good improvement by having a very clear vision for the way in which the subject should be developed and has made great progress with planning the curriculum and assessment. Good use is made of the national strategies in planning the curriculum for pupils up to age 14, which helps to ensure that they get a wide variety of experiences in the curriculum. Some further identification of different texts to be used would ensure that all encounter a wide range of literature. For pupils and students age 14-19, the curriculum is based mainly on the ASDAN modules. However, there is good extension of these, to ensure a wider coverage of the subject including literature and writing for different purposes. The co-ordinator monitors the subject very well, checking both the curriculum to ensure that all aspects are covered, and observing teaching to advise on any improvements needed. Pupils' achievements in English are now tracked using a commercially produced assessment package which is enabling staff to make clear judgements about pupils' learning and to set targets for pupils. A useful baseline assessment for communication has also been introduced. The co-ordinator provides further support to colleagues through the development of resources for the subject, including new reading schemes and big books. A new library base is being set up, although the latter is at an early stage of development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use of signing and symbols effectively helps pupils to participate in the different subjects of the curriculum. Communication is well promoted as pupils are encouraged to listen to what others are saying, and are then assisted to respond. Many opportunities are taken to extend pupils' vocabulary as words are introduced and explained. Big books are used in subjects such as science to help pupils' understanding. Writing is developed in different subject areas such as personal and social education and science, with pupils being given opportunities to use both writing and symbols to record their work. However, there is no formal planning for the use of literacy across the curriculum, so that some opportunities to develop this are missed.

French

53. No lessons were able to be seen in French so no judgement is made about overall provision. However, an appropriate selection of pupils' work was sampled and planning was looked at. There is a detailed scheme of work which is split into topics that include language work, life and French culture. The subject is well planned to be practical and relevant to pupils. There are many opportunities for them to use role play to experience every day activities such as being in a café or shopping. For reading and writing there is good use of the symbols pupils use throughout the school, with French words carefully substituted for English and much use is made of songs and chants.

MATHEMATICS

54. Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure the needs of pupils of all abilities are addressed; this is supported by good subject leadership.
- Relationships are encouraging, supportive and are a strong feature of all lessons.
- Assessment identifies pupils' individual needs well.
- Pupils benefit greatly from real life mathematical experiences but there is room for further development of numeracy across the curriculum.

Commentary

55. Standards in mathematics have improved well since the previous inspection ensuring pupils and students achieve consistently well. This is due in part to the way in which the school has adopted and adapted the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are well structured with a three-part lesson format that includes well-paced introductions, carefully chosen activities matched to needs and effective plenary sessions that establish the degree of pupils' learning. Teachers' references in their planning to individual targets further enhance the quality of learning.

56. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Lessons are characterised by good pace, the involvement of all pupils and the use of a wide range of resources to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons and want to learn. The good achievement of the youngest pupils continues through the school. This is due to well designed and extended tasks which all can join in, such as those used in an exceptionally good lesson on capacity for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This careful planning means that by Year 11, some higher attaining pupils are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. They discuss their mathematics work showing a basic knowledge of counting, two-dimensional shapes and comparisons. Those pupils with complex difficulties show good achievement, with some counting up to three objects, matching basic shapes and understanding and discriminating between 'small' and 'large' objects. The teachers are very skilled at making the activities meaningful for the pupils. For example, when teaching pupils to count in a Year 11 lesson, good use was made of objects that were familiar to the pupils when they matched the number of plates needed for a meal to the group present. The key skills elements in externally accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and Post 16 students enable them to experience even more success and reinforce their understanding.

57. Many pupils have difficulty in communicating their needs and the very good teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers ensures that the unique needs of each pupil whether academic, social or physical are quickly understood and shared. As a result, pupils build good relationships with staff and this gives them the confidence to try new activities.

58. The curriculum is well planned and helps teachers to provide experiences that are appropriate to the ages of the pupils and ensure their learning builds systematically on what they already know, understand and can do. For example, older pupils and students use money to buy a variety of goods, calculating their change. They learn about a fixed budget when shopping for food. Assessment procedures are effective because individual targets are matched to what is taught. They are considered carefully when planning lessons that cater for all needs. Outcomes are then used well to further adapt work or to move pupils and students on.

59. Mathematics is led and managed well. The subject leader provides good advice to other teachers and helps them to improve the range of strategies used to support learning. Improvement from the last inspection is good as teaching and learning is now consistent across the school. The good progress made by pupils at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. There have also been good improvements in the curriculum and assessment procedures.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Numeracy skills are often consolidated satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. For example, younger pupils sing counting rhymes and older pupils shop for and weigh out ingredients to make meals. However, most instances are incidental rather than planned. There is scope for more planned opportunities to ensure these skills are developed consistently.

SCIENCE

61. Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good for pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- The curriculum is well planned and effectively meets the needs of pupils.
- Throughout the school pupils achieve well and have positive attitudes to science.
- Assessment of what the pupils have learned, and what they need to learn next, is good.
- While science is well led, the lack of a specialist room for teaching science restricts the curriculum opportunities for the secondary age pupils.

Commentary

62. The teachers plan and prepare their science lessons very well. They plan suitable tasks for pupils of different abilities and make sure support is provided for those pupils who need it. This ensures that all pupils are included in the lessons and enables them to achieve well. Teachers begin lessons briskly and remind pupils of their previous work; as a result the pupils build well on their previous learning. The tasks are carefully chosen to motivate and interest the pupils so they concentrate well and do their best to answer questions and complete tasks. For example, in a lesson for Years 7 to 9, the pupils learned about force by throwing balls in the air. They understood that the more force they used the higher the ball would go and that because of the effect of gravity it would come down again. In a lesson for Year 11, the pupils concentrated well while looking at vegetables. They identified which parts of a plant we eat, such as lettuce leaves and celery stalks.

63. The teachers know the pupils very well and use this knowledge to plan and organise the lessons. When the pupils need support, teachers plan for teaching assistants to work with them individually or with a group. As a result, all the pupils participate as much as they are able. Clear explanations and good questions are used well by both teachers and teaching assistants to make the pupils think. This is particularly effective for younger pupils. For example, in a Year 3 to 6 lesson, the pupils were asked whether a toy car would roll further if a slope was steep or shallow. They tried to find out by measuring with rulers how far the cars had rolled. The higher attaining pupils worked together and then recorded their findings on a simple grid.

64. The pupils' very positive attitudes contribute to their good achievement. They enjoy their lessons and behave well. There are very good relationships between the pupils and between the adults and pupils. Humour is used well to encourage them and this helps to ensure good behaviour and concentration. Where a pupil has behaviour difficulties the agreed strategies are consistently well used by all adults which minimises any potential disruptions to lessons. This is particularly helpful as most lessons are practical. Teachers praise the pupils when they do well, giving them confidence and motivating them to work harder. The pupils listen and try to follow instructions carefully when completing investigations.

65. There is a very effective system for setting science targets for pupils to achieve. These reflect their individual needs and are closely linked to what will be taught in the science topic in each term. The progress pupils make against these targets is carefully assessed and then used by the teachers to plan new targets. This helps teachers to plan effective lessons that take account of what

individual pupils need to learn next in order to make progress.

66. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who has recently returned from maternity leave, and the deputy headteacher. There is a comprehensive scheme of work for science and sufficient resources to deliver the curriculum. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when science and the role of the subject leader were still at a developmental stage, there was no scheme of work and insufficient resources. The use of ICT to support science remains undeveloped but the subject leaders are currently addressing this. The deputy head teacher now regularly monitors the teaching of science and this is also an improvement since the previous inspection.

67. Currently all science is taught in classrooms as there is no specialist science room in the school. While this is appropriate for primary aged pupils, it restricts opportunities for the secondary age pupils. Although the school uses facilities on the community college site when possible, pupils do not have regular opportunities to develop laboratory skills or experience using specialist equipment. Students from Years 12 to 14 are effectively taught elements of science when they study areas such as the environment for their awards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in resources, including those to aid communication but sometimes problems arise when using shared facilities.
- The appointment of a knowledgeable ICT co-ordinator has begun to effectively improve provision.
- Staff development has been good but there has not been time for this to positively affect pupil achievement.
- Use of ICT across the curriculum is currently underdeveloped.

Commentary

69. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in addressing the key issues in the report. There is an appropriate scheme of work and pupil achievement and teaching, which were unsatisfactory for school age pupils, are now satisfactory overall. Post 16 students also reach levels that are appropriate given the extent of their learning difficulties, and records show clear, continuous progress.

70. The school has improved the quality and quantity of learning resources since the last inspection and this has gone some way towards supporting improving levels of achievement. All rooms have ICT stations and digital cameras, and are connected to the internet. Higher attaining pupils use the keyboard and the mouse. Lower attaining pupils use switches, or Big Macs to access the curriculum. As pupils progress through the school they increase their ability to use commercial programs such as '*Dazzle*', and print out their drawings.

71. ICT resources for pupils with communication difficulties are beginning to be used well. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of symbol vocabulary as an aid to communication. Although not every chance is yet taken to make the best use of switches, within the sensory room equipment such as bubble tubes, fibre optic lights, and switches successfully help to stimulate movement in pupils with the most severe disabilities.

72. By the time pupils enter the secondary department of the school, higher attaining pupils use word processing to record some of their work. Students at Meadway, and in the unit at the community college, use the internet, with adult support, for research, and produce PowerPoint presentations. However, during the inspection problems were noted when using a shared facility.

Difficulties were noted in the sharing of resources, some of which were not designed for these students' specific needs. Additionally there were technical difficulties in accessing specific programs which, because of the lack of a technician, Post 16 staff could not resolve.

73. The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a good start to leading and managing this subject. Work has begun on evaluating the ICT curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning across the school and the use made of ICT equipment across the curriculum. Although the level of staff skills has improved as a result of training, staff are not yet always confident in their use of ICT and pupils and students do not always make as much progress as they could. A good system of assessing small gains in knowledge, skills and understanding has been implemented in line with the school's adopted system. There is a very thorough action plan for further development of the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Good use is made of digital cameras to record individual achievement and in producing displays to support learning and celebrate achievement. Though some use is made of new technology for research and in the presentation of work, pupils have too few opportunities to improve their skills in other lessons. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support work in other subjects, for example, presenting data in mathematics and science.

HUMANITIES

75. The number of lessons seen in humanities was three, all of which were in religious education. No lessons were able to be seen in history or geography. It is, therefore, not possible to form judgements about provision in these two subjects. However, a suitable selection of pupils' work was sampled, planning and teacher records were looked at, and discussions took place with co-ordinators.

Geography

76. The subject is taught to all pupils up to Year 9. For younger pupils there is an emphasis on activities which make the subject relevant to them such as local studies in nearby areas such as Ashdown Forest, keeping a weather diary and transport. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 complete work on other countries including France, where work is effectively linked to French lessons. They learn to do simple map work in the local area, for example making a map with photographs of how to get to Meadway. Geography is also an element of the ASDAN Transitional Challenge in Years 10 and 11 where pupils study issues, such as recycling and the environment. Pupils have also been involved in a project on Africa with the local community college. There is a good scheme of work which is appropriate to the ages and needs of pupils. The subject is well co-ordinated and monitored and there is evidence in pupils' work of a good range of geography topics.

History

77. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, the consistent use of a daily timetable and work on days of the week helps them understand then and now and the passage of time. They go out into the local area to look at the differences between new and old buildings and handle a range of household appliances from different times. By the time they are in Year 9, pupils do simple timelines about themselves. The subject is also made interesting by visits to museums such as *Yesterdays World*. Pupils have dressed up as Victorians. They have role played activities such as helping with the chores and had a school lesson to experience life in Victorian times and consider how life has changed since then. There is no co-ordinator at present but the subject is being effectively overseen and monitored by the deputy headteacher.

Religious Education

78. Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, and pupils make good progress in lessons.
- There is no subject co-ordinator to lead on the development of the curriculum and of assessment.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Commentary

79. Teachers have good knowledge of the pupils, and provide them with a variety of experiences to help them to understand the topics being covered. Pupils are helped to understand some of the language of religion, and to develop concepts such as "special". Good use is made of objects and pictures to help pupils understand what is being explained. Pupils are encouraged to treat artefacts of different religions with care and respect. For example, higher attaining pupils age 11-14 know about the Muslim preparation for prayer and the use of a prayer mat, while others understand that the Koran is special. Active learning supports understanding; for example, some very good use of role play enabled pupils in Year 11 to understand the meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Students in Years 13 and 14 were introduced to the Sikh religion and the 5 Ks, and were able to show some good recall of other religions in the discussion which took place.

80. The previous subject leader began some useful curriculum planning, and the deputy headteacher has a satisfactory overview of the subject. However, there has been insufficient development of the locally agreed syllabus to meet the particular needs of the pupils in the school. As a result, some aspects of the subject are insufficiently covered and, for younger pupils, there is too much concentration on personal development at the expense of specific religious education. The achievements of pupils are difficult to judge because there is no detailed system of assessment in place, though there are plans to introduce this in line with other assessments in the school.

81. There are positive links with assemblies, which support pupils' spiritual development, including participation in different celebrations. Pupils attend a local church for a carol service, and local clergy come to the school for harvest festival. Moral issues are raised, for example when pupils learn about some of the parables of Jesus. Opportunities to learn about different world religions provide useful support for pupils' awareness of the wider community.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

82. No judgement on provision in design and technology was made because this was not part of the main foci of the inspection. Examination of curriculum documents, pupils' records and displays, together with the one lesson observed shows that pupils have opportunities to experience different aspects of this subject. Pupils are encouraged to use a variety of materials, to use tools safely and to make choices. They are helped to plan and to evaluate at appropriate levels. They make items such as collages, cards, masks and printing blocks. In food technology they learn about food preparation and healthy eating. The curriculum needs further development, as do effective systems for recording pupils' progress. While there is a suitable food technology room, facilities for older pupils in other aspects of design technology are lacking.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Music

83. Three lessons of music were seen but it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision given the wide age range in the school and practical nature of the provision. In this limited number of lessons, the pupils achieved well because the teaching was good or very good. Lessons were well planned with activities that interested the pupils. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the pupils chose a shaker and tried to shake it on different parts of their body. The higher attaining pupils did this independently while the adults helped the others. In a lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 9, the pupils played percussion instruments in a marching rhythm or at a fast tempo to indicate running in order to give atmosphere to a story. They all enjoyed the lesson and concentrated hard on what they were to do, one pupil responding with particular enthusiasm for the first time in a music lesson. Year 11 pupils listened to a range of music in different styles and identified which piece of music they preferred and explained how it made them feel. One pupil explained that the music made him want to dance and sing.

84. Subject co-ordination is effective and the music curriculum is good and provides appropriate opportunities for listening to, composing, and performing music. Some helpful support materials and a good range of percussion instruments and other resources enable class teachers to plan lessons that the pupils enjoy. Since the previous inspection when there were not enough instruments, new instruments, including electronic instruments, have been acquired so that there are now sufficient instruments to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Art and design

85. Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and as a result the pupils achieve well.
- There is an effective curriculum which enables pupils to make progress in developing their skills as they move through the school.
- At present the subject has no co-ordinator to lead developments.

Commentary

86. Teachers plan a range of art experiences and activities that interest and motivate pupils and students so they achieve well in art throughout the school. For example, in a Year 11 lesson the pupils developed an understanding of still life. They did this by choosing and arranging objects for a still life drawing with care, as preparation for a later painting. They were motivated by the activity and proud of the work they produced. Teachers enable the pupils and students to concentrate on their designs by preparing materials carefully for them to choose from. They have good support from teaching assistants who help them communicate their ideas and preferences.

87. The work on display in classrooms and around the school shows that the pupils and students develop their skills in art well as they progress through the school. This is due to relevant curricular tasks, planned so they reinforce and increase their skills as they get older. The youngest pupils begin to understand colour when they make collages using various materials in a single colour. In Years 3 to 6 pupils look at African art work and make their own pictures using similar earthy colours. They understand that colour in pictures conveys mood when they think which colours convey happiness and warmth and which colours convey coldness or sadness. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 begin to develop an understanding of line by studying the different types of lines used in drawing and painting. Their observation drawings show that the highest attaining pupils look carefully at objects such as seashells. They draw them in the correct shape and colour so that the shells are clearly recognisable. Year 10 pupils make clay shapes and add surface texture with applied shapes. They

look at paintings by Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock and decide whose work they prefer before producing their own work based on these paintings.

88. At present, leadership is satisfactory with the deputy headteacher managing the subject well as there is no co-ordinator. However, the good long-term curriculum plans, the mutual support the teachers give each other, and a range of resources, ensure that teachers are maintaining the good standards in art noted in the previous inspection. Weaknesses noted in the previous inspection have been addressed. For example, the pupils and students now have planned opportunities to do 3-dimensional work such as modelling.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

89. Physical education was not a focus of this inspection, therefore it was not possible to make a judgement about overall provision. However, three lessons were observed and planning and displays of pupils and students participating in sports were scrutinised.

90. Planning and organisation of the learning opportunities in physical education are good and involve a wide range of activities including athletics, ball games, gymnastics and swimming. In the few lessons that were seen, the activities were well structured to meet the wide range of the pupils' needs. All the pupils are helped to be fully involved in all activities and encouraged to extend their skills. For example, in a good Year 7 to 11 lesson where pupils were using the leisure centre facilities, they enjoyed the range of athletics activities offered, showing effort and motivation throughout. Two higher attaining pupils showed good progress in their skills development as they used the trampoline. In a good Year 2 games lesson, pupils were actively involved in the activities, very well supported by adults. The teaching assistants provided very good support to enable the pupils with complex needs to participate in moving around the room. Their delight during one of the games involving a parachute was obvious.

91. The activities are given an 'extra dimension' by a range of visits out of school, for instance the use of the local leisure centre. Students in Years 12 to 14 have access to the wide range of facilities on the community college site. A wide range of awards are available, for instance swimming and trampoline federation awards. Teachers make the most of these opportunities and this helps to broaden pupils' understanding significantly.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff successfully provide a very good range of relevant activities matched to pupils' and students' ages and needs in lessons and throughout the day which very effectively support pupils' personal development.
- While achievement is often very good, it is particularly so for younger pupils and those from Year 10 onwards.
- Citizenship is very well planned within the personal, social and health education curriculum.
- There has been a significant improvement in health education since the last inspection.
- Subject co-ordination is very good and has led to a significant improvement in achievement.

Commentary

93. Overall teaching, both formally and outside lessons, is very good. This is because the school considers that this is a very important area of development for pupils. A great deal of time has been spent making sure that all aspects are covered, teachers have been carefully trained and that work is appropriate to pupils' and students' ages and needs. As a result, pupils achieve very well. This is a

good improvement on the last inspection when teaching and achievement were satisfactory and there was no scheme of work.

94. Achievement is especially good for those pupils in Years 1 and 2 and for older pupils and students from Year 10 upwards. This is due to work being carefully planned to ensure that they gain a range of necessary personal and social skills. In Years 1 and 2, routines such as morning arrivals, where pupils are greeted and toileted, are consistently well managed by the teacher and teaching assistants. Pupils are given many opportunities to choose and begin to build relationships. For example, in circle time they are happy to choose who to say good morning to and during other activities when they decide who to send their switch controlled toy to next. They take responsibility for taking the register to the office with support. Higher attaining pupils confidently move the symbol for their next lesson on to their own visual timetable independently. Pupils begin to learn the skills of co-operation and turn taking through working individually with staff.

95. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, and those in the Post 16 unit, there is a great emphasis on this subject preparing them for life after school. This is done through accreditation such as the ASDAN Transition Challenge, Life Skills Qualification and Towards Independence which aids their motivation and self esteem and helps them try their best. Careers work and work related activities help older pupils and students to gain confidence and independence.

96. Pupils and students continue to acquire important social skills out of lessons due to very effective teaching and careful planning. For example, lunch time experiences are very good and appropriate. These range from skills learned through individual feeding programmes to pupils taking turns and serving themselves. Post 16 students, make choices about food in the community college canteen. They make decisions about snacks and drinks, interact well with the school dinner staff and confidently pay for their meals. Once a week, two Year 13 and 14 students shop and cook for the others in the group.

97. For primary and younger secondary age pupils, the relevant aspects of citizenship are carefully taught as part of the rights and responsibilities and relationships part of the personal, social, health education and citizenship programme with older pupils having specific lessons. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn about government and elections while older pupils learn about decision making, self advocacy, helping others, resolving conflict and different communities. For Post 16 students, citizenship is considered very important and is a feature throughout the curriculum.

98. There is a planned programme for health education topics which is now systematically taught at every stage at a level appropriate to pupils needs. Sex and drugs education has been a particular focus. As a result, lessons are well planned and relevant giving pupils the confidence to participate. For example, Year 11 pupils complete work on body parts and link it to appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in different settings, such as the difference in what you might wear in school or a garden. In a lesson on tobacco, Year 13 and 14 students concentrated well and helped each other while they made a smoke bottle and recording the results.

99. The subject is very well led and managed, ensuring pupils achieve very well and gain valuable life skills and self esteem. Monitoring is very good and all resources have been cross matched by key stage so that teachers know at a glance which resources to use. There has been very good support for staff with regard to sex education so they feel confident to teach it.

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	2
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	3
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
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	2
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).

*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*