

INSPECTION REPORT

HAY LANE SCHOOL

Kingsbury

LEA area: London Borough of Brent

Unique reference number: 101583

Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Drake

Lead inspector: Mike Smith

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 258914

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Special |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3-19 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 118 |
| School address: | Grove Park Kingsbury London |
| Postcode: | NW9 0JY |
| Telephone number: | 020 82045396 |
| Fax number: | 020 89050971 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors | Mrs J Snow |
| Date of previous inspection: | 23rd March 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hay Lane school is situated in the London Borough of Brent and is the result of an amalgamation of two schools in 1991. Since that time there has been considerable extension and adaptation to the accommodation. The building provides a range of indoor accommodation plus hard surface play areas and an indoor pool. The school provides education for pupils aged 3 to 19 years who have severe, complex, profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Currently there are five pupils on roll who are just five years of age. There is a high percentage of PMLD pupils, a significant group of pupils with visual and/or hearing impairment and an increasing population of pupils diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). There is a wide diversity of cultures and languages and a significant number of refugee pupils, including some who have previously never attended school.

There are currently 118 pupils on roll and all attend full-time. This is a much larger number than average for similar schools, both within the London area and nationally. One hundred and seventeen pupils have a statement of special educational need. Overall, 54 per cent of pupils are boys and 46 per cent are girls. The school has a wide ethnic mix with 58 pupils (49 per cent) coming from homes where English is not their first language. The most common first languages are Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu. There are currently no pupils in public care. The school is organised into three departments; primary, secondary and post-16.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| 15303 | Mr M.J. Smith | Lead inspector | Physical education |
| 32663 | Mrs M Rowland | Lay inspector | |
| 10676 | Mr M Sutton | Team inspector | Geography History Music Special educational needs Post-16 |
| 10421 | Mrs R Kirkwood | Team inspector | Science Design and technology Citizenship |
| 2652 | Mr R Lomas | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design |
| 33067 | Mrs M Woods | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Religious Education Personal, social and health education |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

This is currently a **satisfactory** school with a number of good and very good features. Pupils achieve well overall and often very well in their lessons and make good progress in their personal and social development, as a result of very good teaching and excellent relationships with all staff. The very committed headteacher has correctly identified areas for change and development to increase the effectiveness of the school. The staff are both dedicated and committed to school improvement. The management of the curriculum and school self-evaluation requires improvement, as does the effectiveness of the governing body. Currently, therefore, leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The current restriction on outside visits has had an effect on curriculum enrichment and the personal development of the pupils. However, a comprehensive health and safety policy has now been drawn up after a very rigorous audit of need and detailed research and educational opportunities outside of school should resume very soon. Cramped accommodation has been imaginatively adapted and substantially improved, although not all pupils have equal access to all of the accommodation and it is still unsatisfactory. The school successfully meets most of its agreed aims and currently provides satisfactory value for money. Evidence demonstrates the school is improving.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Hard-working teachers, with very able support staff and speech therapists, help pupils to learn successfully, improve communication skills and become confident, mature young adults.
- Teaching and learning are very good. Pupil achievement is good and sometimes very good. It is particularly good in art and design, physical education, music and food technology.
- Assessment procedures are not fully developed and consistently used across all subjects to inform curriculum planning and pupil learning.
- The very good headteacher is working to ensure that everyone feels valued and has high expectations.
- Governance is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and social skills are the direct result of positive and carefully structured support; they clearly enjoy being in school.
- Relationships between all staff and pupils are very good as is the care, guidance and welfare for pupils. Health and safety is a strength.
- Statutory requirements for modern foreign languages and citizenship are currently not met and the policy and delivery of sex and relationships education needs revising.
- The monitoring and curriculum development roles of the curriculum manager and subject leaders are not effective and good practice is not sufficiently shared throughout the school.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved in some areas, but not sufficiently in others, so overall, progress is satisfactory. Importantly, the quality of education, teaching and learning and pupil achievement have improved. There is still a need to improve curriculum co-ordination, assessment and the role of the governing body. The new headteacher is aware of the need to rapidly improve these areas and has made an encouraging start.

Standards achieved

| Students' achievement at the end of: | In relation to individual targets in: | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Subjects of the curriculum | Personal and social education |
| Year 2 | good | good |
| Year 6 | good | good |
| Year 9 | good | good |
| Year 11 | good | good |
| Year 13 | good | good |

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

Achievement is good and sometimes very good. Overall, pupils of all abilities make good progress as they go through the school and there are no variations in standards or progress between different groups of pupils. Progress is consistently good in English where pupils increasingly and effectively develop their communication skills. All staff help pupils to achieve well in speaking and listening through the effective use of signing and symbols. Pupils' achievement is very good in physical education, music, art and design and food technology. It is good in all other subjects including personal, social and health education. Achievement at post-16 is good and pupils gain creditable passes in a vocational course. Pupils' moral and social developments are very good and their spiritual and cultural developments are **good**. This results in a happy and productive atmosphere in which pupils feel valued, making them well prepared for life after school. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are impressively enthusiastic and interested in their lessons and respond very well to the school's positive culture. Attendance is very good, as is pupils' punctuality. Pupils love coming to school and being in school.

Quality of education

Overall, the school provides a **good** quality of education. This enables all pupils to learn successfully and achieve well. Teaching is **very good** overall and occasionally it is excellent. Assessment procedures are not fully developed or consistently used to support planning. The curriculum is currently satisfactory and meets the special educational needs of all pupils, including those with ASD (autistic spectrum disorders) and hearing and visual impairment. The curriculum suffers from not being enriched by a stimulating range of additional activities outside of school, in the community or in mainstream settings. Links with other schools, colleges and the wider community have also been restricted over the past year. Care, welfare and guidance are very good. Pupils work and play in a safe environment, where relationships are of the highest quality. They trust all staff to care for them properly. Overall, there are satisfactory links with parents.

Leadership and management

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. An encouraging start has been made to address a range of vital school improvement areas and the impact of some of the actions taken, already demonstrate improvement. Overall, however, leadership is only satisfactory because of weaknesses in the development within the curriculum and the governing body. Similarly, management is only satisfactory. Recently employed management arrangements have yet to demonstrate their effect, but are an improvement. The governors do not fulfill statutory requirements. A number of governors know the school very well, but, overall, they do not play a positive and active part in strategic management or ensure through their monitoring and evaluation of school improvement that all statutory requirements are being met.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Parents are happy with the school and a number of them support the school well. They appreciate the way in which the school listens and talks to them about any concerns they may have. They know the individual needs of their children are clearly understood and they make progress, which is greatly appreciated. Pupils are exceptionally happy in school. They particularly like their teachers and support staff and activities such as swimming.

Improvements needed

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

- Ensure that the governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities and in particular, take an active role in the strategic management of the school and in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the school improvement plan.
- Ensure the role of senior managers and all subject co-ordinators are fully developed to include the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and subjects across the school.

- Ensure the statutory requirements for modern foreign language and citizenship are fully met.
- Ensure that assessment procedures are fully developed and consistently used to inform curriculum planning and pupil learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' progress and achievement are good overall. They make good progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans. Their personal and social development is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' communication skills develop well.
- The achievement of pupils with additional needs, and of those for whom English is an additional language, is as good as that of other pupils.
- Pupils achieve very well in physical education, art and design, food technology and music.

Commentary

1. Pupils continue to make good progress since the last inspection which is mainly due to the very good quality of individual teaching across the school. The best gains have been in relation to their social and communication skills. Pupils develop their vocabulary, for example, by looking at fruits, matching colours, signs and names. Many pupils benefit from a multi-sensory approach and the range of activities available to enable them to listen and respond to language through 'hello' songs, which include the use of pupils' first languages, stories using objects of reference, practical activities to develop mark making and through song. There are no variations in the achievements of pupils with more complex needs and no differences in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils whose first language is not English are given specific support with their particular language needs and they too make good progress. Pupils who have visual or hearing impairments or who have ASD, also make good progress in achieving their set targets.

2. Pupils make very good progress in physical education, music, art and design and food technology. They make good progress in all other subjects including swimming, where instruction and health and safety procedures are very good. Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff and consequently move to the next stage of their learning, within and beyond school, well prepared. Their very good moral and social development and behaviour are the outcomes of high quality support and encouragement from the whole staff team. This means that most become confident, mature young adults. There are specialist teachers for art and design, physical education, music and food technology which makes it possible to ensure that these subjects are taught in a consistent manner, enabling a steady build up of pupils' knowledge and skills and understanding. In these subjects pupils' progress is monitored and assessed consistently and in art and design, for example, standards sometimes match levels found in pupils who do not have statements of special educational needs. In physical education, excellent monitoring and assessment strategies ensure that pupils' progress, however small, is clearly demonstrated and there are always high expectations for improvement.

3. The achievement of some pupils is often very good because of the very good teaching and learning and the very good use of resources. This was particularly evident in classes for pupils with more profound learning disabilities and those with ASD. The staff give careful thought to provide challenging and imaginative opportunities to enhance the learning environment. Signing is generally used well and together with the use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), it effectively helps pupils to understand language. Speech and language therapists enable staff to deliver language programmes for pupils so that they are able to improve their learning across the curriculum.

4. Since a pupil had an accident, over a year ago, the school has developed a comprehensive health and safety policy, drawn up after a very rigorous audit of need and detailed research. During

this time, however, the lack of access to educational activities outside the school has severely restricted the range of learning experiences that would contribute to pupil achievement in a range of areas. It has not been possible, for example, to pursue links with other schools for pupils who might benefit from having some of their lessons integrated into a mainstream setting. Similarly, pupils have not had the benefit of educational visits, or for older pupils to have access to work experience or to develop the skills of managing in the community outside of the school.

5. Lessons generally have good curriculum links with other areas of learning, for example, mathematics and English and this ensures that pupils are able to reinforce and practise their understanding of these subjects on a regular basis. Information and communication technology supports all subjects well and through the use of the digital camera, pupils' achievements and experiences are very well recorded. The structure of the upper school programme provides relevant opportunities for pupils to learn basic and vocational skills, leading to their confident application in different settings. They achieve well in the Equals 'Moving On' curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values, and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their learning are very good. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is very good. Pupils' moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff support learning and very good personal development.
- Some pupils do not participate in communal lunches, which is a missed opportunity for socialising with other pupils and staff.

6. Pupils behave very well within the school and are polite, respectful to their teachers, support assistants, visitors and to one another. Relationships between pupils and all adults is very good. In lessons, pupils listen well and fully interact as much as they can. Many successfully participate in class discussions and others indicate that they enjoy lessons by smiling or signing and because there are very good relationships, the adults are quick to notice pupils' responses and appropriately reinforce them. In lessons, pupils work well with good support and are secure in an atmosphere that is free from any sign of harassment. The small number of pupils that show challenging behaviour are effectively managed by staff who are quick to react and are considerate to the pupils and their needs. Staff encourage the pupils to share and to be caring. For example, in one primary aged class, pupils' enjoyed singing and listening about the similarities and differences of different religions.

7. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are well catered for. For example, in a primary assembly everyone was encouraged to use the Moslem and Hindu forms of 'Hello' and there were many examples of African and Japanese music being used to foster cultural development. Staff consistently reinforce the difference between right and wrong and point out to pupils that their actions might make another person unhappy. Pupils are given opportunities to experience the practices of different faiths and are encouraged to understand the meaning underlying these practices. This helps to develop their understanding of spirituality.

8. Pupils enjoy being fully involved in lessons and as a result try very hard to achieve and please the adults around them. They make it clear that they enjoy each other's company; for example, pupils were delighted to see their friends receive awards in assembly. All staff encourage pupils to be independent and take on responsibility, for example, returning registers to the office, or fetching equipment from across the classroom.

9. Pupils' attendance is very good, as is their punctuality. Pupils clearly love coming to school, and this was made very clear during pupil and parent interviews as well as during informal discussions with them and through general observation. There have been no exclusions over the past year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|------|
| School data | 10.2 |
| National data | N/A |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.4 |
| National data | N/A |

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

10. Some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) do not participate in the communal lunches and this restricts them in developing relationships and socialising with their peers and friends. Communal lunches otherwise are orderly and the pupils display very good behaviour, showing consideration to one another and towards the staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is good. The school thinks carefully about how the personal needs of individual pupils can be met. The quality of teaching and learning and pupil progress is very good overall. The level of care and welfare provided is very good. Relationships with parents are satisfactory. Due to circumstances not under the control of the school, links and work with the other schools and the community over the past year have not been developed. Consequently such links have not supported pupils' personal growth or academic progress.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and occasionally it is excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make very good use of resources to support pupils' access to the curriculum.
- Welfare assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Assessment strategies are not fully developed or consistently applied across all subjects.
- Pupils are given enthusiastic encouragement which enables them to actively participate in lessons and maintain their concentration.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in **65** lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 9 (14%) | 28 (43%) | 13 (20%) | 13 (20%) | 2 (3%) | 0 | 0 |

11. Teaching and learning is very good across all the year groups with some examples of excellent practice. Specialist subject teachers for music, physical education, art and design and food technology have a depth of subject knowledge and deliver lessons to a high standard. In these subjects pupils are given effective access to the subject in varied and imaginative ways which very effectively promotes their learning and understanding. For example, in music the theme of a lesson was introduced using recorded music with lighting effects from a projector. This reinforced the subject for pupils and focused their attention. Pupils demonstrated that they could listen intently and were demonstrably startled when the music abruptly changed. The teacher communicated her enthusiasm for the subject to all pupils who were motivated to take turns in singing individually or as an ensemble.

12. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate and to take an active part in lessons. A wide range of multi-sensory resources are effectively used to enable them to do so. For example, in a design and technology lesson based on making pancakes, pupils were given the opportunity to stir the batter, feel the ingredients, smell the pancakes and, finally, to eat the end product with or without jam or honey. Switches are appropriately used to support communication and also to control equipment. In art and design, digital photographs are very effectively used to engage pupils' attention and in a registration session they are used to establish who is present. Pupils are able to eye-point to the photographs of those who have arrived.

13. Welfare assistants provide very effective support which enables pupils to participate in groups and to gain access to the curriculum. They interact very well with pupils and treat them with respect. They have a very good understanding of pupils' individual needs and methods of communication. They are able to respond with sensitivity to the needs of pupils with ASD so that they are drawn into group sessions and are able to focus their attention. For example, in a library session a secondary aged pupil with ASD was allowed to sit where he chose while a welfare assistant read a story which she judged to be interesting for him. She was able to gradually move closer until she sat with him so that he could see the book and become interested in the story. The effective teamwork between teachers and welfare assistants ensures that lessons run smoothly and all pupils can work at and achieve the tasks set for them.

14. A wide range of resources are used very well to help pupils to learn. This includes specialist resources in subjects such as music, physical education or art and design, as well as computer based equipment such as switches and digital cameras. There are also some resources prepared by the school to support learning, for example, books made to reflect pupils' interests using 'Writing with Symbols' so that pupils can learn to access text. Very imaginative and well-designed resources are a strong feature in physical education lessons, which engage, stimulate, challenge and make pupils want to participate and make progress at their own pace and level of achievement.

15. The school puts a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' communication skills so that they can play a part in all that happens in the school. Many of the staff are competent signers and are able to use their skill to make lessons and other school occasions accessible for pupils. For example, in school assemblies, all the interactions are supported by signing and all staff and many pupils sign during the singing of familiar songs. It is this consistency across the school which lessens frustration, encourages learning and places value on individual choices.

16. Assessment of pupils' learning and guidance to enable them to improve is not yet fully developed in all subject areas across the school. Overall, feedback to pupils is encouraging and positive, but does not always have a strong sense of the next step in learning for them. Marking is not generally used to analyse achievement and set new targets. The school is not yet systematically tracking pupils' general progress and ensuring that there are secure judgements made about levels of achievement. There is however, some excellent practice in physical education where the monitoring, recording and assessing strategies for pupil progress and achievement is very clear.

17. Pupil progress is being identified through the individual education plans which provide a framework for developing the skills to access the curriculum. However, this does not provide a model for tracking progress in curriculum subjects.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with many relevant aspects that support pupils' needs. However, whole-school planning, co-ordination and monitoring is under-developed and has not progressed significantly since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the curriculum successfully meets the needs of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs.
- The role of the curriculum manager is not established and there is no clear overview of provision. Not all subject co-ordinators are fulfilling their management role.
- The statutory requirement for modern foreign languages is not currently met and there is no formal delivery of citizenship.
- The restriction on outside visits severely limits the range of opportunities for learning.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is a lack of some specialist facilities. The current restrictions for wheelchair users to the first floor, prevents them having equal access to specialist teaching facilities.
- Welfare assistants and other support staff make a significant contribution to ensuring pupils' access to curriculum opportunities.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is broad and in most respects, relevant to pupils' needs. Because whole-school monitoring of the curriculum has been lacking, curriculum provision varies from class to class and continuity and progression within subjects has not been secured. The restriction on outside trips to support the curriculum has also had an impact on curriculum development. The school is not meeting the statutory requirement for a modern foreign language provision at Key Stage 3 and in addition, there is inadequate provision for sex and relationship education and citizenship for the older pupils.

19. Staff take great care in their planning to ensure that lessons are relevant to individual's needs, which they clearly understand. Teachers make very effective use of the Equals commercial scheme of work. This enables subject schemes of work to be broken down into the small steps which many pupils need to progress. It is less suitable for some higher attaining pupils, whose progress does not always depend on a step-by-step approach.

20. Over the past year the school has been unable to provide opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the school. Consequently, this has restricted the range of experiences and opportunities that pupils would have found beneficial, both in terms of curriculum enrichment and in terms of their personal development. It has not been possible, for example, to pursue links with other schools for pupils whose attainment indicates they might benefit from having some of their lessons integrated in a mainstream setting. Similarly, it has not been possible to arrange for pupils to have the benefit of educational visits, or for older pupils to have access to work experience or to develop the skills of managing in the community.

21. The school benefits from a wide range of non-educational provision. It has employed speech and language therapists, and it has the services of physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nurses. Therapists work well with the staff to minimise the learning difficulties presented by the medical and other needs of some pupils. The welfare assistants make a significant contribution in enabling pupil access to the curriculum and in supporting pupils' achievement. For some pupils they are an essential means to access the curriculum through one-to-one support. In groups, the role played by welfare assistants allows teachers to offer a wider range of activities and ensure that all pupils are actively engaged throughout the lesson. Individual pupil needs are successfully met as non-teaching medical and support staff, along with the teachers, ensure that a relevant curriculum is fully accessed. The move to working with individuals and groups within the classrooms wherever possible, is positive and supports inclusive practice.

22. The lack of whole-school curriculum co-ordination is a management weakness. Teachers have been expected to develop their lesson planning and assessment strategies without reference to a common approach. Pupils may make very good progress in one year because of the quality of the teaching, but those gains may well be lost in the future because of inconsistent year-on-year planning. Despite the use of the Equals framework, pupil progress is not recorded in a common

manner. It is not passed on to the next year to serve as the basis for future development and planning. The use of information about progress is made harder because several classes have pupils from two or three National Curriculum year groups. The progress of pupils through the curriculum and the continuity of their learning are therefore, less easy to ensure.

23. The recently employed curriculum management strategy allows for all subject co-ordinators to report to one of three curriculum managers. There is still a need for one member of the senior management team with overall responsibility to ensure overall consistency. New subject co-ordinators are unclear as to their management responsibilities, so they do not contribute to ensuring that their subject fits in with the agreed policies and procedures. In addition, there has been insufficient access to outside support and training to develop their specialist skills.

24. There is very effective curriculum provision in art and design, physical education, music and food technology. These subjects are taught by specialist teachers who have developed their subject areas very well across the age range and are able to deliver very good quality learning opportunities.

25. Pupils age 14-19 have a curriculum based on National Curriculum core subjects, together with modules of the Moving on scheme, with an extension of the Equals curriculum being introduced for post-16 pupils. These courses provide good learning opportunities for this age group and gives them recognised qualifications for modules of the course.

26. Accommodation has a number of weaknesses and is overall, unsatisfactory. Apart from post-16 students, who have their own facilities downstairs, wheelchair users do not have the same educational opportunities as other pupils. They can not access specialist subject areas on the first floor, such as art and design and food technology, because currently they are not permitted to use the lift. Teachers make every effort to provide appropriate learning experiences for these pupils downstairs. However, there are costs in terms of the efficient use of teachers' time and the flexible and efficient use of rooms. In art, equipment has to be wheeled some distance on a small trolley. There is too little space in most non-specialist classrooms to store pupils' art work. Although the school has made the optimum use of the space available by extending and changing the use of some rooms, because of the changing population in the school with many pupils having more complex needs, the amount of space currently available is insufficient. For example, in classrooms where many pupils are in wheelchairs or special seating, there is not always room to move around to ensure that all have as many opportunities as possible. While the staff do everything in their power to minimise these difficulties, there are occasions when time is spent moving several pupils, because one pupil needs to be moved. There is no specialist facility for science and the school hall is too small for whole school assemblies, or for older pupils for their physical education lessons.

27. Efficient access to the school site is restricted by the size of the main gate and the central 'island'. This can lead to uncertainty about arrival times and can occasionally affect the start of lessons and activities. Although good efforts have been made to make the playground and outside areas more attractive, the space available is too small for the varying needs and age of the pupils.

28. While some of the curricular weaknesses reported at the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily, others still remain. The existence of a clear, documented plan initiated by the headteacher has identified the areas for improvement and means that progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides the pupils with a very good level of care. Procedures for pupil welfare and their health and safety are very good. The support, guidance and advice the pupils receive is very good. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong caring nature for all pupils.
- There is effective attention to the detail of individual pupils' needs.
- The monitoring of individual pupils is very good.
- Health and safety is a strength and a dedicated health and safety committee is in place.
- Teachers, support staff and health professionals demonstrate effective teamwork.
- Induction arrangements are good, but more documents could be translated into other languages to ensure effective communication with parents.

Commentary

29. The school has worked hard to ensure that it now has very high standards of care and support and has addressed the issues raised by the last inspection. Past events have led to an increased emphasis and improvement of health and safety procedures. There is a happy atmosphere in the school, and the attention to each pupil's individual needs is very good.

30. Pupils' annual reviews are now effectively managed and individual education plans (IEPS) with clear targets are in place. Together with an effective care-plan, they ensure that each pupil has clear individual guidance and that there is a regular reappraisal of their needs.

31. Pupils are very well looked after. They are supported by a team of dedicated and caring teachers, welfare assistants and health care professionals. Health care professionals confirm that they enjoy working at the school as a part of the team to deliver the best possible care to the pupils and to help extend their educational opportunities. The physiotherapists get involved in the literacy hour and the health care professionals try to ensure that medical appointments and pupil interventions are carried out when it is not class time, or at least when it is least disruptive to their learning. Child protection issues are dealt with appropriately and all staff are inducted in the correct procedures. Any concerns are reported to two designated members of staff who are very well trained in this area.

32. Health and safety practice and procedures have been very fully audited and exhaustively reviewed. A health and safety committee is now in place to ensure that all policies and procedures are vigorously enforced; it meets regularly and has a very good representation. All staff are to be consulted about the new policy for visits and these should resume very soon. Fire safety has also been overhauled and fire drills are more efficient as a result and new fire equipment has been purchased. The fire brigade recommended that wheelchair users do not use the first floor due to concerns for their safety in the event of a fire. This has been implemented, but has had an impact in terms of equal access to learning resources and specialist areas.

33. Induction procedures are good. The individual needs and support necessary for each pupil coming to the school is carefully considered by teaching staff and health professionals working closely together. As the school has a high proportion of parents whose first language is not English, letters to parents regarding induction should be available in languages other than English. Currently they are not and is a development area.

34. Pupils are consulted about their views during the review process and teachers and welfare assistants discuss with pupils on a regular basis their individual likes and dislikes and are given choices at every opportunity. However, the school does not currently have a forum, such as a school council for seeking pupils' views, to ensure they can influence aspects of school life that directly affects them. Many senior pupils, in particular, have sufficient ability to be given higher profile roles in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools, and the community

Partnerships with parents are satisfactory. Partnerships with local schools and colleges are satisfactory, while links with the community are currently unsatisfactory. The school deals well with any complaints or concerns.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The current circumstances have severely restricted the school's ability to go out into the community.
- Parents are happy with the prompt and effective way the school deals with any concerns or complaints.
- There are no work experience links for pupils in the community and those attending link courses at a local college do so unsupported by school staff.
- The use of home/school books enables English-speaking parents to keep in close touch with the school, but communication with non-English-speaking parents could improve.

Commentary

35. Parents appear generally happy with the quantity and quality of information provided by the school. The prospectus and the annual report of the governors to parents meet statutory requirements. Overall, information for parents is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The home/school books are well used by some parents, but communication with non-English-speaking parents in their home language requires improvement. A member of staff telephones parents if problems arise, but day-to-day contact for these parents is often limited.

36. Parents support school events well, attending concerts, plays and the annual enterprise fortnight. They value the openness of the staff and the helpful way their concerns or suggestions are received. Most parents are happy about their own involvement in their child's learning and are particularly pleased with the help they receive from the therapists and nurses. Staff are happy to advise parents about how they can help their children with their learning at home.

37. The school holds an annual parents' consultation evening and invites parents to their child's annual review. They are given good opportunities to comment on their child's progress and to raise any issues or concerns. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils and students are satisfactory overall. Parents were generally happy about the support from the school at the time their child started and pleased at the quick way they had settled in. The school has good links with the Connexions service for the post-16 students. A personal adviser visits the school twice a week and students have access to advice on their rights from an advocacy service. Recent leavers have gone on to further education, a supported work placement or attendance at a local day centre. Some students attend a link course at the local college as they prepare to leave, but staff, do not go with them. This limits the value of the course and the contribution it makes to the students' transfer.

38. Circumstances at the school have prevented pupils going on any outings for over a year. This has affected the school's ability to develop links with other schools and colleges. An adjacent school has a swimming pool, which pupils have continued to access on a regular basis, as it does not involve leaving the joint site. Links with the community have also been adversely affected, as pupils have not been able to visit local amenities such as shops, leisure facilities or places of interest. They have also not been able to take part in inter-school sporting activities. However, the school does have a number of visitors, for example, coaches from a local professional football club visit weekly to train post-16 students.

39. Regular visitors from the community also include religious leaders, artists, musicians and work experience students from other schools. As pupils have not been able to visit factories or other places of work, the design technology co-ordinator invited people to visit the school and speak with the pupils. This was not very successful in the first year, but a more personal approach is planned.

Some pupils benefited from a residential visit arranged and managed by MENCAP and the whole school holds an enterprise event, which includes an exhibition, to which families and members of the public are invited. Overall, staff have made considerable efforts to overcome the effects of the outside of school, visiting restriction.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she has a clear view of school development. The overall management of the school is, however, only satisfactory. School governance is unsatisfactory. There is good financial management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school.
- The short term priority areas for improvement have been clearly identified by the headteacher.
- The governing body is not fully fulfilling its role and responsibilities.
- There is a committed and supportive teaching and learning support staff. Adults are very good role models.
- The overall management of the curriculum has not developed sufficiently since the last inspection and the role of all subject leaders is not yet fully developed in terms of monitoring the subject across the school.
- The positive support and contribution made by the administrative staff.

Commentary

40. The recently appointed headteacher has clearly identified a short-term action plan for immediate school improvement. There are already positive outcomes to action taken, for example, the school management and meetings structure is now well organised and clear and all staff now participate in a performance management cycle. Other improved areas include the monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom, improved annual review procedures and the recruitment of a speech and language therapist. The headteacher is leading by example and staff now feel there is a clear sense of purpose and morale is high.

41. All staff present very positive role models for the pupils and reinforce the school's aims and values that, teaching, learning, care, support and mutual respect is at the heart of everything the school does. These particular aims are clear and they are successfully demonstrated within its community on a daily basis. A positive learning and caring ethos has been created through the care and commitment of all staff.

The deputy headteacher effectively contributes to the smooth running of the school day, although as curriculum manager, he must take some responsibility for the lack of progress of the curriculum improvement areas, as identified in the last inspection report. There is a newly constructed management team and although it is too early to demonstrate its effectiveness, roles and responsibilities are clear and there is a common sense of purpose, understanding and commitment towards school improvement. Currently, not all subject leaders have clear responsibilities and roles. They do not consistently monitor or evaluate their subject across the school to ensure the consistency of quality provision.

43. The processes for school self-evaluation are not yet well established and the headteacher is aware that currently there is a lack of analysis of useful recorded data that would help formulate strategies for improvement. The senior management team have begun to undertake whole-school monitoring of planning, teaching, learning and pupil achievement and constructive feedback is given to staff for improvement. Performance management for teachers is now established for all and welfare assistants will soon follow suit.

44. The school is generally well run; day-to-day organisation and management are effective and teaching and support staff effectively communicate and support each other. Induction procedures for

new staff require improvement and there is also a need to improve professional development opportunities for all staff, particularly those with additional responsibilities.

The management of resources, including staffing and learning resources, is satisfactory. A number of policy documents require review and updating, for example the sex and relationships policy. Support from the local education authority for the school for the improvement areas identified in the previous inspection, both in terms of curriculum development, governance and pupil support, appears to have been minimal.

46. The governing body is currently not completely fulfilling its statutory role and responsibilities. Although relationships between the governors and the school are very positive and parent governors, in particular, take an active interest in what goes on in the school, overall they do not effectively take an active role in strategic planning and decision-making. They have not ensured that improvements have been made since the last inspection as there have been no effective monitoring and evaluating strategies in place that would ensure that the school's strengths and weaknesses were clearly understood and that would enable them to question and challenge management reports and decisions.

47. Although the school is committed to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all opportunities and the needs of each are met, not all current procedures support the principle. There is no wheelchair access to the first floor classrooms and not all curriculum requirements are being met, or developed sufficiently, for example, the teaching of a modern foreign language, citizenship and sex and relationship education.

48. The headteacher is aware of the need to work closely with the finance officer to ensure that best value principles are effectively adopted. The administrative staff and finance officer provide an effective and positive 'introductory' service to the school and contribute positively to the overall ethos of the school, its public face and the care and support for the pupils and their parents and carers. There is good financial planning and management; all policies are in place and controls are good. Pupil costs are currently high due to the high number who require one-to-one support. However, considering the very positive pupil outcomes, overall, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

49. There has been mixed progress since the last inspection and the leadership, management and governance of the school has much work to do to ensure that improvements continue for the benefit of both pupils and parents/carers. Evidence suggests that under the new management, there is the clear capacity for improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

| | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| | Income and expenditure (£) |
| | Balances (£) |
| | Total income |
| 2117985 | |
| | Balance from previous year |
| | 38267 |
| | Total expenditure |
| 2130117 | |

Balance carried forward to the next

-12000



Expenditure per pupil

17751



PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The provision for English is **good** overall with some **very good** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in developing communication skills.
- There is very good use of signing, pictures and symbols to support pupils' communication.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress.

Commentary

50. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English and by the time they are 16 years old, many are able to read text with symbols and to write simple words and phrases with letters which are usually correctly shaped. In a post-16 group, pupils were able to confidently read aloud from a book about themselves which they had made using a computer programme which combined words with symbols. This formed part of their work for accreditation through the 'Moving On' programme. Pupils make good progress with speaking and listening. Many are able to hold a conversation, recount their personal news and respond to information given by their peers. The very good support which is provided by the many staff who are skilled Makaton signers makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress with their communication skills.

51. Primary aged pupils are grouped into 'focus groups' so that their needs can be met through the most appropriate delivery of the curriculum. Good links are established with speech and language therapists who take part in some class sessions. This enables them to support and encourage the use of communication through literacy lessons. In one lesson pupils were extending their vocabulary through looking at fruits, making choices, matching colours, signs and names. Pupils benefit from a multi-sensory approach in which they have the opportunity to join in with songs, stories using objects of reference which they can explore and practical activities to develop mark making. 'Hello' songs are often used to mark the beginning of a session and may include greetings in the pupils' first language.

52. There is also some very good use of interactive story telling based on Big Books for younger secondary aged pupils. This is supported with signing and objects of reference. In these lessons pupils take an active and enthusiastic part in the story telling showing their interest and enjoyment through their level of concentration and willingness to respond to the teacher's very good questions which encourage them to think about the feelings of the characters in the story.

53. Pupils' progress is being recorded and assessed through the use of commercial schemes such as Equals. There is some good marking of pupils' work which includes annotation to show their degree of independence and note their achievements. As yet, judgements of achievement are not moderated between teachers to ensure consistency between them. Likewise, assessment is not used systematically to plan further learning with clearer differences of approach for individual pupils. Some lessons need to be planned more carefully to ensure that pupils do not spend unnecessary time passively waiting for their turn, but are actively engaged in the process of the lesson throughout.

54. The school library is well used by some teachers to encourage their pupils to read for pleasure and to be able to find books through a simple, effective classification system. In one such lesson pupils were reminded of the routine for appropriate behaviour in the library through shared reading of a class book based on 'Writing with Symbols'. They then practiced returning books to the correct shelf by using the colour coding system and were then able to spend time reading books of

their choice. The library is on the first floor of the building which makes it inaccessible for some pupils. It is tidily organised, but is in need of some fresh, appropriate books as well as access to a computer to broaden access to information retrieval skills.

55. English is led well by a team of three subject leaders with complementary skills. They have put in place thorough long and medium term planning based on the Equals curriculum. They monitor coverage of the curriculum and teachers' records of pupils' progress. Since the last inspection they have led the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy for primary pupils. This has made a significant impact on the delivery of the subject in the school because it has also influenced practice in the secondary part of the school. There is an appropriate action plan for the subject which rightly identifies that further training for teachers is needed as well as the moderation of teachers' judgements of pupil achievement levels.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

56. The use of signing and symbols allows pupils to participate in all areas of the curriculum. Speaking and listening are well promoted as pupils are encouraged to listen carefully to what others are saying, and helped to respond appropriately. Key words are used in different subjects such as science, physical education, art and design and music, so that pupils become aware of subject specific vocabulary, and many opportunities are taken to extend pupils' vocabulary. Big books are used well in most subjects. Writing is developed in different subject areas, with pupils being given opportunities to use both writing and symbols to record their work.

Modern foreign language

57. The statutory requirement for teaching a modern foreign language to pupils aged 11-14 is not formally being met.

58. However, the school does appreciate the high percentage of pupils whose first language is not English and opportunities are planned to reinforce common words in a number of their native languages. For example, in one lesson a teacher made the activity relevant to pupils' home culture by experiencing the 'number ring' song in French, Bengali, Gujarati, Mandarin, English and Sinhalese – the home languages of pupils in the room.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Aspects of management are unsatisfactory so that the school cannot ensure consistency of learning experience for all pupils or their progress in the subject as they move through the school.

Commentary

59. Pupils generally achieve well in mathematics regardless of age, additional needs, gender or whether or not English is their first language. Their achievement is directly linked to good teaching.

60. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 in learning about the permanence of objects, and how objects relate to each other in space, fitted shapes into jigsaws and became better at predicting their alignment. Lower attainers experienced different shapes in their environment through touch. In Year 5, pupils learned to count through joining in songs such as 'head, shoulders, baby, 1,2,3', a song which was culturally very relevant to some of the pupils. Pupils who had no expressive language were shown

how to indicate their understanding by giving other more specific verbalisations. Through careful planning by the teacher, Year 6 pupils with complex difficulties encountered objects of different shapes and characteristics. A visually impaired pupil with movement difficulties learned to interact more with his environment: given a choice of objects which the teacher enabled him to feel, he purposefully tried to grab the green plastic tube which made a noise. Another pupil who earlier seemed uninvolved, became much more engaged, blowing back when a plastic fish 'blew' against his face.

61. In Year 8, pupils learn how to record data on a bar chart. They had searched the classroom for examples of the word 'look' written on the wall displays, and found out which pupil had found the most. In Year 10, some pupils learned to name coins correctly. They were very focused on this activity as, later in the lesson, they were able to 'spend' their 'money' at the 'tuck shop', operated by some post-16 pupils. The 'shop keepers' were also gaining experience in handling money and giving change. Buyers and sellers were, additionally, both being given the opportunity to develop their social skills.

62. In Year 10, pupils' understanding of money and their practice in using it under controlled circumstances was very relevant to them being able to manage similar transactions in the community, for example, buying in shops.

63. Teaching is often lively and captures pupils' attention well. In another Year 10 lesson, for instance, pupils became more secure in counting to ten through a 'pop the bubbles' competition. Teaching is made relevant to pupils' home culture, as in a Year 6 lesson, pupils experienced the 'number ring' song in French, Bengali, Gujarati, Mandarin, English and Sinhalese – the home languages of pupils in the room. Most significantly, most teachers make appropriate use of the Equals scheme of work which breaks up mathematical development into sufficiently small steps for pupils with severe learning difficulties, or profound and multiple learning difficulties to make progress. The very careful use of this scheme enables teachers to track even the smallest achievements such as increasing engagement or participation in the environment.

64. Successful partnerships between teachers and welfare assistants ensure that the very varied ability of pupils in most classes is well catered for. Staff plan together and manage the difficult behaviour of some pupils well. A common feature in the successful teaching is the consistency of classroom routines and of staff response to pupils with positive behaviour being rewarded, and unacceptable behaviour ignored as far as possible. Pupils have a very positive attitude to mathematics lessons and are almost always well behaved. They respect each other's attempts to answer correctly and do not mock incorrect contributions.

65. In spite of the good achievement across the school, management of mathematics is unsatisfactory. There has been no effective co-ordination of the subject at the whole-school level. A development scheme is in its infancy. There are no agreed whole-school systems for lesson planning, teaching, marking, assessment and recording. There is no monitoring of how information gained in one class is passed on and effectively used as a basis for the next stage in learning. The school cannot ensure there is progression for all pupils. There is no monitoring of classroom practice to ensure that there is consistency of teaching of mathematics and that good practice is shared. The school has not evaluated practice and so has not analysed what approaches work best with different learning needs. The co-ordinators have not been trained to fulfill their management role and have not had sufficient access to training to further their own professional development in the subject.

66. Nevertheless, because the headteacher and recently appointed co-ordinators share a vision for the development of mathematics, and an appropriate action plan is now in place, the school now has the capacity to address the management weaknesses in the subject. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection because of the good quality teaching of the subject by individual teachers.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. This is a strong feature in most lessons across the curriculum. It is quite correctly identified as an important life skill and most lessons build a degree of numeracy into their planning and delivery. In music number games are sung and in art pupils paint geometric shapes. Numbers, counting, and scoring are regular features in physical education. Older pupils' personal development is fostered through mathematical activities which relate to competence in managing in the environment beyond school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in lessons is good.
- Pupils make good progress; they enjoy their lessons and work hard.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory as there is no accessible specialist science room.
- Monitoring of the curriculum is not well developed across the school.
- The welfare assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Commentary

68. Pupils receive good teaching overall in both primary and secondary departments. Post-16 students are not currently following a science module in the 'Moving On' curriculum. The good teaching enables pupils to achieve well in a range of science activities. They learn about their body parts and gain an understanding of the functions of some internal organs. Teachers often use very effective methods, including sensory approaches, which stimulates the interest of pupils, encourages exploration and enquiry and promote learning. Well-planned activities and very good support from the welfare assistants help pupils' understanding. Pupils' achievements are generally good.

69. Younger pupils develop an awareness that they see with their eyes and that they need light to see. In one lesson pupils were amazed when they saw torchlight in a darkened classroom, reached for the torch and followed the beam with their eyes. In another lesson, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties explored sound by plucking the strings of a range of musical instruments. Staff encouraged pupils to express a preference, enabling them to develop their choice making skills and supporting careful listening and learning.

70. Older pupils increase their understanding of the dangers of electricity and their knowledge of the key components in building a circuit. They experiment and some were successful in building a simple circuit with minimal support. The use of a worksheet, for a few minutes, is a successful way of assessing pupils' understanding. In another lesson, the main activity was using a worksheet, which did little to increase pupils' knowledge or give a clear assessment of their understanding. Such an activity does little to support pupils making good progress. Assessment is thorough and effective in promoting learning in the primary department, but is not securely established in the secondary department.

71. Subject co-ordination of science is satisfactory overall. In the primary department, effective subject leadership makes a good contribution to raising standards. Leadership in the secondary department is not developed as the co-ordinator has only just taken on the role. The adoption of the Equals curriculum across the school has been a positive step in providing the school with a way of ensuring continuity, although mixed-age classes make tracking of pupil progression difficult in some cases.

72. Pupils are assessed annually using the P-levels, which will give useful data to assist planning in the future. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning against pupils' individual learning plans in the primary department, but does not have the opportunity to observe lessons and monitor teaching. The limited role of the co-ordinator is a barrier to improving teaching and learning further. There is no whole-school policy on the time to be allocated to science for each year group, which presents difficulties for curriculum planning.

73. Accommodation for science is unsatisfactory. Teachers use the resources they have well, but the range of learning experiences is limited by the lack of an accessible science room. The small science room on the first floor is not accessible to pupils in wheelchairs and is too small to be used as a specialist room for whole-class activities.

74. Overall, there have been improvements since the last inspection. The use of other subjects to support pupils' learning in science is starting to make a useful contribution. Examples include the use of bar charts to collate data from a survey of living things in the playground and the building of a lighthouse in design and technology to support investigations in electricity. The development of a whole-school curriculum and improved teaching and learning are positive steps. As a result, pupils make better progress. However, the limitations of accommodation and the under-developed role of the co-ordinator continue to limit further progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of ICT in music lessons is excellent.
- ICT is used effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- There is very good use of computer devices to enable pupils to communicate.
- Digital photographs are widely used to effectively record and demonstrate pupil progress.
- Subject leadership is currently unsatisfactory, but is developing well.
- Some pupils do not have access to the ICT suite which is on the first floor of the building.

75. The use of ICT in its various forms by pupils and staff to support teaching and learning is good. The equipment available is wide ranging, including switches and other communication aids, as well as sound and vision recording and playback devices.

76. Information and communication technology is effectively used in a range of forms to enable pupils to access other areas of the curriculum and to facilitate their communication. This includes at least one computer in each classroom and use of switches. In a music lesson ICT resources enabled pupils to make progress in their knowledge of vocalisation and sound effects. Post-16 students were able to log on to a computer independently in order to access a programme set up for them to use. This provided a good link with the further education (FE) college where pupils will need to use the same process to access computers.

77. Good use is made of the 'Writing with Symbols' program to support pupils who are emergent readers. In a post-16 group students read confidently using a class book about themselves which they had produced using this software. In a Year 8/9 class they were able to follow and join in with the retelling of a story in religious education through the use of symbols to support their understanding. Switches are used well to enable pupils to take part in activities such as responding to a puppet show in an English lesson by answering questions put to them by the puppets. In a music lesson they were able to explore the potential for different sound effects using a microphone which activated lights. They showed great delight in their ability to control the movement of lights with their sounds.

78. Staff effectively use digital cameras and use images well to record and assess learning and to plan further targets. This is good practice and ensures that the pupils' knowledge and understanding are being constantly reinforced and recorded. In physical education lessons, digital images are constantly used very well to give pupils immediate feedback on their performance and as an aid to assessment, discussion, planning and target setting.

79. The leadership and management of ICT is currently unsatisfactory. However, a policy is in place which provides the rationale and framework for its use and indicates further development plans for the subject. These will include support for staff working, a school web site, concept keyboards, an interactive whiteboard and further software. An ICT technician is available one day-per-week through a commercial company to support the technical aspect of the provision. Currently, the subject leader is devoting a significant amount of time to providing technical support which limits the time available to evaluate the quality of provision and facilitate further improvement. Currently, there is no monitoring of the quality of provision in order to inform further improvement.

80. The ICT room is a very recent development, providing increased access to computers, although it appears to be rarely used. It is also on the first floor which means those pupils in wheelchairs have no access, which is currently unacceptable. After school workshops for staff are planned in order to increase their confidence in the use of ICT and its consistent use across the school in terms of teaching and learning. Overall, information and communication technology is being effectively used as a resource for learning across the curriculum and in this respect has made good progress since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Information and communication technology is put to good use in virtually all subjects, to motivate, engage and teach pupils. It is an integral part of most lessons, used by most staff with increasing confidence.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

82. It was not possible to make an overall judgment about provision in **history** and **geography** as only one lesson in each area was observed. However, looking at pupils' work, photographic evidence, teachers' planning and through discussions with the co-ordinators, it appears that satisfactory progress has been sustained in both subjects since the last inspection.

83. Much of pupils' work in history relates to the concept of time and the chronology of events. Pupils are able to point at and recognise photographs of some past events. Appropriate schemes of work are in place, although not always consistently applied. Geography is taught by all class teachers who follow the Equals schemes of work appropriate for their year group. In a lesson on transport Year 7 pupils were able to follow the flight of model helicopters with gestures and eye pointing. Other pupils were able to use a switch to activate a computer programme showing a helicopter in flight. Model helicopters were used as objects of reference to reinforce keywords during the end of lesson discussions. Scrutiny of work shows that pupils have looked at maps and symbols and have worked on weather-related activities.

Religious education

Provision for Religious Education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some very good teaching and learning and pupil achievement is good.
- Pupils are given a wide range of appropriate experiences of the practices of different faiths.

- The sensory approach to the curriculum offers pupils opportunities to appreciate the spiritual dimension of faith.

Commentary

84. Pupils' achievement is good. They have opportunities to experience the origins of the major faiths through story telling supported by pictures and symbols. Pupils in Year 8/9 listened to the story of Buddha and the Bodhi tree retold by the teacher who placed a sequence of symbols on the board to match each element of the story. The pupils were able to recognise the symbols and therefore contribute to the telling of the story. They then had the opportunity to join in a 'meditation' activity in order to develop their understanding of the way that believers practice their faith. Pupils who benefit from sensory access to the curriculum had the opportunity to wear traditional African dress and play drums. They sampled the three foods used to welcome a new baby into the world and express the hope of a 'sweet, exciting and smooth life'.

85. The two lessons observed were very good and excellent and demonstrated some very good practice. Pupils' work shows that they are given experience of religious education through a wide and creative range of activities. These include creating 'places of worship' within classrooms, opportunities for times of reflection and a sensory practical approach to using and making artifacts.

86. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two subject leaders are new to the role. They have put in place a scheme of work from Equals which is in line with the requirements of the agreed syllabus for the Borough. Monitoring of the quality of provision in the subject is currently done by reviewing displays and use of resources. The subject leaders have an appropriate action plan for further development and have money allocated to enable them to implement the plan.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil achievement is very good.
- Teaching is consistently very good.
- Learning is very good; pupils enjoy their art lessons very much.
- The curriculum is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The specialist art room is upstairs; wheelchair users are currently unable to access it.

Commentary

87. Standards in art, although not age related, in a few cases, approach those of pupils in mainstream settings. In 2004 one post-16 student attained Level 2 of the entry level certificate of the Welsh Joint Education Committee, others attaining at Level 1. Achievement is very good. This is mainly because most lessons are taught by one teacher, a subject specialist, who is able to track pupils' progress consistently, so that there is a steady build up of knowledge and skills. Pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, and those whose behaviour is a potential barrier to learning, achieve as well, for the same reasons. Pupils are enabled to develop their design ideas even though they may have difficulty physically in achieving it, through, for example, the use of collage.

88. Teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and skills, an infectious enthusiasm for the subject and meticulous planning. Pupils' needs are met, and they are very well supported by the welfare assistants. Teaching is very creative at all levels. Year 7 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were enabled to achieve greater participation with their environment through the creative combination of differences in sensory experiences: light and

darkness (classroom lights being switched off and on), sound and quiet (salsa music turned off and on), and touch (qualities of different materials such as tissue paper, wet and dry).

89. Very good records of progress ensure that what has already been learned is fully used as the basis for new learning. Pupils say they like their art lessons very much, which can be very meaningful to them. One post-16 student explained how he could see that a man in a picture was sad. He noticed that one side of the face was dark and the other light. He tried to show all this in his painting.

90. The curriculum is very good, enabling pupils to have a very wide experience of skill development, mixed with exposure to the work of famous artists. Pupils keep sketchbooks which serve as a means to develop their sense of ownership of their work, as well as serving as a means to retain evidence of their progress. Year 8 pupils were using materials from the playground as a basis for creating montages based on Lowry paintings. Some post-16 students with profound and multiple learning difficulties were learning about Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', while more able pupils based their work on pictures by Bridget Riley. Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.

91. Very good use is made of display around the school, which creates a positive learning environment and celebrates pupils' achievement. As wheelchair users are not permitted to use the lift to the first floor, for reasons of safety, they do not have the same access to the specialist art room as their more mobile friends. Teachers do the best they can, taking equipment to classes in the lift on a small, rickety trolley. This takes time and has an effect on teacher efficiency, the flexible use of rooms and narrows the range of learning opportunities which can be given to pupils. It also poses problems for the storage of pupils' work.

92. Good links are made with other subjects. A post-16 student was able to make a link in his painting between the depiction of a thunderstorm, the noise it makes (music) and the English vocabulary used to describe it. Colourful decoration made as part of an Indian restaurant project contributed to greater understanding of a cultural tradition, which was relevant and meaningful to those participants who shared it and beneficial in terms of their understanding to those who were not.

93. The leadership and management of art is very good. There are high expectations and a determination that all pupils will have every opportunity to achieve good results. Higher attainers will have the opportunity to enter GCSE. Difficulties about the practical arrangements are not allowed to get in the way of giving all pupils an equal opportunity to experience and enjoying the subject.

94. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Standards of achievement and teaching are now very good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinators have very good subject knowledge.
- Some pupils do not have access to the full curriculum.
- Teaching and learning in lessons taught by the specialist teacher for food technology are very good.
- The accommodation for food technology is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

95. Pupil achievement is satisfactory overall and occasionally it is good or very good. Teaching in lessons seen was good or very good in the primary and secondary departments and satisfactory in post-16. Lack of opportunity for some pupils to access the full curriculum adversely affects their progress. This is mainly due to the variable time allocation for different classes.

96. In a Years 1/2 class, pupils were tearing paper and gluing the pieces to a fish shape made earlier and were encouraged to work as independently as possible; the experienced team of staff giving just the necessary amount of support needed for them to complete the task. In a Year 6 food technology lesson, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties expressed a preference between jam and honey. They assisted in the mixing of pancake batter, with hand on hand assistance, using their senses to gain an understanding of the process. The good use of speech, symbol and sign aided pupils' understanding. They enjoyed eating the product and readily expressed their preference by gesture, speaking and facial expression.

97. Excellent teaching in a Year 7/8 food technology lesson stimulated the interest of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. They used their senses to explore and take part in making and using icing sugar. The good planning, attention to detail and very good knowledge the teacher and welfare assistants have of the needs of the pupils led to very good achievement.

98. Post-16 students learn basic life skills as part of the 'Moving On' curriculum. Their achievements are satisfactory. Clear instructions and good preparation enable students to work as independently as possible when preparing food. They successfully make biscuits using the microwave oven. The use of adapted technology assists some students to access equipment. An example was when a big switch was used to activate the blender, to the evident delight of one student.

99. Pupils throughout the school design and make items for sale during the enterprise fortnight held once a year. Examples of cross-curricular links include art and design to decorate placemats, ICT to make greetings cards and science to make clocks. While they are good, these links are not tracked systematically by the design and technology co-ordinator, so make only a variable contribution to individual pupils' learning.

100. There are two subject co-ordinators, both with very good subject expertise. Design and technology lessons are taught by class teachers. Resources and support are provided for staff and a workshop has been run and there are plans for more. Monitoring teaching or curriculum coverage is not taking place. The co-ordinator for food technology, a specialist teacher has developed a full scheme of work using the Equals curriculum as a framework and teaches the subject to most of the pre-16 classes. Due to the lack of whole-school approach not all classes receive this specialist teaching. Resources are very well used and contribute to pupils' good achievement.

101. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The food technology room is in need of refurbishment and is not accessible to pupils in wheelchairs. The effective use of mobile resources means that these pupils are not disadvantaged. However, this is not an efficient use of the co-ordinator's time. Overall, leadership in design and technology is good while management is satisfactory. Both co-ordinators have high aspirations and a clear vision for the subject. This has resulted in an increase in pupils' achievements and satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

Provision for music throughout the school is **very good**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and as a result, pupils' achievement are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils are consistently challenged to make progress.

- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good.

Commentary

102. Teachers are enthusiastic and have an excellent command of their subject. As a result of this and because of the wide range of musical opportunities made available to them, including visiting musicians and participation in whole-school musical events and festivals, all pupils achieve very well.

103. Very good and imaginative use by teachers of a wide range of audio, visual and computer resources such as a sound beam and sound response lights enables all pupils to access music making. Further very good support is provided by welfare assistants who support teaching and the independent learning of pupils by the effective use of signing.

104. Pupils aged five to seven listen to and sing songs enabling them to learn about musical pitch. By the age of 11, pupils play percussion instruments, demonstrating good rhythm and play along to the beat of the music. They are able to describe instruments they hear. Older pupils explore music through computer technology, playing, arranging and recording their compositions.

105. Teaching throughout the school is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic, encourage pupils and have high expectations. This results in pupils being motivated, increasing their confidence and self-esteem, and leads to very good learning and full participation. Lessons are fun.

106. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. They respond positively to praise and enjoy both listening to and performing music. Pupils are supportive of each other and are good at taking turns. This was highlighted especially in a Year 10 class, where the pupils were using a microphone to vocalise the lyrics of a song. They were able to stop and start on cue while other pupils silently waited their turn and then applauded their classmates' efforts.

107. There is a very good policy for music and high quality schemes of work. Lesson planning is consistently very good or excellent, enabling well-paced and stimulating activities to be provided. Assessment and recording focus appropriately on pupils' achievements in lessons.

Example of outstanding practice

Year 11 musical technology

Both teacher and welfare assistant worked together effectively and energetically to enable all pupils to access an exhilarating range of sound and light experiences which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Expectations were high and all pupils clearly increased their awareness and appreciation of the processes involved in creating vocal effects. Some pupils were enthralled to realise that they could control sound and light effects through technical devices, using their voices.

Teaching was meticulously planned and the resources were very carefully prepared. The teacher's excellent command of a wide range of audio, visual, and information and communication technology resources effectively reinforced the very good learning opportunities. The pace of the lesson was brisk and all pupils were fully attentive and anticipating the next exciting discovery. The teacher led the class seamlessly through a series of technically demanding activities that appropriately challenged the pupils. Staff and pupils had great fun in a high quality learning environment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil achievement is very good.
- Activities are presented in imaginative ways that make very good links to other areas of learning.
- The specialist teacher and welfare assistants have high expectations.
- All pupils are fully included and are encouraged to make choices and become independent learners.
- Activities positively contribute to pupils' personal development; pupils display confidence, have high self-esteem and work hard with sustained concentration.
- There is very good instruction and care in swimming lessons and attainment has improved since the last inspection.
- Opportunities for participation in activities outside of school have been restricted.
- There is very good deployment and ongoing coaching of the welfare assistants.

109. Pupils make very good progress in physical education. The subject has continued to develop an exciting range of opportunities since the last inspection and it plays an important part in every pupil's programme of personal and physical development. Basic physical abilities and body management such as running, jumping, climbing, balancing, holding, releasing, throwing, catching and aiming are reinforced through physical development sessions and exciting indoor adapted games sessions. All pupils make good or very good progress in these skills. Even pupils whose movement is inhibited by a physical disadvantage make very good progress, for example, in holding, releasing, pushing balls and engaging in competitive game situations.

110. All pupils have the opportunity to learn body part names, run, walk and learn to appreciate direction and space. They make very good progress because very thorough lesson planning is directly linked to the learning intentions for creative and physical development as well as being directly linked to the national curriculum requirements. The whole-school approach to the subject ensures continuity and progression with curriculum content. Pupils receive continuous experience of the skills and concepts relating to health and related fitness, safe practice and personal and social development. Importantly, from a very early age they are encouraged to make choices and to take an active part in their own learning. Very good use is made of pictures and symbols to reinforce communication and pupil choice.

Example of outstanding practice

Assessment, recording and reporting

In all lessons, pupils' work is assessed through continuous and close observation, very good use of the digital camera and individual and group analysis. Assessing pupil performance and providing appropriate, clear and immediate feedback is an important component in every lesson. Welfare assistants play a vital role and they are expertly coached in supporting, identifying and monitoring pupil progress. At the end of lessons the teacher makes excellent use of the photographs taken during the lesson of pupil activity and progress, displaying them on the monitor screen for an effective feedback session. Pupils are thrilled at seeing themselves on screen and being praised for their efforts and achievements. This careful attention to the detail of pupil assessment ensures that pupils' progress is carefully considered and directly helps and ensures that future teaching and learning plans fully support pupil achievement.

111. Pupils continue to increase their communication skills through the continuous emphasis on careful listening and the skilful use of pictures, symbols and signing by the teacher and support staff. For a number of pupils, physical education may also include and involve therapeutic support, for example, very effective physiotherapy and/or hydrotherapy that meets an individual's need.

Pupils with mobility difficulties are not excluded from some very imaginative experiences, for example, a class of younger pupils who were primarily wheelchair bound, experienced English country dancing in the school hall. The energetic teacher and support staff supported by appropriate non-stop tape music, moved the pupils around in patterned movements, turns, stops, starts, increasing to more complex patterns and generating a real feel of being in a traditional barn dance. Pupils responded by smiling, laughing, calling out and recognised eye movements signified to experienced staff that they were having great fun. This session was a good example of an exciting activity that supported pupils' personal development, including literacy, communication, numeracy and general social interaction.

113. Older pupils have more choice and decision-making possibilities built into their PE programme. Choices centre around sports that they are interested in, show an aptitude for and may actually pursue after leaving school. The ASDAN accredited course module 'Sports Studies' within the 'Working for Independence' framework is used. A post-16 outdoor ten-pin bowling session showed most pupils competently demonstrating a knowledge of the game, rules and scoring. A number showed skills in releasing and aiming the ball to knock over a good number of pins. Unfortunately, this is a good example of how the restriction on outside visits is limiting the pupils' experiences of practising their skills in a real community ten-pin bowling alley.

114. Pupils' achievements and progress in swimming have improved since the last inspection and an experienced instructor offers very good teaching and support. Health and safety procedures are very good and pupils benefit from an excellent resource on a joint campus. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Some learn how to improve their strokes and stamina, while others learn water confidence and benefit from sensitive one-to-one support. Once again, this is an excellent medium for supporting pupils' progress with their personal development, confidence and self-esteem.

115. Teaching and learning are very good overall with examples of excellence. Planning is exemplary, pupil outcomes clear and lessons very successfully meet a wide range of pupils' needs. Relationships are excellent with very good communication which is often supported by signing. Activities are challenging and expectations are high. Class management is excellent and the specialist teacher and support staff work effectively as a team. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they demonstrate their commitment to improvement and thoroughly enjoy their sessions.

116. The subject is excellently led and managed. Pupil progress is very effectively recorded by photographs, videos, certificates of achievement and review reports. The subject leader has initiated and supported a wide range of outside school activities, which unfortunately, as with other school outings, have been currently suspended. There is an emphasis on team building and social development. There are good links with a local professional football team with players coming to school to coach older pupils.

117. A wide range of appropriate and very imaginatively designed resources, including multi-sensory resources, are extremely well used to support learning. The school hall is inadequate for large numbers or for older pupils, but is effectively utilised. High standards have been sustained since the last inspection and pupil achievement in swimming is now good. Overall, physical education is a great strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for PSHE is **good** overall. Citizenship is currently **unsatisfactory** as it is not formally part of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities during the school day which are effectively used to promote pupils' personal and social skills.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils through which adults model appropriate social behaviours.

- The policy for teaching about sex and relationships is very old and should be revised to bring it up to date with current expectations. There is no clear policy for the teaching of Citizenship.

Commentary

118. All pupils achieve well and as they move through the school they mature and become increasingly independent. Towards the end of their time in school many are able to function independently within the school environment and to take an active part in leading school activities, for example producing the school newspaper. They learn to be part of a group and to make choices for themselves. They are encouraged to work co-operatively with their peers.

119. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social development. It is integral to the ethos of the school and is the focus of many activities carried out during the day. This was clearly evident during the inspection. These activities are carefully planned to enable pupils to meet their personal targets, for example, by making choices of activity or of food and by learning to take turns and listen to others.

120. All pupils have targets in their individual education plans which aim to foster their development in this area. In the best practice there are targets for specific, informal times of the day, such as lunch time, with progress monitored and recorded systematically. During this time pupils with ASD used the picture exchange communication system (PECS) to support them in making choices and becoming more independent. For example, one pupil requested more sauce by using his communication book.

121. During the first session of the day, while pupils gradually arrive at the school, teachers and welfare assistants encourage social conversation among pupils by building on their good knowledge of them as individuals. The pupils are welcomed as they arrive and are immediately drawn into the social group. At break time, pupils are able to sit and choose snacks. They are encouraged to communicate with each other through signing or speech. All pupils show positive responses to each other as well as to the adults working with them.

122. The school's policy for sex education is very old and does not provide a framework for current practice or include education for relationships. The school brochure indicates that there is no formal sex education, although health education is in place and will include sex education for individual pupils where this is felt to be necessary. The delivery of this aspect of the curriculum is left to teachers' discretion. There is no policy for teaching Citizenship and it is not being formally taught, although it is a statutory requirement. There are many opportunities for pupils to become aware that they are members of a community through regular assemblies and school occasions. The links between teaching in other subject areas such as design and technology and PSHE are unclear because of the lack of a clear scheme of work for the subject.

123. The PSHE subject leaders are new to their role this year. They have prepared an action plan which correctly identifies that they need to put in place a scheme of work for consistent delivery throughout the school, so that identified lessons in PSHE can take place and pupil progress and achievements can be recorded. The plan also identifies that training is needed to enable teachers to deliver aspects of the subjects more confidently. Currently, pupils' progress is being monitored through tracking of their progress in achieving their individual education plan targets. The subject leaders do not yet have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

Post-16

Provision in post-16 education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' attitudes towards their learning are good.
- Teaching is good overall and often it is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Preparation for students' later education and employment are limited due to the restriction of off-site visits.
- There is a lack of support for students engaged in further education college link courses.
- The curriculum does not sufficiently meet all students' needs.
- Welfare assistants effectively support students' learning.

Commentary

124. All students remain at school for three years beyond school leaving age. Since the last inspection the Equals 'Moving On' curriculum has been introduced. The students achieve well within their studies based on this three year curriculum, focusing on World Studies (i.e. information and communication technology, foreign cultures, literacy, numeracy, daily living skills, home management, PHSE, citizenship and leisure and recreation), and vocational studies.

125. Scrutiny of students' work shows evidence of good progress through the 'Moving On' modules, Adventurer, Explorer and Traveller. Individual targets for learning are effectively assessed. Some students gained accreditation through the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) in art and design, one pupil gaining entry level 2. There are plans to enter students for accreditation through the WJEC in music.

126. Students benefit from the involvement of visitors to school in supporting their learning, for example, a local professional football club coaching staff visit once each week to engage students in football training. However, due to the restriction on off-site visits, teaching staff are not able to enhance the curriculum with activities and experiences out of school that would further challenge students, for example, work experience is school based. Staff do not support students by accompanying them on link courses to the further education college. This limits the effectiveness of their involvement and in one student's case resulted in his exclusion from the link course as he was unable to sufficiently manage his own behaviour without his previously experienced support.

127. Students enjoy their programme of work in school and make good efforts to achieve well. For example, as part of their work in drama, students were able, after watching a video, to enact scenes from the Odyssey, enthusiastically engaging in role play and acting and spontaneously applauding the efforts of other students. In a very good music lesson students were able to work co-operatively in sharing percussion instruments and practising their own part before coming together to perform as an ensemble. They were able to stop and start on cue, and play softer and louder. When using a microphone to add vocalisation to the piece, students sat silently and listened to each other's contributions. As a result of very good teaching pupils were delighted with their success in performing a new piece of music. In this lesson, signs and symbols were used very effectively by the teacher and the welfare assistant to support and encourage independent work.

128. In an English lesson, the use of clear individual learning targets and very good teaching enabled students to read their class made book together and individually. One student who used a communication aid was able to be fully included in the activities indicating that she would like other pupils to read her page for her. This purposeful and well-planned lesson allowed students to effectively work independently.

129. School staff work hard to prepare students for the transition from school to future placement. In a lesson on post-school planning, students were led through discussions on post-school placements, reviewing their individual visits to a day centre. With support, some students were able to engage in role play using keywords or symbols to practise involvement in interviews and were able to respond to other students' questions about their views on placements.

130. An advocacy group is facilitated in school by social services for students and provides a forum to discuss feelings and issues relating to transition into the community. Transition is further supported by the Connexions service and also the recently initiated 'Person Centred Planning' scheme, though it is not yet possible to evaluate the impact of this initiative. Staff working with the post-16 students are very caring and well organised and as a result, the students are very relaxed and show great pleasure in being at the school.



PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 4 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| How well pupils learn | 2 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 4 |
| Accommodation and resources | 5 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 4 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 5 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 5 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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