

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**HILLSIDE SCHOOL**

**Longridge, Preston**

**LEA area: Lancashire**

**Unique reference number: 131479**

**Headteacher: Geoff Fitzpatrick**

**Lead inspector: Michael McDowell**  
**Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003**

**Inspection number: 258920**  
**Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

**Type of school:** Special  
**School category:** Community special  
**Age range of pupils:** 2 - 16 years  
**Gender of pupils:** Mixed  
**Number on roll;** 53

**School address:** Ribchester Road  
Longridge  
Preston  
**Postcode:** PR3 3XB

**Telephone number:** 01772 782205  
**Fax number:** 01772 782471

**Appropriate authority:** The governing body  
**Name of chair of governors:** Philip Hargreaves

**Date of previous inspection:** 18<sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hillside is a day community special school maintained by Lancashire County Council Education and Cultural Services. It provides sixty places for boys or girls aged two to sixteen who have statements of special educational needs predominantly because of autism or autistic spectrum disorder. Because the school has allowed an older pupil to remain on roll while a suitable alternative placement is arranged, there are 61 pupils presently on roll of whom only seven are girls. Only rarely does the school have pupils aged 14 to 16, and as there are only two pupils in this age group on roll, it makes no separate Key Stage 4 provision at this time. Pupils are drawn from across the whole of the county and from some neighbouring authorities. They are chiefly from white English backgrounds but a minority have a different heritage. Two pupils are Asian British Indian, two are Asian British Pakistani, one is Chinese, five have not declared their ethnic group, and one is Turkish. Only one pupil, whose home language is Panjabi, is at an early stage in acquiring English. One pupil has a dual placement and is on the roll at another school as well. The school is one of the two centres making specialist provision for pupils with Autism in the county. All but very few of the pupils are markedly autistic or have autistic spectrum disorder as a major component of their special educational needs. On entry, the attainments of pupils are very well below the average for their age.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Lead inspector	English, religious education
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Science, citizenship, music, personal, social and health education
31167	Sharon Jefferies	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs
15292	Jan Pollard	Team inspector	Art and design, design and technology
27049	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	Geography, history, modern foreign language, English as an additional language

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school** that provides very good value for money. Leadership and management of the school are both excellent and governance is very good. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are very good.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, there is excellent management and very good governance.
- The deputy headteacher and those with senior management responsibility are very good leaders who carry out their roles very effectively.
- The achievement of pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, is very good because of the high quality teaching, which is well founded on very good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs. This is informed by excellent assessment of pupils' attainments and personal development and prompts very good learning.
- Excellent teamwork in the classroom and very effective management of special educational needs enables pupils to benefit from learning opportunities, to behave very well and to manage difficulties that arise from their autism.
- The programmes for developing communication that are put into practice with such consistency are very good.
- The range of curricular experiences provided outside of the teaching day is limited
- The work of the inclusion team is excellent.
- The outdoor provision for Foundation Stage children is inadequate and makes it difficult to manage their safety.

Since it was last inspected, the school's effectiveness has greatly improved. Pupils' achievement has improved very well and the curriculum planning ensures that pupils build on what they have previously learned and move forward at an appropriate pace. Strategic planning is now very good and effective; there are costed plans for school improvement, year on year, that support this. Monitoring of teaching and learning and of overall school performance is now done very well. Subject leaders carry out their roles very well. Provision for both spiritual and cultural development is much improved and the school is well supported by external services, particularly through the provision of speech and language therapy.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

For children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils across the age range, **achievement is very good**. They make effective use of the picture exchange system to extend their communication skills. They make very good progress in English. They achieve well in mathematics and very well in science. Achievement in information and communication technology is very good. In personal, social and health education they achieve very well and pupils make very good progress towards the targets set for them in individual plans.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, cultural and moral understanding are very good overall.** As a result of the effective means, the school employs to foster communication and to enable pupils to manage difficulties that arise from their autism, pupils learn to interact successfully. A minority of pupils is able to re-integrate into mainstream schools because of this. Even where this outcome is not possible, pupils still make very good gains in their communication skills, and benefit from lessons. Attendance is very good. Unauthorised absence is very rare. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they behave very well.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. Teaching, across the age range, is of very good quality.** This is because pupils are managed very well, their desire to communicate is strongly stimulated and very effective means to do this, other than through speech or writing are provided. **Pupils learn very well** and make very good progress. Assessment is of excellent quality and the curriculum is good. It fully meets statutory requirements and is very well matched to pupils' needs. A particular strength is the very good use made of special communication techniques such as the picture exchange system, (PECS) to ensure that pupils can understand what is taught and make clear their understanding to their teachers. The special educational needs of the pupils limit the relevance of extra-curricular activities such as participation in competitive sport. Nevertheless, too few opportunities for learning outside of the school day are presently provided. Accommodation is generally good but the building is, presently, inaccessible to those with mobility difficulties. Limited outdoor facilities provided for children in the Foundation Stage make it difficult to manage them safely.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are very good. The school provides for the health, welfare and safety of its pupils very well. There is excellent monitoring of the progress of each pupil and this underpins the high quality of support and advice that he or she is given. The school works very hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. Partnership with parents and the community is very good overall. The school keeps parents accurately informed about the progress and achievements of their children. Good use is made of relationships with the community to support aspects of the curriculum and fund raising. Links with local schools are helpful in supporting inclusion. The work of the school inclusion team both within the school and in other schools locally is excellent.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Overall, leadership and management are excellent.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent; he is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and by other members of the senior staff team. The effectiveness of management is excellent and has brought about significant improvements in all areas in the last two years. Governance is very good; governors are well informed about the school's strengths and areas for development. Their oversight of financial matters, the curriculum and the outreach work of the inclusion team are rigorous and they challenge the leadership to continually improve the provision made. Statutory requirements are fully met.

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

Most parents regard the school very highly. To help parents communicate more effectively in cases where children have little or no speech the school provides parents with an introduction to the picture exchange system that it employs so successfully in the classroom. Pupils who expressed a view were very satisfied with the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to improve the very good provision it already makes are:**

- Develop the range of curricular experiences provided outside of the teaching day that is presently limited.
- Improve the outdoor provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage because it is inadequate and makes it difficult to manage pupils' safety.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

**Achievement is very good** both for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils across the age range from Year 1 to Year 9. This is a very marked improvement since the last inspection when progress in all age groups was satisfactory.

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

- Whole school performance targets are achieved.
- Pupils make very good progress towards the individual learning targets set for them.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a very good start.
- Communication skills are developed very well and this leads to very good achievement in many subjects.

#### **Commentary**

1. The school sets realistic and challenging targets for pupils' performance, year on year. All children in the Foundation Stage and pupils who enter in Year 1 or later are thoroughly assessed. Use is made of Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting (PIVATS) to describe their levels of attainment. On the basis of their PIVATS scores pupils are assigned, for reporting purposes, to cohorts, that is, to groups with similar levels of attainment. Targets are then set for each cohort, specifying the improvement in performance each should make over the year. The setting of these targets is informed by records of the progress that pupils in each cohort have made in the past but, importantly, it goes beyond what has previously been shown to be achievable to demand more. In 2002/2003, the targets set for each cohort were achieved. Regular updating of PIVATS assessments shows that the pupils in each cohort are on course to reach the targets set for 2003/2004.
2. The school's analysis of its own performance data shows that ninety five per cent of pupils made progress towards their individual learning targets in the last year and that the great majority attained these. Targets set are soundly based on accurate assessment of pupils' learning capabilities and focus on communication and literacy, the development of numeracy skills and self-management of some aspects of their autistic behaviour. For each pupil, reaching the set targets represents a significant stride towards the acquisition of useable and transferable learning skills. In the few cases where targets were not reached within the projected time limits, the school analysis turned up the specific reasons that acted as a brake on progress. Some of these factors were external to the school. The deepening understanding of pupils' learning needs and capabilities arising from this analysis has sharpened the school's target setting process in these cases.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a very good start. A thorough assessment including an analysis of each child's degree of autism takes place. Teacher and support assistants are thus well informed about children's potential and capabilities. Priority is given to establishing and extending a communication system. As a result of this and because of a curriculum well adapted to the children's needs they make very good progress towards the early goals as they work within half-termly topics. Pupils achieve very well as they develop their communication skills using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and they improve their related skills in literacy. Children move forward from simple indications using a single picture or symbol to the use of PECS sentence strips to make statements, requests and interact with others. For many, speech does not feature in their communication but, over time in the Foundation Stage,

listening and literacy skills emerge. Children show interest in books, look at the illustrations and come to understand that printed text conveys meaning. Some are able to match their names to a name card or read a small range of simple words. Very good progress is made towards writing. Similarly numeracy skills develop very well and children make significant progress in their artistic and creative endeavours and, to the degree that they are able, their knowledge and understanding of the world. The very good start they make in the Foundation Stage particularly in developing useable communication skills prepares them very well for the next stage in their education.

4. Very good progress in acquiring useful communication skills enables pupils, across the age range and including those in minority groups, to learn successfully and achieve very well across the curriculum. Pupils build up their competence in using PECS and add to this developing language and literacy skills. All this helps to underpin their learning in the subjects of the curriculum. By Year 6 pupils show that they have extended their concentration span and increased their social conformity by taking an active part in literacy lessons based on stories and the use of a "Big Book". They come to understand stories they read together such as tales of "Mog" the cat or the "Pied Piper of Hamelin". By Year 9 pupils understand that writing is for many purposes. For example, with some help, they compose seasonal acrostic poems. Very well established communication techniques and developing language and literacy skills make it possible for pupils to make progress in lessons in many subjects. In mathematics key concepts such as "larger than" are well established by Year 4 and number skills develop well. By Year 6 higher achieving pupils subtract numbers under 20 and add three digit numbers using a carry over method. By Year 9 pupils are able to combine their mathematical understanding with growing social skills as they practice giving and receiving payment and change in the tuck-shop. This represents very good progress for secondary pupils over time. Achievement is very good in science across the age range, as it is also in information and communication technology and personal, social and health education, which includes citizenship. In religious education, by Year 6, they are able to understand the moral in a parable and by Year 9 recall significant facts about the nature and origin of important rituals in the Jewish religion. This broad success achieved across the curriculum is only possible because communication is secure.

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

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other qualities are very good. Their behaviour, and their spiritual, moral and cultural development are good and their social development is very good. The attendance of the pupils is very good.** There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' are very well managed in a consistent way by the adult teams in each classroom and this enables them to continue to develop very good attitudes to school.
- Pupils' very good learning attitudes help them to reduce their barriers to learning, increase their access to the curriculum and over time learn how to manage unacceptable behaviour that is the result of their autism.
- The school has significantly improved the provision made for spiritual development.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to learn what is right and what is wrong, to develop independence and to take responsibility for their work.
- Opportunities for cultural understanding are extensive.

## **Commentary**

5. The adult teams, teacher and assistants, who know the pupils very well, manage the pupils in a consistent way and help them to learn acceptable patterns of behaviour. Pupils are able to sit

and listen because they have a very good programme of social development that is individually designed to assist each pupil. There are clear strategies that are followed and consequently pupils have very good personal development. Older pupils are able to focus on their tasks. Because lessons are well organised with sensitive and appropriate support being given, pupils are able to achieve good results and develop their skills. Pupils try hard and are interested in what they are doing. Very good use is made of augmented communication techniques to engage them socially.

6. Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning as they respond very well to the school's provision. Gradually they show more maturity as they move through the school and in classes for older pupils more acceptable behaviour and social interaction are seen. For those pupils whose behaviour is challenging and for whom concentration is difficult, the clear strategies employed encourage them to respond well. Staff work very well together as a team and consistently reinforce good behaviour. They also work very well with the pupils to reduce unacceptable responses.
7. The pupils have good and sensitive provision for their spiritual development. It is well supported through religious education and through class and joint class assemblies. For example, pupils are interested in Advent and in the Advent candle that was lit as part of their class worship. A theme is introduced and pupils are reminded of this during their worship. Some older pupils answer questions well and focus on the worship. The school manages spiritual development very effectively by responding to pupils' particular difficulties. Whole school assemblies are difficult to manage successfully because of pupils' special educational needs and so they are limited in number. However, collective acts of worship are a feature of the day in each individual class. Other opportunities are used to develop awareness, particularly in art where examples of artists' work are used as a focus for discussion.
8. Pupils are taught about right and wrong and know the difference when asked. Staff are very good role models and show care and concern for the pupils helping them to overcome their difficulties. This area is also reinforced in personal, social and health education where pupils achieve very well. Pupils are encouraged to undertake responsibilities. These vary according to their capabilities and with support, include walking from one part of the school to another appropriately and taking the register to the office. Pupils also help to put classroom equipment away. All of these are good achievements, and show that pupils, where possible, increase their confidence and awareness of others and their needs.
9. Pupils are provided with a good curriculum that raises the awareness of their culture and that of others. Very good use is made of outings and visits locally where pupils have opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example, through visiting a mosque. Through this, history, geography, art, music and religious education, pupils are also helped to further develop an awareness of other cultures. The youngest children, for example, learned about Eid and made cards that link with their mosque visit.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.5%	School data :	0.2%
National data:	7.1%	National data:	16%

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

## Exclusions

There were no exclusions, either fixed term or permanent, in the last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good; teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum is good. A strength of the provision is the quality of assessment which is excellent. Teachers make the best possible use of the information they acquire through assessment when planning programmes and lessons for their pupils.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is very good for children and pupils across the age range and because of this, their learning is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has greatly improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers make very purposeful use of their knowledge and understanding of their pupils' special educational needs.
- Pupils' individual capabilities and levels of performance are thoroughly and accurately assessed.
- Effective techniques are used to manage pupils and promote learning.
- The development of communication skills is managed with great consistency.
- Teamwork within classrooms is of the highest quality. Lesson planning is very effective so that pupils are appropriately challenged and time fully used.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (6%)	26 (42%)	23 (37%)	9 (15%)	0	0	0

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

10. At the last inspection, in just under half of lessons observed, teaching was good. In a small proportion, it was very good. However, there were a number of unsatisfactory lessons. Since then, there has been marked improvement in the overall quality of teaching. During this inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were observed and the number of lessons of high quality that stimulated learning very well is greatly increased.

11. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of autism, which is the chief barrier to learning for almost all of the pupils, is very good. Through training opportunities provided by the school and through learning from their more experienced colleagues, teachers and classroom support staff are very aware of the nature of their pupils' learning difficulties. They understand the methods that have proved to be most effective in promoting learning. They make very productive use of this knowledge in planning and structuring the classroom experiences they offer to their pupils. In all lessons they consistently use symbolic or picture communication techniques and reinforce speech with signs when necessary. They make clear to their classes when phases of activities or lessons are starting or finishing. Because of their strong understanding of the masking effect that autism sometimes has on pupils outwardly displaying what they know or understand teachers, are careful to note the degree of understanding and level of participation of each pupil. They match the demands of the work that they set to each pupil's capability very well. Teachers

of both primary and secondary pupils teach all the subjects to their own classes. Because of the nature of pupils' special educational needs, the benefits of this system outweigh the disadvantages of non-specialist teaching of subjects at the secondary stage.

12. Assessment is excellent. Teachers make use of appropriate scales and measures to record frequently and regularly their assessments of what each of their pupils knows, understands and can do. The degree of their autism is also assessed using a reliable method. By these means teachers, and the school as a whole, generate a great deal of useful information about pupils' present and potential attainments and learning capabilities. Teachers use this information in planning lessons and in setting individual learning targets for pupils. The school collates this information and analyses it for trends and this helps in setting whole school targets. Over and above this very relevant range of recorded assessments, the teachers are sensitive to the "cues" that their pupils offer in their day-to-day interactions within the classroom. They come to know them very well, as does the whole class team. It is frequently the case in lessons that teachers or support assistants read from pupils' actions, meanings that are imperceptible to others, but which provide these knowledgeable adults with information vital to the meeting of learning needs.
13. Effective management of pupils is a prominent feature of the teaching. There is an agreed approach that emphasises the need to acknowledge the characteristics of the pupils. For example, it has been found that most pupils do best in familiar and predictable classroom environments and when the sequence of the day's events is made clear. Classrooms are set out so as to provide areas in which pupils can sometimes come together as a group but where, crucially, those who need separate, low distraction, work stations have these provided. The particular techniques that are most productive in engaging the attention and response of each individual pupil are well known to all classroom staff, appear in pupil descriptions and management plans, and are used consistently in lessons. When pupils become preoccupied, distressed or agitated a carefully choreographed series of responses by the teacher and support staff is brought into play to manage the situation. In these circumstances, the great usefulness of the well-developed communication system that the school employs is often seen. It enables pupils who do not use speech to make their wants clear and in turn to have the expectations of the classroom conveyed to them. As a result of the confidence, gentleness and certainty with which pupils are managed lessons produce productive learning opportunities.
14. In all classrooms use is made of PECS to inform pupils of the nature and sequence of the day's lessons. Most pupils do not use speech but are able to comprehend the content and meaning of their lessons when what is said is carefully augmented by the use of symbols and, in some cases, sign. Pupils master the use of PECS very well. By Year 6, most use their PECS books, effectively, to compose sentences. The consistency with which augmented communication is used is very good. Teachers and all classroom staff use it very productively in many contexts. At earlier stages PECS might be the sole means of symbolic communication but quite rapidly in many cases it comes to be a support for other means of communication such as writing.
15. Teachers lead their classroom teams very well; there is great unity of purpose and common understanding amongst these teams. Senior learning support assistants join the teacher in planning the lessons and making decisions about the deployment of resources. This greatly strengthens the planning process because it allies the subject knowledge and understanding of course requirements that the teacher provides to the frequently extensive knowledge of individual pupil's learning characteristics of the support assistants. The expectation of each pupil is as a result, both challenging and realistic. Support assistants lend their talents to make learning experiences richer, for example, by playing a guitar in a singing lesson. Because lessons are jointly planned, there is complete certainty about their purpose and the role that each must play to make these successful. Time is not lost, therefore, in moving between activities or from group to individual work; those working in the classroom know what they have to do and they do it. The team-work within classrooms is one of the school's strongest features and it is excellent.

## The curriculum

**The curriculum is good.** It provides a good range of opportunities and activities during the school day, which supports pupils well. As a result, they achieve very well in most subjects. It provides satisfactory opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision. The quality of accommodation and resources is good in meeting the needs of the pupils presently on roll.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a broad range of relevant opportunities and activities with very good emphasis on augmentative communication and consistent behaviour management.
- Curriculum development has been enhanced by being made a priority, along with effective management.
- Excellent monitoring of pupil progress underpins the support and advice staff use to ensure that the school is a learning environment.
- The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum delivery is very good.
- The range of curricular experiences provided outside the school day is limited.
- The accommodation is generally good but the building is, presently inaccessible to anyone with mobility difficulties.
- The outdoor play provision for children in the Foundation Stage is inadequate and presents some potential difficulties when ensuring the safety of the children.

### Commentary

16. The school provides a good range of activities for pupils. It fully meets statutory requirements, and learning opportunities are very well matched to the pupils' needs. Literacy and numeracy strategies are well embedded across the school, resulting in increasing standards of English and mathematics. Key Stage 3 strategies are being implemented. A particular strength of curriculum is the very good use made of special communication techniques such as the picture exchange system (PECS), which together with highly effective behaviour management ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Within each National Curriculum subject and in religious education a range of appropriate activities and topics are planned that match the measured capabilities of pupils. By working through these with their pupils, teachers ensure that they are working towards Level 1 and beyond of the National Curriculum.
17. There is a strong corporate understanding of the National Curriculum, the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Literacy Strategy that ensures the clear curriculum planning. This is supported by very good provision for personal social and relationship education, very good behaviour management and skilled use of communication programmes. The subject leaders are very well led by the headteacher and the senior management team, who have worked hard to embed National Curriculum subjects to ensure good coverage and that statutory requirements are met. Very good use of Lancashire's early years file is made in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is well supported by a range of detailed policies such as planning, recording, reporting and assessment, risk assessment, positive behaviour management and ongoing and continual professional development. The highly skilled class teams work effectively together to make certain that the curriculum meets the very individual needs of the pupils.
18. The school provides highly effective learning environments where all pupils are well served by the continuum of the curriculum. Pupils make measurable progress within each subject for each stage in their learning. This is verified and quantified by excellent monitoring, assessment and recording by teachers. Teachers use the information gained by assessment to ensure that pupils understand and benefit from learning opportunities in and out of school. The highly effective deployment of learning support assistants in classes throughout school ensure pupils are consistently very well challenged to achieve and kept on track at the right level. The school has developed curriculum maps that are within an overall curriculum plan. It has placed an

emphasis on agreed approaches to communication and behaviour management which are consistently applied and ensure that the school is a learning environment at all times. For most pupils the clear priority is to establish appropriate and relevant learning and to develop communication skills. The highly skilled staff team work hard to make certain that this is consistently applied throughout the curriculum. Teachers understand the curriculum requirements of the subjects they teach very well.

19. Support for learning outside of the school during the school day is planned well to extend learning into the community. Pupils swim, ride, visit churches and mosques, have educational visits to Salmesbury Hall, Preston Docks, Guy's thatched hamlet and Clitheroe castle. Pupils find access to the world outside of the school challenging because of their autism and their special educational needs. These special educational needs limit the relevance of many of the means to enrich the curriculum by activities beyond the school day such as participation in competitive sport. Support for individuals beyond the school day can be problematic for a variety of reasons linked to their autism. It is recognised that this makes enriching the curriculum difficult, as attention to appropriate support, timing, regularity, sameness, noise levels, crowds and transport all need careful consideration. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to extend pupils' learning opportunities outside of the school day.
20. Accommodation and resource provision is good overall. There have been great strides taken to improve the accommodation and resources within the school by providing for example specialist rooms such as physical education, (PE), information and communication technology, (ICT), Art and design, design and technology, music, food technology, science, an interactive room and a sensory room. There are plans for developing the extensive school grounds. However, the accommodation is on three storeys with stairs and steps throughout restricting access to those with mobility difficulties. The outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage are inadequate and pose some difficulties when ensuring children's safety. In addition, there is no medical room.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**The school meets a very high standard in the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils.** It provides excellent support, advice and guidance for its pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school is very good at seeking the views of pupils and acting on them despite the difficulties caused by the pupils' very special educational needs.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the school pupils receive excellent support to help their achievement in their education and personal development.
- The work of the inclusion team is excellent.
- The very high quality of an extensive range of care and welfare initiatives in the school maximises the learning opportunities for pupils.
- Through the advocacy of adults, pupils have been involved in the recent development of the school.

## **Commentary**

21. Pupils are very well known by the adults in the school, especially those who work with them on a regular basis. Adults have an in-depth knowledge of the needs of the pupils, a similar knowledge of the strategies being employed to address these needs and a comprehensive knowledge of the pupils' responses to all opportunities presented to them. This results in the excellent support and guidance pupils receive throughout the school day and enables them to make very good progress. Where there may be an unavoidable change of personnel working with a pupil, the extensive and highly relevant records kept about the pupil ensure that the new person is

comprehensively briefed. The very good use of the chat book of each pupil is an aid to inform parents and carers of the pupil's time at school and any strategies employed to overcome difficulties. It also ensures school is kept informed, on a regular basis, of how pupils' are coping at home. The consistency that runs throughout the school also provides support to the pupils, by providing a high degree of security, essential if the pupils are to make progress. The most obvious consistencies are in the way rooms are organised and the way in which pupils are managed. Throughout the school pupils have very good relationships with adults.

22. The 'Inclusion team' is an initiative to develop pupils' ability to spend productive time with pupils who receive their education in a mainstream setting. This can mean pupils coming from a mainstream school to spend time in Hillside school or for individual pupils from Hillside to spend some time each week in a mainstream setting. This is of obvious social benefit to all the pupils involved and for a small number, it enables them to gradually make the transition into mainstream education. This initiative is excellently implemented. Pupils who may benefit from spending time with pupils from mainstream schools are identified well ahead of any contact taking place and they are thoroughly prepared for the experience. This preparation includes getting used to the different ways in which a mainstream class operates. These new patterns of behaviour are introduced and practised through the Games Club. The classes to which the pupils will be assigned are also thoroughly prepared. The class teacher is made fully aware of the needs of the pupil and the pupils in the class are given an appropriate awareness of their new friend's difficulties. This further extends the support available for pupils. After each visit, the pupil is involved in evaluating the experience and their response influences and modifies the program for the next visit.
23. Very high quality and comprehensive risk assessments exist for all pupils and are very accessible to all that work with the pupils. All incidents and accidents are recorded thoroughly. Close scrutiny of these records ensures that where patterns are emerging, further initiatives are developed to improve the circumstances for specific pupils. By ensuring that the care and welfare of pupils is given a very high priority, the school maximises the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered.
24. The school works very hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. The school council is in its infancy and as yet has had no direct influence on the development of the school, although the members of the school council did complete pupil questionnaires for the inspection. Nevertheless, the adults in the school are skilled advocates on behalf of the pupils.

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

**The school has established very good links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are good.** The effectiveness of extended school services is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information for parents about their children's progress is very good.
- The school is highly regarded by mainstream schools in the area.

### **Commentary**

25. Because the school serves a very wide geographic area, there is very little opportunity for parents to have casual, informal contact with the school. To attempt to address this, the school holds regular coffee mornings for parents and will always attempt to meet a parent's request to come into the school for a specific reason, or general support. If necessary, members of the school staff visit parents in their home to provide information and support. The formal channels of communication are very good. Annual reports for parents about their children's progress are very good, giving detailed information about what the pupil can do and the standards they are

achieving. Some reports are excellent as they contain information on how the teacher is approaching the acquiring of a particular skill in such detail, that parents can be fully involved as partners in their children's development. There is a parents evening each term, where parents can discuss, in detail, with their children's teacher, the progress being made by their children and any future plans. These meetings are long enough to enable worthwhile discussion and partnership to develop. Parents are fully informed about their children's Individual Education Plan targets and have the opportunity to contribute to them at the parents' evenings. On a daily basis the chat books are very well used and provide a genuine dialogue to support the pupils' progress.

26. The school has very good links with a number of mainstream schools and colleges in the area and a number of these schools ask Hillside school to provide advice and expertise to benefit individual pupils in the mainstream school. The very high qualities of the inclusion programmes some of these schools operate with Hillside underpin the high regard these schools have for Hillside and are a tangible benefit to all pupils involved in these programmes. The quality of these programmes enables a small number of pupils from Hillside to move into a mainstream setting for all of their education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are excellent. Governance is very good.** There are no significant barriers to learning that adversely affect achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The qualities of leadership and management displayed by the headteacher are excellent.
- The headteacher has created a very effective senior management team.
- The governors make a very good contribution to the direction of the school.
- The very effective school development plan is linked clearly to financial planning.
- Day-to-day finances and administration are very good.
- The number and quality of teaching staff is good; the number and quality of support staff is very good, this impacts positively on pupils' achievement.

### **Commentary**

27. The headteacher's leadership and management are excellent. He is totally committed to moving the school forward to achieve higher standards and inspires staff. He has established a very able senior management team that shares his determination that all pupils will make as much progress as they can, both academically and in broader areas of their personal achievement. The headteacher delegates responsibilities very effectively to the re-organised senior management team. Staff appreciate this, take their responsibilities seriously, and as a result are working extremely hard to implement positive aspects to raise standards. The school is far-sighted, for example, funds used to support pupils in mainstream school are also positively benefiting Hillside pupils because of the excellent links established, which open more opportunities for them to work and play along side mainstream pupils. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. Parents are strongly supportive of the way the school is led and managed. The parents' questionnaires show that they are very satisfied with the school's management and leadership.
28. Subject co-ordination is very good. Subject leaders are effective in promoting learning and higher standards in their subjects through formal and informal meetings and increasingly, through scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' progress.
29. Governance is very good and fully complies with statutory requirements. The governors make an effective contribution to the direction of the school and have a very good understanding of its

work. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school; they are linked to subjects across the school. They are committed and have considerable empathy with the pupils and their special educational needs. The school is fortunate in that the chairperson spends a good amount of time in the school and displays very good understanding of the pupils' individual needs. Governors speak with knowledge of the school and its pupils and are well informed of its aims and developments. They challenge the management when necessary and will not give up until they are satisfied with the explanations they receive. They are well organised as a body and use their committees effectively to monitor and help manage the school.

30. The school's planning for future developments was criticised in the previous report and was a key area for the school to address. Very good improvements have been made, resulting in tightly focused and structured plans, setting out intentions very clearly. There are good procedures in place for keeping track of progress in all areas of the school's work. The resulting information is used well to inform school development planning and staff development. There are clear links between the school's priorities and its financial planning. The headteacher and governing body appropriately give careful consideration to the cost-effectiveness of their spending decisions.
31. The school follows good practice in the purchase of resources and in its appointment of contractors for work on the school premises as well as its careful consideration of the outcomes of its spending decisions. School administration staff keep all accounts well and provide good quality support and information for the headteacher and governing body. The latest auditor's report confirms the high quality of practice and it made only minor recommendations for improvement, which have been fully implemented.
32. Staff performance management is securely in place and individual targets have been identified which effectively support improvements in teaching through lesson observations and constructive feedback. There are a good number of well qualified, enthusiastic teachers. This is complemented by a very good number of very competent and enthusiastic support staff. Teachers and support staff form very effective teams across the school and this has a beneficial effect on the progress pupils make. Teaching and support staff have good opportunities to take part in a wide range of appropriate training opportunities. The responsibilities of all staff are well known to them. Staff induction is structured and it ensures that new staff get to know about the school and pupils as quickly as possible. For example, school behaviour management strategies and consistent communication strategies that enable pupils to become active learners.
33. The most significant aid to raising achievement is the school's programme for helping pupils to communicate effectively. A school communication team has been set up. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) is used consistently and successfully across the school by teachers and learning support assistants. A barrier to school improvement is the fact that the school caters for pupils from the whole of the county, plus some from outside authorities. This means that some pupils have to travel almost one hour each way to school. Therefore, when the school organises events such as parents' evenings, coffee mornings and progress reports to parents, many parents have great difficulty in attending. The school recognises this and it does all it can to help and support parents, and in fact manages to get over 60 per cent of parents attending events. The fact that most pupils live far from the school makes the organisation of extra curricular activities very difficult.
34. Overall, leadership and management of the school have made very good improvements since the previous inspection. The shared commitment of staff ensures that pupils' needs are met. High morale and a very good ethos in school have been key factors in this improvement and raising of pupils' achievements. Taking into account the high levels of achievement, the school gives very good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	Balances (£)
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Total income	1,088,917
Total expenditure	1,075,972
Expenditure per pupil	17,932

Balance from previous year	91,112
Balance carried forward to the next	104,057

35. The balance carried forward, 9.6%, includes contingency funding and an element for planned new building.

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

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

Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

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

- Teaching is very good and promotes very good learning.
- The teacher and the classroom staff know their pupils very well.
- The curriculum is very good.

#### **Commentary**

36. The children enter the school with a range of special educational needs, particularly personal, social, emotional and learning all of which contribute to their autism. Speaking and listening skills are poorly developed. The teacher and her team concentrate on the development of language and social skills and already within one term children are responding positively to school and are achieving very well. This is because there is very good teaching and support.
37. The children are very well managed because the staff who know them so well meet their specific needs and encourage appropriate behaviour. The classroom is well planned with specific areas for different activities. The team collaborates well and the support staff make an important contribution to the children's wellbeing and learning. Assessment and record keeping is also very good. In the previous inspection, children made satisfactory progress so there has been a very good improvement since the last inspection.
38. The well-planned curriculum is carefully matched to fulfil the children's needs. It is appropriately stimulating and interesting.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (FOUNDATION STAGE)**

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

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

- The children achieve very well because the staff work to reduce behaviour difficulties arising from autism.
- There is a clear programme that encourages independence skills.
- Children are helped to learn how to play, use the equipment and take turns.

#### **Commentary**

39. The teacher and the support staff ensure that, following a detailed analysis of children's needs, the class environment provides well established routines and well structured activities that reduce anxiety and encourage learning to take place. Very clear strategies are in place to help children when they show inappropriate behaviour. The staff remain calm and without fuss help the children to resolve their difficulties and return to the class activities. The priority given to establishing an effective communication system pays off by helping to alleviate uncertainty about pupils' feelings and needs. Teaching is very good and pupils learn very well. Their achievement is very good because of this.

40. Children are given opportunities outside the classroom when they need some respite but they quickly learn to sit at a table with others, and through the picture exchange system (PECS), make their requests known at snack time. Children sit together in the area for snacks and stay there until they have finished. They join others and eat their meals in the dining room. There is good liaison with parents and this has resulted in success with toilet training and has improved their independence.
41. Children learn how to share and take turns with equipment as part of their social training and with support take the register to the office and learn to move around the school, gaining in confidence.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY (FOUNDATION STAGE)**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Throughout the day children are encouraged to interact through speech and PECS.
- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's communication, language and literacy and teaching is very good overall.

### **Commentary**

42. Children enter school with very poorly developed language skills, speaking single words and some are without functioning speech. Children are helped to use the picture exchange system so that they can communicate their needs. They can also let the staff know what they understand and ask for objects. Through PECS, children learn of the importance of language and the clearly structured programme in the literacy session encourages language and communication very well. Throughout the day children are encouraged to interact. Staff are very good role models and ensure that communication takes place regularly.
43. Teaching is very good and it promotes very good learning. Singing rhymes are very well used and although children can only attend for a short time, they try to join in, some with very limited speech. Very good use of the "Big Book" accompanied with felt animals for colour and name recognition is challenging but children try hard to communicate, some in a limited way, using signs, pointing and making approximations of sounds and words. Because the teaching is very good children are stimulated and want to respond and their achievements are very good. Some children show co-operative behaviour and work on word recognition, others are beginning to differentiate between pictures and print. Good emphasis is placed on mark making with some pupils beginning to write their names.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT (FOUNDATION STAGE)**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are very well engaged in mathematical activities and work within their capabilities.
- Adults work very well with the children developing mathematical ideas and language.

## Commentary

44. Children are very well supported because their individual needs are well known. Work is carefully planned and each child has been carefully assessed with appropriate work provided. Adults work very well with the children as they undertake singing games that help with number recognition. Because the presentation is energetic and exciting, the children join in and take part, with their attention well focused. Children are able to recognise simple shapes and make a good effort to say the names. Others use PECS or touch to identify the shape. With reinforcement and encouragement children are sure what they have to do and are eager to respond.
45. Teaching is very good and support is very well structured. Encouraging counting and the reciting of numbers helps the children to develop language. Children learn very well. A constant commentary by the adults that is supported by PECS extends children's experiences and helps them to acquire mathematical ideas so that their achievement is very good. Appropriate use of equipment that does not confuse or cause anxiety and familiarity in the structure of the lessons, ensures that children have very good access to learning.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD (FOUNDATION STAGE)

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- With support, children develop their skills well using the touch screen on the computers.
- Planning for all areas is very good and good teaching ensures that children have a wide range of experiences from which they learn well.
- Children are greatly encouraged to learn in food technology, which they enjoy.

## Commentary

46. Children are well focused on the computer program for short periods of time. They are fascinated by the movement of objects on the screen and like to make marks and patterns using the draw and paint elements. Their hand control is weak for this and their concentration limited, but they are familiar with the screen and in spite of their learning difficulties, they are confident users. However, they are easily distracted even though the computers are sited in teaching bays in the corridor where distraction is less than in the classroom.
47. While only a limited amount of teaching was seen in this area, it was of good quality, overall, with very good teaching seen in the food area. Learning is good.
48. Children have very good opportunities to taste and touch food. The kitchen area is a well-organised area and very safe for the children. They try food that is new to them. Some do not like all that they taste, but others are prepared to eat it. By these practices, they learn to taste and smell food and to extend what they eat. The children's construction work shows good achievement. They are able to position blocks purposefully and they enjoy making towers. They also enjoy moving the blocks in a random way gaining pleasure from the changing forms. Visits using the minibus extend the children's experiences and the good use of photographs remind children of these outings and are a focus for conversation.
49. The very good planning shows that the area is well covered and that children have opportunities to widen their experiences, become more independent and to respond to their surroundings. This challenges their autism and encourages the development of awareness.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (FOUNDATION STAGE)**

Provision for physical development is overall **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills.
- Children have very good opportunities to experiment in movement.
- The outdoor provision is inadequate and presents some difficulties.
- Fine motor control is weak.

### **Commentary**

50. Because teaching is of high quality, children have very good opportunities to develop confidence and skills through using the well-planned work on apparatus. They learn well. They wait for their turn and enjoy moving along the equipment slowly and carefully. They are well supported and they achieve well. PECS is well used for communication and safety.
51. The interaction room gives children a very good opportunity to move in the way they want, in a safe but supported environment. They are relaxed and enjoy setting their own tasks to achieve. They climb, roll and jump with pleasure and move according to their capabilities, but all the time gaining in confidence.
52. The outdoor playground is unsatisfactory as large concrete steps project into the play area and there are unguarded posts that have to be taken into account by adults when activities are being planned.
53. Some children find it difficult to use pencils, pens and tools with ease but opportunities that help them develop their manipulative skills are provided. They enjoy making marks.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT (FOUNDATION STAGE)**

Provision for creative development is **good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Children join in the singing with enjoyment.
- Displays of children's art work show good responses.
- Very well planned teaching gives pupils a broad experience of creative development.

### **Commentary**

54. Music gives children opportunities to join in singing as a group activity and to become aware of others. They enjoy this and achieve well. It makes a very strong contribution to their personal development. They move to the music and sing along to the tape trying hard to sing the words. Teaching is good. Adults are lively and work hard to enthuse the children and to focus their attention. They use puppets and streamers and help the children to join in the activities. This is a good activity as children forget their mannerisms and move freely.
55. From the artwork on display, it is clear that children enjoy painting and experimenting with materials. A broad range of techniques, including drawing, painting, cutting and sticking, is used to make pictures.

56. Children benefit from very good planning that ensures that all of them get sufficient stimulus and opportunity to improve their making skills and to develop their creativity. All adults know exactly what they have to do in creative learning sessions.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

The school makes appropriate provision for teaching a modern foreign language, French, for all pupils in Years 7 to 9. One week in each term is designated as “French Week” and during it an emphasis on the French language and culture permeates teaching and learning in all subjects. It was not possible to observe these arrangements in operation, but they were discussed with the subject leader and pupils who communicate using speech recall a number of French words.

#### **English**

Provision for English is **very good**.

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

- Effective use of the picture exchange system ensures a level of understanding, extends communication skills and leads to very good achievement.
- The special educational needs of pupils and their capabilities are thoroughly assessed and very well understood.
- Teaching is of very high quality and promotes very good learning.
- Lessons are planned very thoroughly.
- Subject leadership is very good.

#### **Commentary**

57. Pupils across the age range, including those for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when pupils’ progress was satisfactory. This is largely due to the very good use made of special communication techniques such as the picture exchange system. This system has advantages over sign in that it draws the pupils using it into a dialogue or exchange of information. Initially, single pictures that stand for one item are used, but by Year 6 most pupils who rely on this system, use pictures in conjunction with a textual stem to form a sentence, for example, a request. The consistent use of pictures and symbols in conjunction with text, and always reinforced by teachers using the spoken word, proves very effective in extending pupils understanding of language and promoting their desire to communicate. As a result, the great majority of pupils join in their lessons, increase the attention they give to learning and derive enjoyment from stories, factual writing and poems. They answer questions using their own preferred means with very good understanding and recall. A minority of the pupils, who are capable of doing so, develop their spoken language and writing skills very well.

58. Teachers and support staff know their pupils’ learning characteristics very well. There is thorough and continuous assessment of each pupil and the standards that they attain are recorded very clearly using an appropriately fine-grained scale. Knowing the stage that each pupil is at, and the level of each of his or her accomplishments, enables teachers to plan lessons that build on this and moves learning forward.

59. The quality of teaching is greatly improved since the school was last inspected. This is because there is now very good, shared, understanding that the effective initial work on providing a basic

means of communication must be extended during English lessons and in subjects across the curriculum, so that oracy and literacy skills are fostered and developed. Some English lessons are excellent and the majority is very good. The planning that is based firmly on the excellent practice in assessment is very thorough. All members of the classroom team know their roles and the purposes of the lesson. As a result, organisation in the classroom is, generally flawless and time is used very profitably. Sensitivity to the needs of individual pupils arising from their autism ensures that both personal and learning needs are fully met.

60. A strongly emerging feature of the teaching in English is the good adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy for these very special circumstances. Good infant and junior school practice, such as the use of “Big Books” to provide a focus for group work on texts and stories is well established. In some lessons role play, sensory stimulation and singing are used to give impact to the teaching. Many pupils respond very well to this. The nature of their special educational needs is such that it is necessary to familiarise pupils with the work by repeating it to a degree not required in mainstream schools. Teachers do this well, increasing, incrementally, the learning demands they make on pupils.
61. For older pupils in Year 9, use is made of a wide range of strategies and techniques, from role play to conventional junior and secondary practice, such as focussing on the meaning and spelling of key words, questioning, and sharing work so as to extend social communication. In classes with pupils who use speech and are able to read and write these skills are carefully built up. Writing for a variety of purposes is introduced. For example, one class of Year 9 pupils showed good understanding of the form of “acrostic” verse; each successfully composed an “acrostic” on a seasonal theme and showed their increasing social communication skills by sharing their efforts with the class.
62. Leadership in English has had a chequered history. Those who have led the subject have held the post for very brief periods of time before moving on. To add stability the role of subject leader has now been taken on by the deputy headteacher. A vigorous start has been made. There is a clear plan for the development of the subject and guidance about what should be taught and how this should be done. All plans are submitted to the subject leader who scrutinises them and discusses their content with the teacher. Resources for learning have been improved and a library is developing. Teaching is very well supported by the leadership provided.

### **Example of outstanding practice.**

A literacy lesson enables pupils with autism to respond within a group when listening to the story of “Mog and the Vee Ee Tee” by Judith Kerr.

Stimulating and enthusiastic teaching and purposeful deployment of the learning support team enabled autistic pupils who find social interaction and group work difficult to be highly motivated and inspired participants in a literacy lesson. The teacher prepared pupils with excellent details of the timeline for the lesson, her expectations of them and who would support who. The teacher’s delivery was excellent and both motivated and inspired the class. Pupils couldn’t wait to be chosen to respond to her questions about the text or complete sections of the storyboard. They were all individually challenged for example either by meowing like Mog, finding written script to place alongside characters, writing words given on a white board or finding two words the same. The many excellent resources and their skilful use kept everyone interested throughout. Pupils loved ‘living the story’ eagerly awaiting their turn to feel the soft fur of Mog the cat, the sharp prick of the thorn, and to take part in ‘binit’ where they had to identify whether or not written words did or did not begin with the phonemes shown. The teacher exploited every opportunity to get the best from her pupils who were eager learners. Together the class delighted in each other’s success.

## Language and Literacy across the curriculum

63. Pupils of all ages are taught all of the subjects by their own class teachers. This is to cut down the amount of change that pupils experience during the school day and provide them with the familiarity and predictability that, because of their special educational needs, most seek. This practice has the beneficial effect of ensuring that in lessons across the curriculum teachers are familiar with the language and literacy need of their pupils. They are very consistent in the use that is made of PECS and where oral communication or reading skills are emerging lesson plans in all subjects take this into account. Pupils who are capable of doing so, or who are “breaking through” in their reading, are encouraged to read, sometimes aloud, to the group. Written responses to record learning are sought in some lessons. In some cases the written response takes the form of filling in missing words but for a few written responses are in the form of sentences. Use of information and communication technology is very good.

## English as an additional language

64. There are several pupils with English as an additional language that is not their mother tongue; however, these pupils are all either non communicative owing to their autism or at a very early stage of language acquisition. They are making progress in line with other pupils in the school and this is because teachers plan to meet individual needs and adapt their resources appropriately.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across all age groups; as a result, pupils achieve well.
- The Numeracy Strategy is well embedded across the school.
- An enthusiastic subject leader has been recently appointed and is well supported by the Deputy Head.
- Mathematics is well resourced, with inspiring and interactive teaching and learning resources.
- Support assistants manage pupils well and are sensitive to their needs.

### Commentary

65. Teaching and learning are consistently good; as a result, pupils achieve well. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when progress throughout school and across the full range of attainment targets was judged to be unsatisfactory. Pupils are well managed. They try hard and apply themselves well. Pupils enjoy good relationships in class with the teachers and learning support assistants, and lessons move along at a good pace. Assessment is accurate and recording is very thorough. The information that assessment provides enables teachers to involve all pupils in lessons, and to encourage them to be independent workers wherever possible.

66. Mathematics lessons follow a well-structured pattern and this owes something to the way in which the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented. There is a strong corporate understanding of the National Numeracy strategy that ensures the clear curriculum planning. This is supported by very good behaviour management and skilled use of communication programmes. Consequently pupils know and understand what is

expected of them. They work hard and respond well to adult support. Pupils benefit from the structured routines that have clear objectives and from well timed changes of activities.

67. Since September the school has had a new co-ordinator who has experience of teaching pupils aged 5 to 11 using the National Numeracy Strategy. She is ably supported by the deputy head and together they have the enthusiasm, skills, experience and knowledge to take the subject forward. She has planned to extend the monitoring of teaching and learning to complement the existing pattern of liaison between teachers about what needs to be taught and what outcomes might be expected.
68. Teachers make some of their learning resources, but there are also many other stimulating materials that are well matched to the individual needs of pupils. These have a beneficial effect and enhance the progress pupils make. ICT is used well to support the acquisition of numeracy skills, pupils practise number values, adding and subtracting, and recreate simple repetitive patterns on computers. The interactive room is used well to focus the pupils on small movements, early number acquisition and create space for programming the roamer. Calculators are used by some older pupils and interactive computer software supports individuals to practise their skills, knowledge and understanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils count reliably up to five, counting everyday items like cups and motorbikes. They begin to represent numbers using their fingers and can find one more. In Years 3 to 6, pupils sing number songs like 'When Goldilocks went to the house of the Bears' to support their understanding of big, medium and small. They can order size using non-standard measurements like straws and cut food into halves and quarters.
69. By Year 4, pupils understand simple data handling using tally charts to chart dice dots when thrown. They know that a shape described as three straight lines is a triangle and a straight line and a curve is a semi circle. By Year 6 pupils understand 'more than', can subtract numbers under 20, and total two numbers together up to 30. Higher attainers can use standard written methods to work out complex calculations like  $156 + 192 + 11$  using hundreds, tens and units. By Year 9 pupils practise their money skills in the tuck shop; measure angles in a square and by year 11 know that all these angles add up to 360 and that you measure angles with a protractor.
70. Support assistants across the school know the pupils very well and are sensitive to their needs. Their work is of the highest quality. They know what to do because lessons are planned jointly with the teacher and the management strategies for each pupil are agreed.
71. A lesson was seen that demonstrated outstanding teaching and learning by extremely autistic Year 6 pupils in a numeracy lesson on fractions.

#### **Example of outstanding practice.**

The lesson grasped the attention of all the pupils. It was extremely well organised. After an initial introduction to all the class with songs and practical activities matching fraction symbols to cardboard slices of pizza, the class was divided into two groups. One group worked with the teacher on their individual education targets. Excellent use of PECS and signing was made to engage the pupils. The other group went to the kitchen with two learning support assistants. Using signing, PECS and fruits such as bananas, strawberries and apples to demonstrate, pupils learned how a "whole" may be divided into a half, a quarter and a third. All pupils were practically involved in this. As a result of the variety of approaches and the very positive support that the teacher and the learning support assistants offered, the pupils made excellent progress throughout the lesson.

## Mathematics across the curriculum.

72. Mathematical skills are used to very good effect in literacy lessons in Years 1 to 6, pupils count the number of animals who are waiting in the vets in the 'Mog at the V E T'. They match and decorate biscuits with big and small marshmallows in food technology. In Years 3 to 6 art and design, pupils identify fractions when printing with fruit, they cut fruit into halves and quarters and print patterns onto paper. They also estimate how much paint they will need. Older pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 use their mathematics, number and money skills when shopping in the supermarket. Achievement is very good and supports the development of learning in other areas.

## SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**; as a result pupils of all abilities across the school achieve very well and make very good progress.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are consistently very good and teachers present activities that are challenging, relevant and well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Communication is a strength of science lessons across the school.
- Teamwork in science lessons is very good.
- Pupils are well managed consistently across the school.
- Science is well led and has made very good improvements since the previous inspection.

### Commentary

73. Teaching and learning across the school are very good. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives. Planning, support and resources take account of the diverse and challenging learning needs so that every pupil is included and there are opportunities for all pupils to show meaningful achievement. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on "light", because of the good relationships staff have with pupils, and the very good communication with them, pupils managed to work in pairs reflecting beams of light using two mirrors. With support, pupils complete accurate recordings of their findings. Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.
74. PECs and signing are used very well in lessons. In all lessons, staff sign very clearly to indicate the lesson has ended and they are about to start another subject. Pupils 'post' their PECs symbol into a 'post box' to indicate they understand the lesson has finished and they are ready to start the next activity. This works very well.
75. Teamwork in lessons is very good. Teachers and assistants work well together. Teachers and support assistants plan together, assess, and record pupils' achievement regularly. Records are well annotated showing how much or how little support pupils required. Staff model appropriate behaviour and maintain pupils on task with timely interventions and prompts. They ensure more challenging pupils are fully included in lessons. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are reinforced regularly.
76. All staff apply the school's management strategies consistently across the school. These strategies ensure pupils' access to a positive learning environment.
77. Leadership of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has worked hard to improve facilities and resources. At the last inspection, provision for science was deemed to be generally satisfactory with some unsatisfactory elements as a result of poor science content in lessons. Provision is

now very good due to improvements in teaching and learning, the development of a science room, increased resources, and good planning and increased subject knowledge. Staff work well together to ensure consistent communications and behavioural strategies are applied across the school. These work well and are very good practice.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for ICT is **very good**. ICT was seen to be taught very well in subjects across the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for ICT has been developed well to meet the needs of the pupils and their achievement is very good.
- Pupils are confident and enjoy using the equipment.
- ICT is well used across the curriculum in its various forms.
- Strong co-ordination has led to the subject being confidently taught to the benefit of pupils' learning.
- ICT is only taught as a discrete subject for the oldest pupils.

### **Commentary**

78. The subject has been developed very well since the last inspection. All issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. Teaching staff have all had expert training, and learning support staff have been trained by the co-ordinator. Every pupil has mention of ICT in his or her individual education plan, (IEP). Throughout the school, ICT is integrated into the whole curriculum except for the oldest class where it is timetabled separately. ICT is now securely used to support all subjects throughout school. The school now has computer suites, interactive rooms, a sensory room, an interactive white board and class based ICT resources. Internet and Intranet resources are available with appropriate protection. These resources are used to good effect.

79. In Years 1-3, pupils are encouraged to insert their chosen tape and press the switches on tape recorders to select their favourite songs in music lessons. The sensory room is used well to support literacy lessons. Pupils all have individual help when choosing a computer program to support their work. They use a mouse and touch-sensitive screens well. They carry out these operations confidently and develop their skills very well.

80. In Years 6 and 7 pupils work individually on the computer to support their work in history. They use a floor robot in maths lessons, programming its moves. They use a suitable program, "Alphasmart 3000", to record their work in English. They save, download and print their work out very successfully. All staff give very good support to individuals, which adds to the quality of the pupils' learning.

81. The co-ordinator is developing a key skills checklist for teachers rather than a scheme of work. There is a suitable plan to develop the subject and teachers and other staff members are given strong and effective support to make the best use of resources. When ICT is taught within lessons in other subjects, the quality of teaching is very good and it promotes very good learning.

82. In Years 9 -11, pupils have researched topics of personal interest like polar bears, boxer dogs and the Spice Girls. They have also drawn pictures of themselves on the computer. They were able to use this facility well and print out the relevant information for their projects making this a useful tool for learning.

## Information and Communication Technology across the curriculum

83. Pupils enjoy using the computer to support their individual programmes of work. Equipment is used well to support all curriculum areas. The whole school makes very good use of ICT and the presentation of displays is good as are the word labels and PECS symbols and other equipment made by teachers for pupils. Using programs on the computer gives pupils a very good means of accessing information both visually and verbally at an appropriate pace and level and this enhances the delivery of the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

### History

Provision is **very good** for Years 1 to 6 pupils and **good** for older pupils.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and the practical approach taken by the teachers is successful in generating pupils' interest in the topics being covered.
- A very enthusiastic curriculum leader ensures that pupils' work is well planned and that it covers a full range of topics.
- Planning for what is being taught to Years 1 to 6 pupils is comprehensive and ensures that pupils cover a full range of topics but there is more to do in planning for Years 7 to 9.

#### Commentary

84. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection week. However, pupils' work and teachers' records show that achievement and progress over time is good. History is taught every week to all Year 1 to 9 pupils. There is evidence to show that older pupils are learning about the Egyptians in an exciting and stimulating way. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were learning how to use makeup and create an image of Tutankhamen; taking it in turns, they were accessing information from the computer about life in Ancient Egypt. Younger pupils study and wear Tudor clothes and they play with Tudor toys borrowed from the museum in Preston. By the end of Year 9 pupils have learnt about all aspects of Viking life, castles and life during the Second World War with Year 9 pupils making model air raid shelters. There are good links with other subjects, for example, with PSHE and food technology. With help, pupils recreate a typical meal of pottage as eaten by peasants in the Middle Ages. By the use of such exercises, opportunities are taken to develop pupils' awareness of others and their needs. History makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development throughout the school.

85. There has been an improvement since the last inspection when no history lessons were observed and it was taught on a rolling programme. There is now a very enthusiastic and hard working curriculum leader who has rewritten the policy and the schemes of work for the Year 1 to 6 pupils. This is in line with and adapted to the needs of autistic pupils and is based upon national guidelines. At the present time, she is working to make the curriculum for older pupils more cohesive with the assistance of a visiting consultant. Over the past two years since becoming co-ordinator, she has built up a very well resourced department. She has made resource packs for teachers and organised visits within the area surrounding the school that is extremely rich in Roman, Tudor and Victorian history. Pupils' progress is assessed using 'P' levels. However, the curriculum leader is fine-tuning this by adapting these levels into PIVATS.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is taught imaginatively and very well; pupils respond positively to geography and they achieve well.
- The curriculum leader despite being very new to the post has made a good impact on the subject.
- The area around school is used well as a local resource.
- The new developing curriculum whilst being good providing first hand experience needs also to be skills based.
- To meet the needs of pupils who have autism, there is a very practical approach to the subject.

### **Commentary**

86. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection week, however, pupils' work shows that achievement and progress are good. Geography is taught every week and it is taught imaginatively and very well using local resources extremely well. Year 1 and 2 pupils develop their awareness of the position of their classroom in relation to others by operating a mail service and delivering letters. Good use is made of PECS and photography. Year 3 pupils study the course of the River Ribble, which they visit on field trips. By the end of Year 6 pupils know the differences between town and country. They have visited Beacon Fell, Spring Wood and Preston Town Centre. Year 6 pupils have studied features of their own region and compared these to features of contrasting lands, for example, Bangladesh. During a Year 7 lesson pupils study the differences between the Sahara and the Arctic. A practical session on this topic involved passing an ice cube around class and making a Bedouin tent and an igloo. These activities assist the pupils' understanding of the two contrasting climates.

87. There is a new curriculum leader who in the short time in post has begun enthusiastically to develop a whole school approach to geography. She is using national guidelines with the help of the local education authority's advisory teacher to write a curriculum plan. She is aware that there needs to be a skills based curriculum to match the needs of the pupils in addition to the experiential one. The subject has had an exciting new beginning and it contributes well to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development in the school.

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are effective and well planned.
- Religious education lessons contribute to spiritual, social and moral learning.
- Leadership of the subject is purposeful and knowledgeable.
- The scheme of work based on the agreed local syllabus is not yet complete.

### **Commentary**

88. Pupils across the age range are taught about the major world faiths in a manner that is consistent with their capabilities and special learning needs. Teachers refer to the agreed local syllabus and the advice of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), when planning their work. Planning within each year group is consistent. It ensures that what the pupils know, understand and can do builds up over the year. Very good use is made of a broad variety of teaching methods to engage the attention and interest of pupils and build up their knowledge and understanding. In teaching pupils in Year 6 about Christianity, parables that illustrate important tenets of the teaching of Jesus Christ are simplified and translated into pictures and symbolic sentences so that the oral message is made more understandable. For older pupils, effective use is made of role- play to develop understanding of the Christian sacrament of baptism. A broad range of artefacts, role- play and augmentative communication is used to illustrate, and develop understanding of the nature and significance of, the Passover meal in Judaism. The use of these good and appropriate teaching methods means that pupils learn effectively and recall much of what they have learned previously.
89. Because of the rich variety in the teaching methods used and the successful attempt that is made to engage pupils at a personal level in the teachings of World Faiths, pupils' spiritual, moral and social learning are enhanced.
90. The curriculum leader for religious education had been in post for less than a term at the time of the inspection. Leadership is good and soundly based on good knowledge and experience of the subject. There has been an audit of the subject including its resources and a plan for development has been drawn up. Training opportunities have been taken and a productive relationship has been started with the LEA advisory service. Planning for the teaching of religious education over the team by all teachers is monitored and discussed.
91. A start has been made on further developing the curriculum for the whole school so that it fully matches the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and meets pupils' needs. However, it is still a shortcoming that, following criticism of the lack of such a scheme of work in the last inspection report, it is still not yet in place.

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

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Achievement is good.
- The curriculum is good, well planned and covers all areas thoroughly.
- Very good co-ordination and a good range of resources support teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

92. The previous inspection found design and technology to be satisfactory overall with some pupils making good progress. Now, design and technology is good with pupils achieving well taking into account their capabilities. Teaching is good with effective planning leading to good learning and achievement. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
93. Pupils' work in the classrooms and on display shows that they focus on their tasks, that there is a wide range of activities undertaken in a well-structured and planned curriculum. For example,

there are well-designed cars using electric switches made by older pupils, with younger pupils making masks using sheet materials. The design element is also present with pupils drawing their design before making their artefact. Food and textiles, for example, also feature in the planning and pupils have first hand experience of working with ingredients and in textiles, they made a curtain incorporating the school symbol.

94. The only lesson seen was good, with the older pupils working well. There are clear strategies for maintaining acceptable behaviour to ensure that the pupils have full access to the task and succeed with it. With support they made a lunch box using card and were able to use scissors appropriately and carefully. They are able to use paint effectively and are well controlled when using glue and brushes. The content is interesting for the pupils and they are able to use the food items they made using salt dough the previous week for their lunch box. Pupils learn about appropriate choices to be made for lunches.
95. The co-ordinator organises the subject very well and ensures that all areas of the curriculum are taught. The policy and the scheme of work provide a clear and straightforward approach to the subject. The curriculum is being further refined to meet the needs of pupils with specific needs and to make the curriculum even more relevant to them. Resources are good and there are sufficient to cover all areas of the curriculum. Displays round the school show that over time pupils learn to use tools with increasing effectiveness and are supported in a way that allows them to become gradually more independent in the way they work. The new art and design and technology room is well used with the pupils.

## Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is much improved.
- The curriculum is very good, well ordered and covers all areas thoroughly.
- There is very good achievement by the pupils who gradually gain in knowledge and skills.
- Teaching and learning is very good overall because lessons are well planned and behaviour is well managed.
- A good range of resources supports teaching and learning. They are well used.
- Co-ordination is effective.

### Commentary

96. The previous inspection found that progress overall was unsatisfactory in the knowledge and understanding of art, in the lack of challenge of the work and behaviour was not managed well. Art is now good overall with some very good teaching observed. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection.
97. There is a very well structured policy and the art curriculum has been reviewed. It now covers all areas thoroughly and at the appropriate level, providing activities that challenge the pupils. Themes and topics are very well organised and overall there is a very good record of art activities, including a wide range of artists that support pupils' practical work.
98. Pupils are very well supported and this ensures that they are able to undertake the appropriate tasks because their behaviour is well managed and they focus on what they are doing. This results in very good achievement and pupils gradually acquire knowledge and skills in art. The younger pupils in Year 2 are able to use different textures of paper to make a collage caterpillar. Good use is made of language describing colour and because the lesson is well prepared, pupils

use the glue and brushes with care and are able to achieve a good result. Older pupils in Year 8 use the work of David Hockney as a stimulus and make collage designs based on matching colours with the painting they are using. The very good support pupils get encourages them to be confident in making choices. Two pupils very well supported, use the Website to find further work of David Hockney and enjoy this task. The oldest pupils worked very well using stencils to paint and embellish surfaces. The variety of resources including beads gives the pupils many opportunities to develop and take responsibility for their work.

99. Overall, teaching is very good because teachers and support teams work well together. They know the pupils very well and understand their needs. The lessons are very well planned within the capabilities of the pupils and they respond well to them. There is consistency and a very well structured approach that produces a secure environment in which pupils can learn well according to their capabilities.
100. There is a good supply and variety of resources that are well prepared for use. These add to the quality of the lessons and pupils have opportunities to experiment with a wide range of papers, paints and textiles that engage their interest and also help to develop their skills.
101. There is a new art co-ordinator who has already begun to develop the art further through using batik and extending pupils' skills in collage techniques using the theme of the sea. Displays throughout the school show that pupils develop their skills very well over time. Art is also well used to support other subjects of the curriculum. The new art and design and technology room is well used with the pupils.

## Music

The provision for music is **good**. Six lessons were seen because, at the school's request, provision for music and its impact was a focus of the inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and are fully included in lessons, because teaching and learning are good.
- Teaching promotes pupils' personal and social development well.
- Co-ordination of music across the school is at an early stage of development.

### Commentary

102. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' progress was satisfactory. Achievement is now good. Teachers are skilled at including all pupils fully in lessons. This is because of very good teamwork in classes. Staff ensure that support for behaviour and communications enable pupils to participate fully in lessons. They get pupils to make choices, some verbally and some by use of PECs; they identify and name musical instruments and the sounds they make. They play a range of instruments and when listening to taped music or disks identify instruments, and say whether they are playing loud, soft, slow or fast. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils not only played and sang individually but also worked well in pairs and small groups singing 'rounds'. When they sang action songs they worked well with a partner, showed great enjoyment and expressed their choices of music and songs very clearly. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils had great fun when a trumpet was introduced. They all managed to play some notes, but one boy in particular had great success, greatly encouraged and praised by staff, which increased his confidence and self-esteem. The levels of interest and willingness to participate in music suggest that it is an area in which pupils can more readily gain access and can experience success.

103. Teaching promotes pupils' personal and social development well. Pupils learn to share resources, wait turns patiently. They learn to value themselves and others. Pupils sing well, and show great confidence when asked to sing as an individual or in pairs. Lessons build pupils' confidence and self-esteem as well as building musical knowledge and skills.
104. A new enthusiastic co-ordinator has very recently been appointed and is keen to promote music across the school. Work has started on developing provision for music in line with the school's clear policy. Plans for what is to be taught are being drawn up. The place of music as a therapeutic tool is also being explored. There are a number of pupils for whom music therapy would be beneficial.

## Physical education

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory** overall and **good** in swimming.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leadership is satisfactory overall but more work is needed to match the curriculum to individual needs.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress and achievement are good.
- Good provision is made to help ensure that pupils learn to be safe in water and swim.
- Accommodation for PE is not fully suited to subject needs.

### Commentary

105. Provision has improved since the school was last inspected. Planning of lessons is greatly helped by using the local authority's schemes of work but would further benefit from specific planning which understands the autistic spectrum continuum. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has plans but needs time to put these into action. Besides work in gymnastics and games, opportunities are provided for swimming and horse riding. Many pupils, because of their autism, have problems with competitive sport or team play. Provision for sport is satisfactory given the particular special needs of the pupils. The co-ordinator has plans to develop the use of pupils' break time to involve them in more purposeful physical activity. He also has plans to involve pupils in a cycling proficiency scheme and a cycling route around the school grounds has been proposed. These plans will enhance provision.
106. Teaching is satisfactorily planned and the outcomes expected are clear. Planning is based on good assessments of pupils' capabilities. The activities chosen suit the capabilities of most of the pupils while at the same time providing a challenge to some. Pupils respond well in the main given a high level of personal support. Teachers have satisfactory control of their classes, model new elements in the lesson satisfactorily and make full use of the learning support assistants assigned to them. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
107. By Year 3 pupils run to music, walk along a bench and ride tricycles. By Year 6 they begin to play invasion games, catch balls and throw beanbags into a basket. By Year 4, they can twirl a ribbon independently and move in different ways, running, jumping, crawling, climbing and developing their body awareness. By Year 9, pupils can perform a very simple sequence. They know how to exercise safely by warming up and with help, they locate their own pulse to feel the beat after exercise. This helps them to understand the effects of exercise on the body. Pupils having been shown how to move mats safely, do this successfully.
108. Provision for swimming is good in that all pupils throughout school are provided with opportunities to swim at two different pools. Planning for swimming is accurate and recorded. In Year 7 pupils make very good attempts to practise front and back crawl, dive for hoops, complete

a star float, tread water and swim two lengths. All pupils are enthusiastic and challenged to do their best. Visual demonstrations in the water by the teacher along with clear verbal poolside instruction and pictorial cue cards are well used to support learning.

109. There is a hall, which is used for gymnastic lessons, but this serves as the school hall and is not suited to many aspects of secondary physical education. This is because it has to be used for other purposes, such as lunch and assembly. The gymnasium at a local high school is used by older pupils to compensate for this. Some staff do not adhere to the school's clear dress code for teaching and supporting PE and this is not safe practise.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teamwork enhances pupils learning.
- There are good opportunities for learning during the school day.
- A good quality programme of work which includes PSHE and citizenship, and day-to-day activates permeates the whole school.
- Procedures and assessment have improved and are now very good.

### **Commentary**

110. All staff are very aware of the importance of promoting pupils' personal development and they work together to bring this about. Because they understand pupils' needs very well, they are very good at doing this, in lessons in all subjects and in other activities. Each pupil has targets for personal development in their individual education plan and a strong emphasis is placed on helping them achieve them.
111. Very good teamwork enhances progress pupils make. Consistently very good teaching and support promotes the development of social and self-help skills very well.
112. The school uses breaks and lunch times as learning opportunities for pupils. Pupils have targets set and staff carefully monitor what is happening at breaks and lunch times to ensure pupils are making progress particularly in their social and moral development. At lunchtime pupils sit together, fetch their lunches, return their plates in an orderly manner; take turns and wait patiently if necessary. At breaks, staff encourage pupils to recognise and play with each other always supporting, encouraging and praising their efforts.
113. PSHE was not reported discretely in the previous report, but social development was deemed to be good. PSHE is now very good. This is good improvement since the last report. PSHE is now established on the timetable for pupils from Year 3. Younger pupils are taught PSHE through their topics in a cross-curricular way, and this works well. By using PECS cards to write and sequence an activity, pupils are enable to follow the PECs symbols and therefore follow the sequence of events, such as washing their hands after visiting the toilet. This seems a simple enough practice, but the school is extremely good at communication and this is a meaningful way to get pupils to improve their hygiene and personal care. Year 7 pupils are taught the importance of self-help in house keeping skills. Pupils show an understanding of keeping kitchen surfaces clean and germ free. Pupils check clothes labels to decide the washing temperature and also the correct iron temperature to use. Others, through role-play, enhance their shopping skills.

114. The school uses the suitable fined-grained evaluation scale, PIVATS, to track pupils' achievement and this allows management to analyse strengths and weaknesses across the school; identify where there are weaknesses and amend the programme to rectify. Lessons are supported by the school's Connexions adviser, from as early as Year 8, and this gives pupils, and their parents, opportunities to be more aware of courses and colleges which are available to them. This is good practice and is appreciated by pupils and parents.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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