

INSPECTION REPORT

KING'S MILL SCHOOL

Driffield

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118144

Headteacher: Ms Sarah Young

Lead inspector: Mrs Rosemary Eaton

Dates of inspection: 15th to 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 258929

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	75 (66 FTE)

School address:	Victoria Road Driffield
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Telephone number:	01377 253375
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Thacker

Date of previous inspection:	13/06/2001
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

King's Mill is a school for pupils with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently, 75 pupils attend, with over twice as many boys as girls. King's Mill's nursery provides up to 20 part time places, with 18 children attending at the time of the inspection. The pupils in the main part of the school have statements of special educational needs, ten of them resulting from the pupils' profound and multiple learning difficulties. In addition to their severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, seven pupils in Years 4 to 8 have autistic spectrum disorders. When they join the school, the attainment of most pupils is well below that expected for their age. All but one of the pupils are white. None have English as an additional language. The pupils' socio-economic circumstances are broadly below average. The school provides residential accommodation for up to 17 pupils at any one time. In total, around 40 pupils board for between one and three nights per week, including weekends and most school holidays. King's Mill has received the Sportsmark, Silver Artsmark. Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award and Schools Achievement Award. The school's hydrotherapy pool is used by community groups and a children's charity has an office on site.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15173	Rosemary Eaton	Lead inspector	Art and design
			Design and technology
			Drama
			Music
			English as an additional language
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
23549	Helen Eadington	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum
			English
			Special educational needs
15551	Patricia Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Science
			History
			Geography
			Religious education
20466	Alan Tattersall	Team inspector	Modern foreign language
			Information and communication technology
			Personal, social and health education and Citizenship
			Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

King's Mill is a **good school with many very good features**. It provides **good value for money**. Children in the nursery achieve very well and achievement is good in the main part of the school. Pupils' personal development is very good. The quality of teaching is good and the school is well led and managed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head teacher's leadership is very good and ensures that all the school's work is aimed at helping pupils to achieve well.
- Children in the nursery get off to a flying start.
- All pupils have very good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school and the wider community.
- The accommodation for teaching does not fully meet the needs of the curriculum or the pupils.
- The school provides an outstanding range of stimulating activities to enrich the curriculum.
- The residential provision makes a very strong contribution to pupils' achievement and personal development.
- Pupils are very keen to do well and to play an active part in the school.
- There are not enough computers or other information and communication technology equipment.
- The curriculum for food technology in Years 10 and 11 is not varied enough.
- The school has no procedures to check whether or not pupils are punctual.

The school has **improved well** since the previous inspection, which was in 2001. Pupils' achievement is now better in several areas, especially in English. There is now more good and very good teaching. The key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. This has led to particular improvements in the curriculum, how pupils' achievement is measured, and the way in which the school plans for the future.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, pupils **achieve well**. **Children in the nursery achieve very well in all but one of the areas of their learning**. In **physical development**, their achievement is **good** rather than very good. In the main part of the school, **pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, and religious education**. Achievement is **very good** in **drama, personal, social and health education and physical education**. In **Years 1 and 2**, pupils achieve **well**. Achievement is **good** overall in **Years 3 to 6**, but that of **pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties** is simply **satisfactory**. The school has spotted this and taken action to improve the way it meets the needs of these pupils. In **Years 7 to 9**, achievement is **good**. **Year 10 and 11** pupils also achieve **well**. The pupils are successful in a number of accredited courses, including the Bronze level of a youth award scheme.

Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **very good**. The school makes sure that each aspect is catered for very well, with cultural opportunities being particularly strong. Pupils have **very positive attitudes** to school – they enjoy it and they work very hard. They **behave very**

well in school, when on visits and when staying overnight. **Attendance** is **satisfactory**. Pupils are seldom away unless they are ill. Although some pupils do not always arrive in time for the start of the school day, there are no records of their punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** is **good** overall. **Teaching and learning** are **good** in the main part of the school and **very good** in the nursery. Teachers gather information carefully about how well pupils have learned. They use this knowledge effectively to plan lessons and activities that meet their individual needs and enable them to make progress.

The school provides a **very good** quality **curriculum**, which motivates pupils to learn. Very strong links with other schools and the community provide numerous opportunities for them to gain new skills and knowledge and to work in different settings. The basic curriculum is enriched by these and many other exciting activities. The accommodation for learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils are **cared for well**, which means they are comfortable and happy and able to concentrate on learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good.

The school's **leadership** is **good**. The head teacher provides very good leadership, making sure that all staff are committed to helping all pupils do as well as possible.

Management is **good**. There are effective systems for checking how well pupils and staff are performing and that funds are spent wisely.

The **governors** do a **good** job. They are well involved in planning for the school's future and they appreciate its strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are **very satisfied** with the school. They are particularly impressed with the range of activities provided for their children and the good quality teaching.

Pupils are also **very satisfied**. They feel safe in school and are confident that the staff will quickly sort out any problems they may have.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Keep working with the local education authority to provide better accommodation.
- Provide more computers and other information and communication technology equipment.
- Develop and improve the food technology curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- In order to evaluate the impact of lateness on pupils' learning, put in place systems to check on their punctuality to school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve **well**. The **children in the nursery** achieve **very well**. The achievement of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery class do very well in nearly all the areas of their learning.
- In the main school, most pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- In drama, physical education and personal, social and health education, pupils get on very well.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are beginning to make better progress but currently, their achievement is only satisfactory.
- In Years 10 and 11, pupils work towards a good range of accreditation.

Commentary

1 In the nursery class, the children are taught very well and the area is very well organised – for example, full use is made of the information collected about children's individual needs and how well they have learned. As a result, the children achieve very well in all aspects of the curriculum other than physical development. Their achievement here is good rather than very good, because they are unable to use their outdoor play area at present.

2 During Years 1 to 6, the pupils with severe learning difficulties achieve well in English, mathematics, science and religious education, in line with the quality of teaching in these subjects. In physical education, drama and personal, social and health education, achievement is very good, because the school makes very effective arrangements to provide opportunities that give a boost to pupils' learning in these subjects. For example, pupils have specialist drama teaching and many have residential experiences, supporting their personal and social development. Through careful analysis of assessment information, senior staff have recently identified that pupils in Years 3 to 6 with profound and multiple learning difficulties have not been getting on as well as those with severe learning difficulties, particularly in developing communication skills. Decisive action has been taken and these pupils are now taught as a separate group for part of each day. This is already having a positive impact on their achievement – for instance, two pupils are now learning to communicate using a picture exchange system.

3 The pupils in Years 7 to 9 continue to achieve well or very well in the same subjects as the younger ones, for the same reasons. Additionally, they benefit from well-established links with a local secondary school, which enable higher attaining pupils to be stretched in subjects such as physical education and textiles technology. The minority of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders generally achieve as well as other pupils, and the same applies to those in Years 1 to 6. However, the school is aware that a very small number, who have particular difficulty concentrating on their work, achieve slightly less well. Plans are in hand to develop teachers' skills in order to meet these pupils' needs more effectively.

4 During Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to achieve well or very well in the subjects that are strengths of the school. Across the curriculum, all pupils have good opportunities to have their work externally accredited – for example, through unit awards or a youth award scheme up to and including Bronze level. Last year, the five pupils who left at the end of Year 11, all went on to post-16 education, three of them to different colleges of further education.

5 Because pupils throughout the school achieve well in English and mathematics, they are well equipped to use their skills in lessons in all subjects. In information and communication technology, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They are not able to do better than this, because there are insufficient computers and other resources – such as switch equipment – for them to use regularly. This is a key priority in the school's development plan and funds have been allocated to it. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are generally no more than adequate to help them learn in other subjects.

6 The school checks systematically the relative achievement of different groups of pupils. This analysis shows, for example, that girls and boys get on equally well, a fact confirmed by the inspection. In responding to the OFSTED questionnaire, parents were unanimous in their view that their children are making good progress. This view is supported by the fact that, on average, pupils achieve at least 75 per cent of their challenging individual targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **satisfactory** and pupils' **attitudes and behaviour** are **very good**. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is **very good**, in response to the very wide range of experiences that the school offers them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very keen to do well and play an active part in school life.
- There are no clear procedures to check pupils' punctuality.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and especially their cultural development.
- Pupils behave very well in and out of school and in the residential setting.
- There are very effective systems in place to encourage and support good behaviour.

Commentary

7 Pupils enjoy their time at school and work very hard to achieve as well as they can. Their joyful response to each morning's assembly gives a clear indication of their behaviour and attitudes for the day. They communicate their pleasure at awards for themselves and their friends, for good work or effort, and relate very well to each other and staff, both in the school and the residence. In the residence, pupils enjoy developing the skills needed for daily life, by helping with arrangements for supper or recreational activities. They frequently check on their personal, social, health and citizenship targets, displayed on the notice boards, to ensure that they are doing as well as they can. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do their best to co-operate with staff who are working with them or helping them with their personal care needs. All pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities for them to get to know pupils from other schools and members of the wider community. For example, two secondary aged pupils, participating in a rugby match and a basketball game with mainstream pupils, worked very hard and kept up well with their groups. They returned to King's Mill tired, but proud of their achievements and wanting the lessons to continue. In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, pupils were very positive about liking their school.

8 There are no clear procedures or records, to enable the school to accurately keep track of pupils' punctuality. During the week of the inspection, a few buses did not always arrive on time for the start of the school day, and several pupils brought in by their parents were also late. However, scrutiny of the current and previous years' registers showed no record of any pupil being unpunctual.

9 Pupils' personal development is very good and begins in the nursery, where children are provided with regular worthwhile experiences that help them gain important social skills. Throughout the school, pupils are particularly well supported by the many opportunities they have to learn about their own and other cultures. For example, they have enjoyed 'special' days devoted to celebrating French, American or Italian culture and Hindu and Christian festivals. Pupils are familiar with evaluating their own work and activities – for instance, by adding their comments on the day's work

to home/school diaries. The school council members take their responsibilities very seriously and have influenced school developments. For example, they instigated a separate school questionnaire to establish the views of pupils who board.

10 Individual positive behaviour plans, strategies and rewards work very well alongside whole school systems, successfully promoting very good behaviour in school and the residence. This means, for instance, that pupils' learning is seldom interrupted by incidents of poor behaviour and this contributes to their good achievement. There have been no exclusions. The school actively and successfully encourages pupils to work and play co-operatively together. In discussions and through the inspection questionnaire, pupils indicate that they feel safe in school and in the residence, and that if they have any concerns – for example, about bullying – staff deal quickly with the matter.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	14.7	School data	0
National data	8.5	National data	0.5

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

Note: The official authorised absence figures are high. This is because the school's return to the Department for Education and Skills is distorted by the number of pupils staying at the residence each night and who are classed as boarding pupils for the following day. Over the same period, if all pupils in school were classed as day pupils, the authorised absence for the year would be 9.5%.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
74	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The **quality of education** is **good** overall. The curriculum and partnership with other schools and the community are very good. Teaching and learning, care, guidance and support and partnership with parents are all good. The accommodation for teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in the classes in the main part of the school, but **very good** in the nursery. **Assessment procedures** are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, because teachers plan carefully to meet their individual needs.
- Activities and resources are chosen imaginatively to capture pupils' interest and encourage them to work hard.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well.

- The seamless teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants contributes to the very high standards of teaching and learning in the nursery.
- Occasionally, teachers do not make the best use of the time available for learning.
- The school makes very good use of assessment information to adapt the curriculum for pupils special educational needs.

Commentary

11 Across the school, teaching groups are made up of pupils with wide-ranging learning difficulties. In line with the school's very strong commitment to enabling every pupil to gain as much as possible from their education, teachers' plans take account of the needs of each one. This means that they are all able to learn well, whatever their particular strengths or difficulties. For example, in an English lesson for pupils in Years 2 to 5 with severe learning difficulties, the higher attaining pupils worked with teaching assistants to arrange pictures and words to retell the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Meanwhile, the teacher focused on two pupils with particular communication difficulties. Stimulating resources, such as soft toy animals and a basket of fresh fruit, prompted these pupils to do their best to follow instructions – such as putting on a monkey glove puppet and taking a banana. This successfully increased their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and the plot of the story, motivated them to communicate, and helped them to achieve equally as well as the other pupils. In several subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils in Years 3 to 6 with profound and multiple learning difficulties are currently taught well as a separate group. This is already proving effective for them and means that teachers of other groups have to cater for a narrower range of needs.

12 Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive and are one reason why pupils behave very well during lessons – they want their teachers to be pleased with them. Additionally, pupils are confident to take part in activities that are difficult, because they know that their efforts will be appreciated, whether successful or not. The interesting activities and resources provided during lessons are further triggers to pupils' desire to get involved and willingness to work hard. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and treat them all fairly, whilst recognising that a small number need special support to help them become effective learners. Although they are still developing strategies to manage the behaviour of a tiny number of pupils who are especially challenging – for example, because of their autistic spectrum disorders – teachers ensure that other pupils' learning is not interrupted.

13 In the nursery class, the teaching is particularly good. An important factor here is the outstanding quality of teamwork between the two teachers and the teaching assistants. Lesson plans are extremely detailed, and are known and understood by all, and routines are very well established. The staff are confident and very knowledgeable about the needs of these young children, how they learn and the next stage in their development. This means that lessons can quickly be adjusted – for example, to incorporate a song that perks up children who may be flagging or an activity to extend those who are doing especially well. Teachers throughout the school gather information systematically about how well pupils have learned and then use this effectively to plan lessons and activities. This is done especially thoroughly in English and mathematics, where the targets in pupils' individual education plans also help teachers determine the content and organisation of lessons. Generally, these are structured very carefully, with time used to the full. On occasions, however, teachers misjudge how long to spend on a particular phase of the lesson. For instance, pupils might be expected to sit for too long as a whole class, answering questions. They then become bored and restless and the pace of learning slows down.

14 Since the previous inspection, the proportion of good, very good or excellent teaching has increased by nearly 20 per cent. The head teacher has contributed significantly to this improvement, by establishing regular checks on teachers' planning and performance in class and by providing training and support where weaknesses are observed. Because the curriculum in most subjects is very well organised, it provides a secure framework within which teachers can plan in detail what and how they will teach their class, and this too contributes to the high quality of teaching. On the other hand, small classrooms and the lack of specialist teaching areas mean that teachers have to work harder than would otherwise be necessary, devising ways of compensating for the unsatisfactory accommodation. Parents and pupils agree that the teaching is good and that pupils are expected to work hard.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	15 (31%)	25 (52%)	5 (11%)	1 (2%)	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.

Assessment

15 There are effective and well used procedures to promote and support pupils' academic progress. Since the previous inspection, this area has improved well. Annual assessments of each pupil have a particular focus on English and mathematics. The information gathered is used effectively to identify learning targets for pupils' individual education plans. These targets are detailed and specific and help the school to check how well pupils are making progress during the day and in the residential setting. The school makes very good use of assessment information to support curricular planning – for instance, when modifying what will be taught in each subject or, in lessons, to match tasks and questions to pupils' needs. The school has recently extended its assessment procedures so pupils' achievement can be measured in every subject. However, this has not been in place for a sufficient time to allow judgements on its effect to be made.

The curriculum

The **curriculum** provides a very broad range of worthwhile opportunities that meet the needs of pupils **very well**. An **excellent** programme of **enrichment activities** is in place throughout the school and in the residential setting. **Accommodation, resources and staffing** are **satisfactory** overall. However, aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory and there are insufficient information communication technology resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils have very good opportunities to be involved in the life of the school and the wider community.
- The school provides an outstanding range of stimulating activities which motivate pupils to learn.
- The curriculum is very well planned to provide experiences that are appropriate to the ages of the pupils.
- There is excellent provision for the creative arts and for sport.
- The school provides a well-developed, coherent programme to prepare pupils in Years 10 and 11 very well for the next stage in their education.
- There are no specialist bases – for example, for pupils to learn science or design and technology.
- Classrooms are too small for the number of pupils they accommodate.
- There are not enough computers and other technological resources such as large switches and remote control devices.
- Personal and social development is promoted very well throughout the school day and in the residential setting.
- The curriculum for food technology in Years 10 and 11 is too repetitive.

Commentary

16 The curriculum has been very well thought out to provide the full range of National Curriculum subjects, religious education and collective worship and made relevant and worthwhile to pupils of all ages and abilities. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that pupils of all abilities

are included in as many activities as possible. The consistent use of signing and symbols benefits pupils throughout the school, and the recent introduction of a picture exchange communication system has increased pupils' options and is already enhancing the achievement of a significant number. Provision for pupils more complex needs is also enhanced by the opportunities they are given for using the hydrotherapy pool, sensory room and soft play area. As they move up through the school, there are many opportunities for pupils to work with their peers in mainstream schools and colleges. Children in the nursery visit a mainstream nursery and a local playgroup. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 take part in work experience, pursue accreditation at the local secondary school, use community facilities – for example, for information and communication technology, and follow college courses.

17 There are nationally recognised, innovative and imaginative creative arts and sports programmes, much enjoyed and appreciated by the pupils. The use of visiting artists and coaches, the wide range of visits and activities involved, such as to theatres and sporting events and the self confidence and pride these promote, contribute significantly to pupils' overall good achievement. Personal, social and health education is very effective. In addition to the taught curriculum, staff make the most of every opportunity to encourage pupils to learn relevant skills. For example, at lunch time, pupils are patiently helped to become more independent. This is followed through into the residential setting, where developing pupils' independent living skills receives very high priority. When they are ready, pupils are taught sensitively about sex and relationships and how to keep themselves safe.

18 Older pupils have a choice of a wide range of activities at lunchtimes, including sport, music, crafts and computer games. Throughout the school day and in the residential setting, a very wide range of visits and activities make the curriculum relevant and stimulating. Especially effective are the 'special' days, which are devoted to a whole school experience. For example, during the 'Indian day', pupils listened to and played Indian music, learnt Indian dancing, examined artefacts and made paintings based on Indian patterns. They cooked Indian food and ate an Indian meal at lunchtime. These days are memorable for the pupils and help them to appreciate and respect the cultures of people they may not yet have encountered.

19 The curriculum is regularly reviewed and changes are made to bring about improvement – for example, to meet more effectively the needs of the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Developing the design and technology curriculum is a current priority. However, the school had not identified food technology as a particular problem. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a course that is very narrow in scope. It is not clear how pupils' learning builds on what has gone before and their work is not recognised fully through suitable external accreditation. Additionally, there are overlaps between this aspect of the curriculum and others, such as lifeskills education.

20 Where possible, the school tries to make up for the lack of specialist teaching accommodation – for example, by using mainstream school or community facilities. Classrooms are frequently over-crowded as they are too small for the number of pupils and the specialist equipment many of them need. This restricts the activities that can take place and makes it difficult for pupils to move around – for example, to collect resources. Computers are too few in number and often out of date, and there are not enough specialised communication devices available to pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are provided for **well**. **Good** quality **support, advice and guidance** are offered and the school makes **good** efforts to **find out the views of all pupils**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very aware of pupils' special educational needs.
- Pupils' personal care needs are met discreetly and their physical needs are looked after very well.
- Child protection arrangements are given high priority.

- The movement of transport at the beginning and end of the day remains potentially hazardous.
- There is very good planning to help Year 11 pupils to move on.
- Pupils' care is shared effectively between school and residence.
- Specialist drama activities offer very effective support to the welfare of older boys.
- Girls are not currently represented on the school council.

Commentary

21 Staff have a detailed knowledge of the backgrounds, interests and needs of pupils. They use this knowledge to guide their personal development very well. Underlying this professional approach to the care and welfare of pupils is strong affection, a sense of fun and very good relationships. Teachers and residential staff make opportunities for discussions with pupils, so that they are confident of being listened to and having any concerns taken seriously. All pupils questioned considered that the school had a caring attitude. During a late evening in the residence, senior pupils and staff sat round the dining room table, enjoying supper together. They plainly preferred to be there, in each others' company, rather than watching a television programme or video.

22 Pupils' achievements are enhanced by the well organised arrangements for their personal care. Staff do not make a fuss about this area of support but pupils' dignity is maintained and their comfort assured, so that they can apply themselves to their learning. Moving and handling of pupils are well organised and documented and each pupil has an individual risk assessment. Medication and mealtime arrangements are well organised, and support pupils' personal and social development and their health. Despite this, the school would welcome the support and guidance of regular contact with a school nurse, which is currently lacking.

23 The close working relationships and shared practices between the school and residence maintain a constant level of awareness of child protection issues. Pupils benefit from the school's close links with other agencies and from high quality support from Health Authority staff and educational psychologists. The congestion in the school's car park at the beginning and end of the school day remains a cause for concern. The school has established clear routes for pupils to walk to and from their transport so as not to go into the car park itself. However, the necessity for some vehicles to reverse, and the fact that movement of transport is not consistently overseen by school staff, mean that the car park represents a potential hazard to pupils.

24 The school has acted swiftly to meet the recommendations of the recent National Care Standards Commission report for the residence. These referred chiefly to recording systems. The report praised the high standards of personal care provided. The majority of pupils take part in and enjoy the experience of a residential stay. Close liaison between care and teaching staff supports behavioural and educational reviews, works towards pupils' personal and social development, and tracks and checks concerns about individual pupils.

25 The school takes very good advantage of initiatives to support particular groups of pupils. For example, boys in Years 10 and 11 respond very well to the 'Speak Out' project sessions taught by a drama therapist. They act out incidents that may have left them feeling vulnerable and are helped to realise their inner strengths and weaknesses. This has a significant impact on their self-esteem and ability to face difficult social occasions or understand someone else's problems. The school makes very good arrangements to prepare Year 11 pupils for the next stage in their education. They receive the necessary guidance to help them make informed choices and take part in college courses and work experience as part of their curriculum.

26 The school council offers secondary-aged pupils the opportunity to make suggestions and influence school issues, after they have canvassed the views of all pupils. However, the democratic ballot for members has resulted in no girls being elected to the current council. The school is considering ways to redress this imbalance through the council's constitution. Timetabled discussion times offer pupils of all ages the chance to communicate any worries, concerns or

suggestions that they may have, but there is not any other formal route for primary-aged pupils to have a regular voice in the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with **parents** are **good**. Those with the **community and other schools and colleges** are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very strong links with the local community and schools and colleges.
- Home/school diaries are used very effectively.
- A good range of opportunities is provided for parents to come into school to discuss their children or take part in workshops.
- An assistant head teacher has recently been given responsibility for developing further links with parents.
- The Parents and Friends of King's Mill raise significant funds for the school.

Commentary

27 Links with the local community provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils. These are a significant contributory factor in pupils' enjoyment of school and to their very positive attitudes to all that school offers. The residential staff make imaginative use of leisure opportunities. For example, pupils revel in a touch of 'retail therapy', at the same time making good use of their literacy and numeracy skills, when shopping for items for making supper. Very strong links with local schools and playgroups provide mainstream experiences for pupils. They also enable the school to ensure, for example, that timetables do not clash and that an alternative can be quickly found if a venue is suddenly unavailable. The school is very conscientious in organising further opportunities and keeping in contact with pupils who have left. For instance, the residential staff organise social activities at a local club for adults and young people with learning difficulties. These give current pupils good opportunities to meet up with former pupils and allow the staff to find out how previous pupils have coped with moving onto the next stage in their education.

28 The information provided for parents is good and is rooted in the home/school diaries that are completed each day in school. Although there is little formal homework, parents are encouraged to support their children by, for example, signing to them or helping them to complete practical activities during holidays. The school celebrates achievements by pupils at home by presenting awards. Annual written reports are discussed fully at review meetings and the school keeps a detailed record of issues raised, and targets set, by parents. The administration office maintains close contact with parents on a day-to-day basis – for example, when receiving information about why a pupil cannot attend school – and transport escorts are seen as a valuable source of home/school contact. Parents are encouraged to come into school to discuss behavioural strategies and review their children's progress and residential staff are frequently in contact with them.

29 The school actively pursues parental participation and has recently appointed an assistant head teacher to further these links. It recognises that many parents have limited opportunities to get into school because they live some distance away, or lack transport. A regular, lively newsletter now goes out to them, and their views are consistently sought and acted on through the school's own questionnaires. A number of workshops have been held – for example, to improve parents' awareness of what their children are learning at school. Successful fundraising by parents and friends of the school has helped to equip the new adventure playground, for example.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, **leadership and management** are **good**. The school is **well led** and its **governance and management** are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher has very high aspirations for the school and her leadership is very strong.
- The school improvement plan focuses strongly on raising standards across all areas of the curriculum.
- The governing body is closely involved in strategic planning.
- Financial management is good.
- The quality of subject leadership is variable.

- Staff receive good quality, relevant training.
- The school carefully checks how well it is performing.

Commentary

30 The head teacher's determination to establish King's Mill as a school where all pupils achieve their potential, is underpinned by the support of the strong senior management team. The team includes the head of residential care and will be at full strength in the near future with the appointment of a full time administrative officer. The inclusion of representatives of all the main groups involved in the running of the school emphasises the head teacher's determination to promote a shared sense of purpose. As a result of her example, support and very high expectations, all staff demonstrate a clear commitment to the success of the school. Regular departmental meetings provide a practical way for them to contribute to making decisions.

31 The school improvement plan is an effective tool for managing the development of the school. Raising standards is a priority in all areas. A similar document is in place for the residential provision. The plans are closely linked to the development budget which ensures that targets are supported by appropriate finance arrangements. Subject leaders are involved in identifying the improvement plan priorities through their own action plans. Although these currently vary in quality, the process is having a positive impact on raising achievements, and extending teachers' understanding of their own leadership role in relation to their subjects.

32 The school's finances are well managed by the governing body, head teacher, senior management team and the administration officer. Expenditure is efficiently monitored and spending is closely linked to the educational objectives identified in the improvement plan. The governing body is well led by an experienced and knowledgeable chairperson. Governors are strongly supportive of the school and are committed to moving it forward. They have an appropriate committee structure and all governors have particular responsibilities for areas such as key subjects and aspects of the school. Governing body minutes indicate that governors are well involved in strategic planning and that they have a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors question the head teacher, the senior management team and subject leaders, and discuss issues carefully before reaching decisions. However, their role in checking on certain aspects of the school, such as teaching and learning, is underdeveloped.

33 The school has good systems for evaluating its own effectiveness. For instance, assessment results for all pupils are analysed in terms of ethnicity, gender and specific groups of pupils, such as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. When discrepancies are noted, possible causes are identified and suitable actions considered and put in place. The quality of teaching is checked systematically by senior staff and increasingly by subject leaders. Although a significant proportion of the teachers are employed on a part time basis, this does not adversely affect the quality of teaching or the delivery of the curriculum. The good arrangements for training, liaison and management mean that they work closely together as a team. The role of subject leaders is developing well, although some teachers' leadership skills are more advanced than others. This imbalance is being addressed through a well-focused training programme. The school benefits from the expertise and enthusiasm of a leading literacy teacher.

34 Arrangements for staff development are good and performance management is well established. Targets are also in place for teaching assistants through a series of professional development interviews. A relevant staff development programme is planned in relation to the school improvement plan and the priorities identified through the performance management cycle. Newly appointed staff undertake an effective programme of induction to ensure they understand their responsibilities to the pupils, and a range of routines and procedures which must be implemented consistently.

35 The most significant barriers to raising achievement are the lack of space and specialist facilities for curriculum areas such as science, design and technology and art and design. The school is attempting to minimise the adverse effects of this through links with other schools and with the community.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1261587
Total expenditure	1117874
Expenditure per pupil	14904

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	117881
Balance carried forward to the next	143713

Note: The amount carried forward is deceptive. When all the year's spending is finally taken into account, the balance is much less. Any surplus has been allocated to meeting needs identified in the school's improvement plan – for example, to increase the number of computers.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school makes **very good** provision for children in the nursery. Because they are very well taught, children achieve very well overall.

- The nursery is very well led and managed.
- Children's needs are assessed very carefully.
- There are very good links with other nurseries and playgroups.
- Not enough use is made of computers and other information and communication technology equipment.

36 The leadership of the nursery is very good and staff work together extremely well as an effective team. Lesson planning is detailed and children achieve very well because their needs are very carefully assessed and work is planned to match their varying levels of attainment. There are clear targets established for children to achieve in each lesson, and very good systems to measure their progress. Staff are very skilled at involving children of all abilities. The regular input from a speech and language therapist supports assessment and planning well. Many children benefit from regular opportunities to work and play with children in local nurseries and play groups. Children do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology and switched equipment to reinforce and extend their learning and help them to communicate.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's social skills are promoted throughout the day.
- They have very good opportunities to develop independence.
- Relationships between children and adults are very positive.
- Behaviour management is calm, firm and consistent.

Commentary

37 Children achieve very well. Their social skills and understanding are promoted and reinforced consistently throughout the day. This is a highly effective means of helping them to learn, and supports children's very good achievement in this area of their development. Relationships are very positive and staff are unfailingly patient, calm and clear about how children are expected to behave. Consequently, children feel safe, enjoy being in the nursery and are ready to learn. They understand the class routines and follow them as well as they are able. They are encouraged to make choices and higher attaining children are learning to select activities and resources with minimal help. Snack times provide very good opportunities for the children to share drinks and biscuits, and be part of a group in which everyone takes turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many planned opportunities for children to use speech and signing, although not enough use is made of switches to help them to communicate.
- Children's early reading and writing skills begin to develop well.

- Resources are used very effectively.
- Staff provide good models of speaking and signing.

Commentary

38 Children make very good progress in learning to communicate. Teachers and teaching assistants create many opportunities for them to express themselves through speech, supported by signs. Because staff regularly draw attention to the timetable, children begin to understand symbols, particularly those that tell them what is happening throughout the day. During literacy periods they start to develop early reading skills. For instance, they begin to associate objects, such as puppets, with pictures in a story. Higher attainers recognise their own names and photographs of other children. Adults read stories in a lively expressive manner so that children's understanding and enjoyment are promoted very well. Because they have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills, they begin to develop the control needed in order to make progress towards writing. The use of a sand tray for letter formation is effective and higher attaining children make purposeful marks on paper with a pencil or crayon.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers promote children's mathematical understanding through a wide range of practical activities, which contribute to their very good achievement.
- New ideas and vocabulary are introduced systematically.
- Good use is made of number rhymes and songs.

Commentary

39 Children achieve very well. Numeracy skills and basic mathematical concepts and language are very effectively taught through a wide range of classroom activities, including number rhymes and songs, and structured play. Counting activities and the language of colour, size, shape and position are well used by staff as part of the daily routines. Consequently, higher-attaining children confidently count and recognise number shapes to five. Those with more complex needs benefit from opportunities to explore colours, textures and shapes, and show pleasure when helped to place bricks on top of one another.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are based on a wide range of first-hand experiences.
- Children are encouraged to explore, observe, predict and solve problems.
- Visitors to the nursery make a valuable contribution to children's learning.

Commentary

40 Children achieve very well. They begin to understand the passing of time when they talk about birthdays, and become increasingly aware of classroom routines. They explore the world around them through activities that use all their senses as, for instance, when they mix and shape dough to make bread. Because staff make good use of photographs, children become aware of their own growth, and of relationships within the family. Members of the local community also make a valuable contribution to children's understanding of the world, as, for example, when the postman

delivered a parcel to the classroom. Children occasionally visit the school's sensory room to use its resources. This helps them to appreciate that they can control events by hitting switches.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Currently, the outside play area is not available for children to use.
- Drama and physical education lessons promote their development very effectively.
- The hydrotherapy pool is used well.
- There are many planned opportunities for children to develop their fine motor skills.

Commentary

41 Children's achievement is good overall but is currently restricted by delays in the completion of a new outdoor play area. At present, children have very limited opportunities to use large play equipment, such as bicycles and climbing frames. However, drama and physical education lessons make very good contributions to their physical development through the many opportunities they provide for running, jumping, stretching, rolling and throwing. The staff take every opportunity to maximise the children's independence in activities such as eating and dressing. Children's visits to the hydrotherapy pool make a valuable contribution to their physical development, as do the physiotherapy sessions provided for the small number requiring this level of support. Children benefit from the many opportunities they are given to increase their control of small pieces of equipment, such as pencils, construction toys and tracking games.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make very good use of resources, including some from other cultures.
- Children have good opportunities for role play.
- Music is well used in all areas of learning.
- Children are encouraged to experiment and develop their own ideas.

Commentary

42 Children achieve very well. They are encouraged to experiment with colours and texture when painting with fingers or brushes. Children enjoy making collages and mixing flour and water to form shapes with dough and hand printing widens their experience of a range of media. All the children benefit from their weekly drama lesson and the many opportunities they are given for dressing up and role play and to help them develop their ideas and imagination. Music is very well used throughout the day to promote children's personal and social skills and their literacy and numeracy development. They enjoy singing songs and jingles and many join in enthusiastically with the appropriate actions. Children of all abilities are intrigued by the sounds they make with home made shakers and other percussion instruments, encouraging them to experiment and explore.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 to 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

43 French was not taught during the period of the inspection, so no judgement can be made about the subject. All pupils in Years 7 to 11 experience blocks of intensive teaching. These help them to learn French words and understand a little about the culture.

English

The quality of the provision is **good**. The majority of pupils throughout the school achieve well in all aspects of English. Achievement in speaking and listening and other communication skills is frequently very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use a good range of methods of alternative communication to reinforce and clarify spoken language.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- Assessment procedures are good and the information gained is very well used to plan the next stage in pupils' learning.
- Until very recently, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have made unsatisfactory progress in communication skills.
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to support most pupils' learning, although there is insufficient use of switched equipment for pupils with the most complex needs.

Commentary

44 During Years 1 to 6, most pupils become increasingly attentive for longer periods. Because teachers make very good use of signing and symbols to help pupils to understand and communicate, they develop their confidence to contribute to discussions in whatever way they are able. New vocabulary is clearly explained and repeated in context, so pupils learn to understand and use it correctly. By the end of Year 6, many pupils answer and ask questions confidently, though some may need prompts and encouragement to do so. As they move up through the secondary department, pupils listen more carefully to instructions and learn to appreciate the idea of turn taking, and when to speak and when to remain quiet and listen. The school values the speech and language therapist's contribution to the communication programme in the school and staff work closely with her.

45 The introduction of a picture exchange communication system is significantly improving communication skills, particularly amongst pupils with features of autistic spectrum disorders. However, recent assessments have indicated that primary-aged pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have made unsatisfactory progress in communication. Consequently, the school has introduced a daily basic skills enhancement programme for this group in an effort to boost their performance. Enhanced staffing levels mean that pupils have more attention paid to their individual needs. Staff are still discovering the most effective ways to stimulate responses from each one. However, there have already been improvements in the ability of several pupils to use the picture exchange system to indicate that, for instance, they want a snack. Switches are not used sufficiently to help these pupils communicate and interact with their environment.

46 Pupils' reading and writing skills develop well. Teachers throughout the school use interesting resources and adapt and extend texts with the use of symbols. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils read a sentence, sometimes with symbol prompts, and many recognise a significant proportion of common words from the National Literacy Strategy list. The effective use of computer programs reinforces pupils' ability to recognise words and letters. Pupils make good progress in their writing skills through opportunities to write over an adult's model and copy letters

and words to record their activities. They continue to progress well as they move through the secondary department where they enjoy a good range of texts, chosen carefully to be appropriate to their ages and interests, successfully motivating pupils to read. These pupils benefit from writing for a range of purposes – such as using a diary to plan and record the day's events, writing a report for the school newspaper and creating their own poems. Throughout the school, pupils' independence in writing is well promoted by their use of a computer program that produces symbols.

47 There are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and the information gained is very well used in planning future work. Teachers know their pupils very well, have high expectations of them and persistently challenge them to do better. They make effective use of the learning targets in pupils' individual education plans in order to plan lessons and activities. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make by assisting small groups or individuals to play a full part in the lesson. The very good relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils enable pupils to quickly become confident in their role as learners.

48 Most pupils now achieve better than at the time of the previous inspection. English is now well led and managed. The written guidance for teachers is well organised and includes a clear rationale for the range of communication systems offered by the school. The newly appointed subject leader is a member of the senior management team, is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has already identified areas for further development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49 Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise and apply the skills and knowledge they learn in English lessons. For example, pupils develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons such as science, mathematics and history. Older secondary pupils speak purposefully about a range of topics and many use appropriate language in a variety of contexts, including during their lessons at mainstream schools. The high quality weekly drama sessions with a visiting specialist teacher are also very valuable.

MATHEMATICS

The provision is **good**. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because they are well taught and follow a very good curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned to provide a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities that meet individual learning needs.
- What pupils can do is assessed regularly and thoroughly and this information is very well used to plan future lessons and adjust the curriculum.
- There are too few planned opportunities to enable pupils to practise and apply numeracy skills across other curriculum areas.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties do not achieve as well as those with severe learning difficulties.

Commentary

50 Most pupils achieve well throughout the school. However, the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 with profound and multiple learning difficulties is only satisfactory. The school is aware of this, because it carefully tracks each pupil's achievement. It has taken steps to address it by setting up a separate teaching group for these pupils. Good learning is now taking place in lessons for this group, because of more focused teaching to meet their needs, the effective use of signs and symbols to help them to communicate and the increasing use of switches and other devices to aid communication and participation. For example, in a lesson on 'making things happen', pupils worked in the light room and learned that hitting a switch gives a reward in the form of sound, light or movement.

51 Teaching and learning are often very good in Years 1 to 6. Resources are well chosen to support activities that stimulate and motivate pupils and so provide opportunities to reinforce their basic skills in many different ways. For example, pupils in Years 4 to 6 with severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders learn to name two-dimensional shapes. In one lesson, they waved a wand and said 'Hocus Pocus' as the teacher turned a 'magic circle' into a square. They used their wands to point to shapes sewn onto the teacher's shirt and they identified shapes in the classroom and on photographs. As a result of these exciting methods, most learned to identify and name circles, squares, triangles, rectangles and hexagons. A few said how many sides and corners the shapes have. All thoroughly enjoyed the lesson.

52 The curriculum is very well planned and helps teachers to provide experiences that are appropriate to the ages of the pupils and ensure their learning builds systematically on what they already know, understand and can do. Because assessment procedures are effective, pupils' individual needs are also considered carefully – for example, when setting targets for them to achieve or planning lessons that cater for all pupils. Mathematics is led and managed well. The subject leader provides expert advice to other teachers and helps them to improve the range of strategies used to support pupils' learning.

53 The good progress made by pupils at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained, and there is now some very good progress, especially in Years 1 to 6. There have also been good improvements in the curriculum and assessment procedures.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54 Numeracy skills are often consolidated satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. For example, younger pupils sing counting rhymes and older pupils shop for and weigh out ingredients to make meals and take part in running a tuck shop and coffee shop. However, there is scope for more planned opportunities to ensure these skills are developed consistently.

SCIENCE

The provision is **good**. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because they are well taught and follow a relevant curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to explore materials and experiment practically.
- Good use is made of the environment and visits to enrich the curriculum and make lessons stimulating and memorable.
- Lessons are well planned to provide activities that are adapted to pupils of all abilities so they are all fully included in the lessons.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support science lessons.

Commentary

55 Teaching and learning are consistently good with activities carefully planned so that pupils of all abilities can take part, enjoy them and learn well. For example, in one lesson, Year 1 and 2 pupils used their senses to explore how stretching and squashing can change materials. All adults worked together as a coherent team to help pupils to participate and really explore the dough and the jelly. They used signs and symbols to help pupils to understand and communicate and develop their vocabulary, using words such as 'pull', 'squash', 'roll' and 'stretch'. Personal and social skills such as washing hands, taking turns, sharing materials and clearing away were promoted well. While pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experienced changing the shape of materials, others with less complex needs demonstrated their understanding that some materials can be changed by stretching and squashing. The activities were motivating and pupils worked hard.

56 What pupils can do is assessed regularly in detail and this information is very well used to plan future lessons. Science is well led and managed. The subject leader provides very useful guidance for teachers and has adapted the curriculum for pupils with the most complex needs by breaking each stage of learning into very small steps. This helps teachers to assess accurately the level these pupils are working at and plan their next steps, helping them to make good progress.

57 The curriculum is very well planned to provide experiences that are appropriate to the ages of the pupils and ensure their learning progresses as they move up through the school. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 use orange juice to investigate how materials change when they are heated or frozen, building on the work they have done in the primary department. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers to help them to learn in science lessons.

58 A wide range of visits and the use of the local environment enrich the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit the local recycling centre and recycle their rubbish, they pond dip in a local pond and use microscopes to examine their finds, visit a photographic museum and a star dome and grow prize winning sunflowers, measuring them to see whose was the tallest. Pupils enjoy these activities, work hard and achieve well.

59 At the previous inspection, a judgement about science provision was not made.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision is **satisfactory**, although the quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to learn well in lessons. There is not enough equipment and this prevents pupils' achievement being more than satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy using computers and usually make good progress in lessons.
- There are not enough suitable computers in classrooms or special switches and devices to enable pupils to gain easy and sufficiently regular access to the subject.
- All pupils have clear targets to develop skills in using computers and devices.
- A few pupils receive very good lessons from a local charity and in mainstream schools.
- Teachers plan to promote pupils' learning in information communication technology in all subjects.

Commentary

60 Pupils are very keen to learn and they make good progress in lessons that are dedicated to the subject, because teachers plan well to use the limited equipment. For example, in Years 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils are designing the format of a page for a newspaper. The work is well matched to pupils' individual targets to learn skills such as altering the print size. However, pupils need to share a computer to complete the work. In Years 4 to 6, pupils made rapid progress in a lesson to investigate how to operate remote control toys. They enjoyed the lovely stimulating toys and responded very well to the teacher's encouragement to find out what their toy did and explain this to the others, helping them all to understand the basic principles of controlling equipment. However, the toys had been borrowed from staff and so are not therefore readily available for pupils to use.

61 Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties receive occasional opportunities for instance, to use a large switch to operate a recorded voice, to help them to communicate. They regularly visit the sensory room and experience the effects created by the equipment. However, the school recognises the need to provide more special switches, so these pupils can operate household appliances more independently, and to increase opportunities for them to use devices to communicate.

62 A small number of higher attaining pupils in Years 8 and 9 have weekly opportunities to receive instruction in the local office of a charity. They make very good progress in these lessons because they receive effective support and build up skills systematically. For instance, they are gradually learning how to type out work using a word processing program, to alter, save and print their work. They also improve their communication skills by working with people in the community and this gives them confidence that prepares them well for future life. They are very interested and try hard.

63 The subject leader has been successful in ensuring the gradual improvement in the number and quality of computers and of staff skills. This has led, for instance, to the very effective way that teachers use digital cameras in lessons and for pupils to record their work. There are very high expectations and advanced planning to provide high quality resources, such as interactive white boards. Pupils' achievement is largely the same as at the time of the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64 In their planning for all subjects, teachers identify how they can enable pupils to experience information and communication technology. This provides satisfactory opportunities to promote pupils' learning – for instance, in literacy. In a religious education lesson to explore 'things that make you happy', one pupil in Year 8 found a picture of a biscuit on the computer and typed the correct word. Three higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 5 shared a computer to recognise and count numbers to ten. This contributed to the very good progress they made in numeracy during the lesson and improved their skills in making selections on the screen and moving numbers using the mouse. However, the shortage of resources prevents the impact of teachers' planning being more than satisfactory overall.

HUMANITIES

65 Only one lesson was seen in both history and geography so no judgements are being made about these subjects.

66 The curriculum in this area is enriched by 'special' days – for example, about World War II – which make the topics memorable for pupils throughout the school. Visits to places in the locality are planned carefully and help pupils to appreciate their environment and culture.

Religious education

The provision is **good**. Pupils achieve well because they are well taught and follow a good quality curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 'Special' days on aspects of Christianity and other faiths provide a wide variety of stimulating and memorable activities.
- Teachers plan topics that are appropriate to the ages and abilities of the pupils.
- Teaching encourages pupils to make choices, respect others, become independent and feel that they are special.

Commentary

67 Each half term, pupils enjoy a 'special' day that helps them to understand Christianity and other religions. These include assemblies, visits to different places of worship, making and eating appropriate foods, enacting stories and listening to music. Books of photographs and momentos made about these days are well used by teachers to help pupils to recall their experiences and different religions.

68 Religious education topics are well thought out so that they are meaningful to the pupils. For example, pupils in Years 4 to 6 complete a topic on making promises. This includes acting out getting married (recording the event with digital photographs and enjoying the reception), making promises to 'be kind and helpful to each other', visiting the Salvation Army Mission and discussing Brownie and Beaver promises. As a result, pupils make good progress in their understanding of the significance of making and keeping promises.

69 Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use pictures and symbols to talk about 'What I believe' and put in the bin those they do not believe in. Their responses show a level of maturity – for example, they put in the bin pictures of Father Christmas and, after watching a video about a teenage alcoholic, a statement that the alcoholic was 'bad'.

70 Leadership and management are good. Effective strategies have been put in place to address identified needs. For example, resources have been improved, a coherent curriculum has been established throughout the school and staff are more confident in teaching the subject. These all contribute to pupils' good achievement. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, because staff focus consistently on enabling pupils to learn from religion as well as about it.

71 No judgement about religious education was made in the previous report.

TECHNOLOGY

72 Two food technology lessons were seen in Years 7 to 11. A textiles lesson was observed in a mainstream school, involving two of King's Mill's Year 7 and 8 pupils.

Design and technology

73 Insufficient work was seen to form judgements about design and technology. However, scrutiny of the records of pupils who had recently left at the end of Year 11 showed that the work they do in food technology is too repetitive. Every week, during Years 10 and 11, pupils go shopping and then prepare their lunch. This work leads to very little in the way of accreditation. The accommodation for the subject is poor, particularly for the secondary-aged pupils. In Years 7 to 9, a small number of pupils benefit from lessons in a mainstream school.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

74 Although three art and design lessons were seen, they were all in Years 1 to 6. Two music lessons in Years 2 to 6 were observed and a range of documents and displays were examined. Two drama lessons were seen in Years 4 to 6 and 9 to 11. A personal, social and health education lesson in Years 7 to 9 also contributed to the evidence about drama.

75 The opportunities provided for pupils have led to the school being awarded the Silver Artsmark, recognising the richness of the creative arts curriculum. The regular lessons in each subject are enhanced by visits from professional artists and musicians and pupils regularly take part in exhibitions and performances in the wider community. In music, pupils benefit from specialist teaching. Music and art and design are used often to help pupils to learn in other subjects. This area of the curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Drama

The provision is **very good**. Pupils achieve very well, in line with the quality of teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are taught by a highly skilled specialist teacher.

- The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' communication skills and their self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 work alongside pupils from a mainstream primary school.
- Personal, social and health education lessons with a drama therapist provide very valuable opportunities for boys in Years 7 to 9 to develop and practise their skills.
- The school hall is an unsatisfactory location for drama lessons.
- Pupils have good opportunities to watch and work with professional performers.

Commentary

76 Each week, every class is taught by a specialist teacher. Her expert skills and knowledge of the subject, combined with her familiarity with each pupil's needs, enable her to plan and teach lessons that result in very effective learning and very good achievement. From the first moment, pupils are drawn into the lesson, responding to the teacher's enthusiasm and very high expectations for their behaviour, effort and performance. One strength of the teaching is the way in which all pupils are fully included and involved, as a result of sensitive planning and exciting activities that make them all want to join in. For example, in one lesson, two Year 5 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders followed the instruction to run under a parachute and change places – a very challenging task for them. When one group of pupils went to a storeroom to select resources, during the same lesson, a pupil using a wheelchair was pushed in to take part in the proceedings. Because they are relaxed and totally involved, pupils are very eager to communicate – answering questions or putting forward their ideas. Those who do not speak make great efforts to sign, supported very effectively by class teachers and teaching assistants. During lessons and as they move up through the school, pupils grow in confidence and are fully at ease when asked to enact situations. For instance, pupils in Years 9 to 11 adopted roles spontaneously following a '999 call', working very well together as an 'emergency response team.' Overcoming self-consciousness and learning to present themselves positively help to equip pupils to play a full part in the community and prepare them for their lives beyond school.

77 Drama opportunities are co-ordinated very effectively by the headteacher and, as a result, the school further enhances drama lessons. For example, the pupils in Years 4 to 6 are joined by Year 6 pupils from a mainstream primary school. These lessons offer excellent opportunities for pupils from both schools to learn from each other. During the inspection, the King's Mill pupils made exceptional progress, doing their very best to work in partnership with the mainstream pupils. Boys in Years 7 to 9 take part in a personal, social and health education project – 'Speak Out' – led by a drama therapist. This aims to encourage them to express and discuss their feelings, as part of a national drive to help boys to achieve better. The lessons make very effective contributions to pupils' work in drama, last term culminating in the group writing a play and presenting it to the school. Pupils throughout the school have frequent opportunities to watch and join in professional performances. For example, during the term prior to the inspection, pupils joined in productions of Shakespeare plays and 'The Magic Flute'. The main difficulty faced by staff and pupils is that the school hall is small, used (unavoidably) for storing dining furniture, and is a thoroughfare. These factors inhibit pupils' movement and freedom to express themselves.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision is **very good**. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well. They are taught very well and take part in an impressive range of games and sports in spite of the limitations of the school hall and field.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader arranges exceptional opportunities for pupils to participate and achieve in a wide range of sports and games.
- The school's achievement has been recognised through the Sportsmark Award.

- Pupils receive very good opportunities to take part in games and sports in mainstream schools and in the community.
- The school hall and field are too small for physical education.
- Pupils participate very well in lessons and try hard to improve their skills.

Commentary

78 Pupils achieve very well, participating in a rich variety of sports and games and this is recognised nationally through the Sportsmark award. They follow an interesting and stimulating curriculum, often receiving instruction from visiting coaches in major sports such as soccer. The arrangements for pupils to participate in minority sports, such as judo, are typical of the high expectations promoted by the subject leader.

79 Lessons in school make effective use of the available facilities. In a rugby lesson for pupils in Years 7 and 8, pupils achieved very well, learning to hold and move with the ball. They quickly progressed to learning how to tackle. The field was too small for them to run around satisfactorily, but pupils have the opportunity to build on their skills at a later date, when they use community facilities. Pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders make equally good progress, either within lessons or through another programme such as hydrotherapy, because teachers are fully aware of their needs and plan relevant activities for them.

80 The school makes exceptionally good use of facilities and opportunities to participate in sport in the community. Pupils have access to large indoor and outdoor sporting areas and swimming pools. Older pupils join lessons at a mainstream secondary school and this enables them to put their skills into practice. For instance, pupils in Years 10 and 11 take part in games lessons. Pupils are proud to show visitors their photographs of participation in sporting events and games in the community. Those in the school football team have received particularly good experiences, extending their skills by playing against several schools.

81 Physical education is very well led and managed and the subject leader has developed good resources for games and sports. These include the 'sports bags', each containing the necessary items for games, that staff provide for pupils at breaks, lunchtimes and in the residence. The development plan for physical education is detailed and well thought out. The previous report did not judge pupils' achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision is **very good**. Pupils achieve very well. Teachers and other staff ensure that they provide comprehensive opportunities for pupils to learn and these permeate the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive frequent opportunities to extend their personal skills throughout the school day and in the residence.
- There is effective assessment and recording and this ensures pupils have clear targets to achieve.
- The many opportunities to visit the community and take part in lessons with pupils from other schools enhance pupils' personal and social skills and their understanding of citizenship.
- Visitors who lead lessons make a strong contribution to help pupils to improve their personal and social skills.
- In Years 10 and 11, there is occasional overlap between lessons that contribute to the subject.

Commentary

82 Staff guide pupils' learning in personal, health and social education very effectively throughout the day. They know pupils very well and use comprehensive assessment information to set detailed targets for pupils to learn more. Pupils achieve these very well, learning to improve the way they get on with each other or look after themselves. Staff very effectively promote pupils' skills at lunchtimes. Pupils receive guidance for instance, to learn to eat more independently, choose their food and co-operate with each other. They continue making progress when they are in residence. The staff ensure that pupils gain valuable experience of group living, sharing and caring for themselves. The skills that they learn – for instance, in personal hygiene – receive recognition through unit award accreditation.

83 Lessons in citizenship provide good opportunities for pupils to learn to behave responsibly towards others in their family or the community. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, for instance, are learning to draw up a shopping list and are guided to the local supermarket to shop for family needs. This develops their confidence when out and about in the community and provides them with experience in composing lists and handling money. Since pupils receive similar opportunities to shop in food technology lessons, there is a need for the school to check to ensure that teachers' planning enables pupils to build up these skills systematically and in a wider range of contexts. Many pupils join lessons such as design and technology and physical education in local schools and these opportunities provide valuable experiences in communicating with people in the wider community.

84 Teachers plan effectively for pupils to build upon their learning in lessons throughout the day. For instance, in physical education, there is a strong emphasis on pupils developing self-help skills, such as getting dressed. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 participate in accredited courses in the skills needed for adult life and these provide further opportunities to take part in tasks involving areas such as personal care.

85 There has been a very good improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' achievement was judged to be largely satisfactory.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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