

INSPECTION REPORT

NETHER HALL SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester

Unique reference number: 120361

Headteacher: Mr P Goodchild

Lead inspector: Mr D Smith

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 258955

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:	5-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	72
School address:	Netherhall Road Leicester
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Appropriate authority:	Leicester
Name of chair of governors:	Mr S Brown
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Nether Hall School is a Community Special School serving the East side of Leicester and they gained a School's Achievement Award in 2003. The capacity of the school is 80 pupils and there are currently 72 pupils on roll, 39 boys and 33 girls aged 5 to 19. The pupils have a wide range of special educational needs including severe learning difficulties and a higher percentage of pupils with more complex learning difficulties than the average for similar schools nationally. A small number of pupils are identified as autistic. 69 of the pupils have statements of special educational needs and 3 pupils are undergoing statutory assessment. 62 pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and for 51 of the pupils English is not their first language. Both of these are very high when compared to similar schools nationally. 36 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. There have been no pupil exclusions from the school during the past five years. The school has good links with mainstream schools where the pupils have the opportunity to share their facilities. The achievements of the pupils are not compared with national standards for pupils in mainstream schools due to the special educational needs of the pupils in this school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17323	Mr D Smith	Lead inspector	Citizenship
			Post 16
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
22466	Mrs D Pearson	Team inspector	Science
			Music
			Physical education
1769	Mr M Holohan	Team Inspector	Mathematics
			Geography
			History
			Special educational needs
15600	Mr C Richardson	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			Design and technology
19386	Mr T Watts	Team inspector	English
			Modern foreign language
			Religious education
			English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school with many very good features and the school provides good value for money. The pupils achieve well making good progress in their learning as a result of the good and often very good teaching. Standards are highest for pupils in Years 7 to 9 where pupils' achievements are very good. The management of the school is very good and both the governance and leadership are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The outstanding consistent approach to the use of very good systems of communication.
- The very good management of the school.
- The good and often very good quality of teaching and learning.
- The very good contribution of the learning support staff.
- The use of exemplary Best Value principles to guide very good financial management.
- The very good care, welfare and positive ethos of the school.
- The good links with parents.
- Insufficient inclusive learning and personal development opportunities for the pupils.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and good progress in the provision for the students at post-16. The school has with energy and developing expertise, tackled the large number of weaknesses identified in the last report. The business plan is now fully implemented and very well managed. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly and the school's good assessment systems are effectively used to inform teacher's planning. The staff relationships are good and as a result the management of the good curriculum is now fully effective. The pupils with more complex learning difficulties have a clearly planned curriculum but have insufficient opportunities to share their learning opportunities with other children in the school. The school is in a strong position to make further progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	good	good
Year 6	good	good
Year 9	very good	very good
Year 11	good	good
Year 13	good	good

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

Pupils' achievements are consistently good across the school. Pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are very good. Although good overall there is a greater incidence of satisfactory achievements at post-16. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics. In Years 3 to 6 the pupils' achievements are very good in maths, physical education and good in personal, social and health education, English and science. In Years 7 to 9 achievements are very good in maths, music, physical education and good in English, science and information and communication technology. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are very good in mathematics and physical education and good in English and science. Post-16 students' achievements are good in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The students make good progress in aspects of their work related curriculum and external accreditation such as ASDAN. The pupils with more complex learning needs achieve well but are not fully included with other pupils in the school and

therefore miss opportunities to learn and play alongside their peers. The pupils with autism are taught an appropriate curriculum well and as a result their achievements are good.

The school makes very good provision make **for pupils' moral and cultural development and good provision for their spiritual and social development**. The pupils are a credit to the school, parents and themselves. They have very good attitudes fostering very good relationships and they become increasingly confident in school without fear of bullying or harassment. The pupils' behaviour is very good and an excellent reflection of this is the fact that there have been no pupil exclusions from the school during the past five years. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and the pupils are very punctual both when arriving at school and getting to their lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and for the pupils in Years 7 to 9 it is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good or better for the pupils in Years 10 and 11. Although the quality of teaching and learning for the students at post-16 is good overall, they experience a higher percentage of satisfactory teaching than in the other age groups. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in mathematics and is very good and at times excellent in physical education and music. It is good in English, science, information and communication technology and religious education. Curriculum provision is good and is enriched during the teaching day. The provision of extra-curricular activities is only satisfactory because there is a limited range of lunchtime, after school and residential activities. The pupils are very well cared for and receive very good support and guidance. The school has good systems for consulting pupils and takes their views into account. Good links have been developed with the parents and the community. Strong relationships have been established with other schools to provide opportunities for the pupils to use mainstream facilities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The management of the school is very good whilst the leadership and governance are good. The leadership of the head teacher and deputy head teacher is very good and they are well supported by staff at all levels. The school runs very well and all of the staff help to create the calm and well ordered environment. The curriculum is now well managed and systems have been put in place to improve the quality of teaching. The school is forward looking and the senior managers gather appropriate information to help in their analysis of future developments. The school's business manager makes an excellent contribution to the very good financial management in the school. The school is well set for continual improvement, challenged and supported by an able governing body. The school has not yet developed an outreach service.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are positive about the school and in particular appreciate the very good information provided by the school. They have full confidence in the school's approach to manage any concerns or complaints. The pupils are very positive about the school and their very good attitude to school life is reflected in their commitment to sporting activities and membership of the School Council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:
Increase the inclusive learning and personal development opportunities for the pupils by;

- Building on the well established links with mainstream schools and extending the pupils' opportunities to learn and play alongside their mainstream peers
- Maximising the opportunities for the pupils with the most complex needs to learn and play alongside their peers in the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are consistently **good** across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make good progress towards achieving their individual and school targets.
- Pupils achievements in mathematics are very good overall.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve very well

Commentary

1 Pupils' achievements are good overall but they are very good for the pupils in Years 7 to 9. Most of the pupils make substantial progress in all three target areas of English, mathematics and personal and social development.

2 The school uses comprehensive assessment systems and the information from this process is used effectively to set the pupils challenging targets. Last year all of the pupils made progress in at least one of their major target areas. Overall the greatest progress was made in the development of the pupils' literacy skills as a result of the outstanding use of the school' communication systems. Pupils are very well taught to understand and to use symbols, signing, and electronic aids, as well as being very effectively encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills. The available data is also used to establish challenging school targets and the good results are carefully analysed to inform the setting of appropriate targets in the future. The school does use comparisons where possible to help establish challenging targets for the pupils in the spirit of Best Value principles.

3 Mathematics is very effectively managed and the very good teaching provides the pupils with the opportunity to make very good progress in their learning and as a result they achieve very well. For example the pupils in Year 2 are making very good progress in their recognition of different shapes and the use of number. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can count up to five and recognise groups of five objects. The pupils' recognition of basic shapes is developing well and the lower attaining pupils can confidently name basic shapes. Pupils in Year 9 are beginning to be able to apply their knowledge of number and shape to practical lessons where they construct accurate graphs and charts. This work is effectively continued into Year 11, where pupils are able to undertake simple calculations such as addition and subtraction. Higher attaining pupils can also recognise and name more complex numbers.

4 The achievements of the pupils in Years 7 to 9 are very good. This is particularly the case when as a result of inspired teaching they make excellent progress in their learning. In physical education pupils with more complex learning difficulties make small but very significant steps in their experience of competitive games and this is a strength. The staff includes all of the pupils in the activities and seize on every opportunity to challenge the pupils to make further progress. Other pupils make very good progress in a wide range of sports. Pupils are captivated by the opportunity to listen to a visitor playing a didgeridoo and a pupil is aware that the instrument comes from Australia. Pupils enjoy listening to the sounds of an excellent range of instruments and understand that music can be very distinctive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is very good. Their moral and cultural developments are very good, spiritual and social development

are good, making these aspects of personal development good overall. This is a good, effective improvement since the previous inspection

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very positive ethos and as a result the pupils make very good progress in their personal development.
- The consistent use of very effective behaviour plans.
- The School Council and school sports association provide pupils with opportunities for personal development.
- A lack of fully inclusive opportunities for the pupils.
- The pupils cultural development is very good
- Procedures to promote attendance and improve punctuality are good and as a result attendance is satisfactory.

Commentary

5 The head teacher has developed a very positive school culture that promotes challenge and achieves success. Mutual respect and care for each and every individual are central to the way of life in school. Staff provide very good role models, showing respect and concern for the individual needs of all pupils. This is reflected in pupils' positive responses, in their attitudes towards each other, and helps their very good understanding and applying of principles, that distinguish right from wrong. They have very good regard for the consequences of their own and others' actions as they establish very good relationships. Behaviour in class is very good, for example, pupils listen quietly when other pupils are responding to teachers' questions. They share resources well and are aware of others' feelings, such as when one pupil became very concerned when another pupil was not feeling well during a lunchtime break.

Exclusions

There have been no pupil exclusions during the last five years. This fact is an excellent reflection of the school's effectiveness in developing a very positive school ethos

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	14		
White – any other White background	1		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	37		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Black or Black British – African	4		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3		
No ethnic group recorded	2		

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

6 The very positive school ethos and the use of very effective behavioural plans has resulted in no occurrences of racism or bullying in the past 18 months. All staff are trained in the team-teach approach for managing pupils' behaviour. An example of the effectiveness of this occurs during a

lunchtime session in the school hall, when a disruptive pupil is quietly and effectively managed by a teacher. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this leads to pupils learning in a very caring and appropriate environment, particularly for those pupils with complex learning difficulties. Generally, pupils want to learn and do their best regardless of their particular needs or individual background. Their very good attitude to school life is reflected in their commitment to participate in school sports association events and the School Council.

7 The school has worked very hard to provide weekly mainstream inclusion for all of the pupils with severe learning difficulties. They are providing opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development but the pupils are not included in lessons with their mainstream peers. The inclusion of pupils with more complex learning difficulties, with their peers, in the rest of the school is under developed and this limits the opportunities for them to learn and play together.

8 Teachers are mindful that the vast majority of pupils are from an Indian culture. This is shown in the way that they raise questions of faith sensitively and pupils are encouraged to talk about their own faiths. The school curriculum reflects a strong multi-cultural emphasis and there are many displays around school of local and Indian culture. Visits have been made to churches, mosques and temples and recently, through curriculum planning, pupils have developed an awareness of culture in China, Italy, South America and Mexico.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002-2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.1%	School data	0.3%
National data	9.1%	National data	0.6%

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

9 Attendance at the school is satisfactory. There are very good strategies in place to check on and improve attendance. The school maintains a rigorous check on the punctuality of the transport service bringing pupils to school and as a result the pupils are very punctual. Regular meetings with the education welfare service allow the school to focus on reasons why pupils are not attending school and this support is effective. Usually pupils are absent because of illness or for example hospital appointments.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

10 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and for the pupils in Years 7 to 9 it is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good or better for the pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in mathematics and is very good, and at times excellent, in physical education and music. It is good in English, science, information and communication technology and religious education. Curriculum provision is good with good enrichment opportunities but the provision of additional activities outside of the teaching day is only satisfactory. The pupils are very well cared for and receive very good support and guidance. The school has good systems for consulting pupils and takes their views into account. Good links have been developed with the parents and the community. Strong relationships have been established with other schools and these provide opportunities for the pupils to use mainstream facilities and this enhances their achievements.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in the school is **good** overall. Assessment systems are **good** and are used well.

Main strengths and weakness

- The very good work of the learning support staff
- The staff's insistence on high standards of pupils' behaviour
- The staff have high expectations overall and very high expectations for the pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning is variable

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3%)	23 (37%)	28 (45%)	9 (15%)	-	-	-

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.

Commentary

11 The learning support staff are very well deployed and make a significant contribution to the good teaching and learning in the school. This is a particular strength in the teaching of pupils who have more complex learning needs and those who are autistic. They know the pupils very well and relate exceptionally well to them, giving the pupils the confidence to tackle challenging tasks and make good progress. They make a very valuable contribution to the very good school ethos. The school day is very well managed, very busy and the pupils are very effectively motivated to make the best of their abilities and in particular this generates a very positive approach to their work.

12 The school has made very good progress since their last inspection in establishing good assessment systems under the very good leadership of the deputy head teacher. Well considered systems provide a wealth of information and this is used effectively to set the pupils' targets and also for effective lesson planning. Mark books are used very effectively and provide the staff with the opportunity to discuss pupils' progress with them. The pupils' targets are not fixed, in that if they are too easy or hard then the opportunity is taken to readjust them. The introduction of Progress Files is an indication of further progress in the school. Progress Files give a comprehensive picture of the all round development of each pupil. It is the opinion of the parents that the pupil reports produced by the school are particularly detailed and informative and a strength of the school.

13 The school places a very high priority on encouraging the highest standards of behaviour and this approach is very effective in class and across the school. The pupils can play together co-operatively during breaks and are also a credit to the school when they are out on visits. The staff take every opportunity to praise the pupils and are equally consistent when establishing clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour. The autistic pupils respond well to the structured systems used by the staff. Effective behaviour plans are designed to change the unacceptable behaviour of individual pupils and these plans are used well by the staff.

14 The very high expectations of the staff, and some excellent teaching in music and physical education, contribute to the very good teaching and learning of the pupils in Years 7 to 9. The lessons are very well planned with the use of a particularly wide variety of teaching strategies and very skilled use of stimulating resources. Inspired teaching in music and physical education challenges the pupils to make excellent progress in their learning.

15 Homework is a satisfactory feature of the school's provision but it is not used consistently. Greater opportunities could be provided to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning at home. Some of the parents are not clear as to whether their child is given sufficient homework and this is a weakness.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** quality curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in the quality and range of the curriculum and meets statutory requirements. There is **good** enrichment through provision for pupils to experience music, drama and very good for sports but extra-curricular opportunities could be further developed. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's provision for developing the pupils' communication across the school is outstanding.
- The curriculum for the pupils with autism is good
- Pupils located in mainstream have insufficient shared curriculum time with their mainstream peers and the pupils with more complex needs spend too little shared time with their peers in the school.
- The personal, social and health education programme is good but opportunities for residential visits and work placements are limited.
- The curriculum is now well managed but there are no facilities for design and technology and the science room is too small.

Commentary

16 The school has developed a very good range of communication systems that are well supported by the relevant professional and used exceptionally well across the school. This innovative approach ensures that all of the pupils access their entitlement to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum and make good progress.

17 The school works hard to ensure pupils have a very wide range of experiences in sport and the arts. Many of the pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to play a range of sports and are actively involved in team games. This is successful in not only developing pupils' skills but also teaching them personal and social skills that develop their self-confidence and the ability to work together. Similarly, music and drama form a strong part of the curriculum. Pupils have benefited from an artist in residence and visits to places such as a sculpture park. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunity to participate in drama as is evident in their imaginative and high quality productions of Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet. The pupils take part enthusiastically and with a high level of confidence and pride. The extra-curricular activities that are provided are of a high quality but opportunities are missed to provide an extensive and stimulating range of activities during the lunch breaks and after school.

18 The curriculum for the pupils who are autistic has been carefully designed to fully meet their needs and has a marked impact on the good progress that they make.

19 Pupils with more complex learning needs are provided with a good curriculum but they have insufficient opportunities to learn alongside their peers in the school. Increased opportunities for shared learning would give them greater access to subjects such as design and technology and a modern foreign language. The school does provide opportunities for all of the pupils in the school to mix and is planning to extend this into shared play times with a local school. However currently there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils with more complex learning difficulties to learn and play with other pupils. The school has funded the building of a bridge that links with a local school and they plan to increase the opportunities for the pupils to mix with the mainstream pupils during their breaks.

20 The personal, social and health education programme successfully develops pupils' social skills and effectively prepares them for life after school. The success of this programme is demonstrated by the very good social skills of the pupils when they are in school. However, there is a need to develop these skills further. The current practice of not giving pupils opportunities for residential experiences until they are over 16 results in many pupils not taking up the opportunities offered. There is a need to ensure that pupils have this opportunity earlier in their school career. The school provides limited opportunities for the pupils to take part in work experience before they

are in Year 12. There is a need to further develop this provision to ensure that pupils have a wider understanding of the world of work.

21 The curriculum is now well managed and there have been marked improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. The team's conclusions are that the amount of teaching time is satisfactory for the pupils to benefit from the curriculum. There are no specialist facilities for the teaching of design and technology and the food technology room is too small. The pupils with more complex learning difficulties have insufficient access to the technology curriculum and too few opportunities to learn alongside their peers in subjects such as this. The science room is also too small and poorly designed although the members of staff work hard to ensure that the teaching of science is not adversely affected.

Care, guidance and support

Care for pupils is **very good** and pupils receive very well thought out support, advice and guidance. Good systems are in place to consult and involve pupils in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well known to staff, helping to develop very good and trusting relationships.
- Monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal developments are very good
- Liaison with health professionals in school is effective.
- The very good programme for settling in new pupils.
- Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to express their views.
- Health and safety procedures in school are very good.
- The standard of the catering in the school is very high.
- Child protection procedures are very good
- The work related programme for the pupils in Years 10 and 11 is underdeveloped.

Commentary

22 The staff know the pupils very well. This knowledge is used to very good effect to talk, or indicate by signing the achievements that pupils have made in lessons. To record these achievements, mark books are used very effectively as a starting point for debate with pupils, and enable staff to move a pupils' targets forward if they are being achieved regularly. The introduction of Progress Files is liberating staff and pupils from simply recording pupils' experiences to now, especially in the "All About Me" section, displaying their achievements. Progress Files give an accurate and useful picture of a child's development. This is particularly useful for those pupils with very limited communication skills, especially for example, providing the background information for college interviews. Morning registration and the afternoon assembly are both used as times when pupils can bring up special concerns to them. There is close and effective communication between staff, the speech therapists and physiotherapists in school. A number of staff work with pupils out of school hours at local youth clubs, and this gives them the opportunity to get to know pupils in a social, as well as an educational, setting.

23 The needs of each pupil have a high priority in the school. When a new pupil is due to arrive, the staff carry out a home visit and also takes the advice of health professionals, over the level of specialist equipment or support needed for that pupil when they start school. Pupils have the opportunity to shape events in their school, through the School Council, and their views have been taken into account over break time and lunch time activities and the usefulness of Makaton signing as a communication tool.

24 Health and safety has a high priority in school. Moving and handling is organised by an identified co-ordinator and individual risk assessments are made for pupils who have very special medical, physical or sensory needs. Four staff in school hold first aid qualifications and all staff are trained in emergency aid. The school is swift in seeking out specialist advice in health and safety

procedures where it feels it needs the expertise, for example when making fire risk assessments or on educational visits.

25 The school canteen is very diligent in meeting the special dietary requirements of pupils and tries hard to give pupils food that they like and enjoy eating; “nice and tasty” was the report from the School Council meeting. Close links exist to child protection services in the city and the training for all staff in this area is updated annually. The designated person, the head teacher, shares any additional expertise he has in this area with all staff.

26 The school has given careful consideration to the vocational needs of the pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, these pupils do not have access to work experience placements or sufficient careers guidance and this limits the opportunities to develop their independence skills.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good links are established with parents. Links between the school and the community are also **good**. Strong relationships are established with other schools and colleges to promote opportunities for pupils and students to use their facilities

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided to parents is very good.
- The administration office links to parents are very good.
- Home/school links are good and are well supported by the fact that some of the staff are bi-lingual.
- The high profile of school in local community

Commentary

27 Parents value the information they receive from school. Where home/school diaries are in use, for example for pupils where there are communication difficulties, these are considered to be especially useful for a day-to-day dialogue with school. Parents appreciate that the school knows their children very well and consider that staff are always thinking of new ways to help them at home. Although few parents are in school regularly, this does not stop them working closely with the school to back up what is taught at school. Importantly for example, effectively supporting behaviour management plans. The school consults parents regularly for an evaluation of its performance, with a strong focus on the satisfaction that they are offering to parents for their children’s education. They have full confidence in the school’s approach in dealing with any complaints or concerns.

28 The administration office keeps a close contact with parents on a day-to-day basis. It receives, for example, routine information about why a pupil cannot attend school, and is a focal point for exchange of information between parents and teachers. Bi-lingual staff throughout the school, help many parents, where English is not the main language at home, to communicate directly with school. This is especially useful when staff make home visits to assess how the school can help parents with their children’s learning.

29 Links with the extended community are good and provide a wide range of resources in the form of visits, visitors and staff for the school. For example a video has been made by a friend of the school to compare the locality where the school is based, with another school in a very rural setting. This video is a key feature of the geography and history curriculum for Year’s 3 to 6, and has other uses in supporting the National Literacy Strategy. Local shops are used to accustom pupils, on the autistic spectrum, to walk to a café to buy refreshments and this is very successful. The hydro-pool in a nearby hospital and the local swimming baths are both used to good effect to support swimming programmes.

30 The strengths and skills of the school’s staff are valuable resources to the community. The school hosts meetings, for example, to share financial strategies through a Pay Roll Users group, or

as a resource in behavioural management strategies, such as Team Teach. Strong links to schools and colleges in the area are finding ways to include pupils in a variety of educational and social programmes, especially for when pupils leave the school and continue their education elsewhere. The opening of the bridge to the neighbouring Primary School is seen as the start of a range of inclusion and integration opportunities for both schools. During the inspection the School Council of the primary school came to visit Nether Hall, and were very enthusiastic about the range of resources, most especially the sensory spa bath and outdoor play equipment, that the school had to offer them. Plans for new building work in the school to encompass ways that the school can help both the youngest and oldest in the local community by providing a parent and toddler club and senior citizens group, are indicative of the school's strong commitment to the local area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The management of the school is very effective whilst the leadership and governance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective use of well considered management systems across the school.
- A shared ambition to provide the very best opportunities for the pupils.
- The very good induction and continuing professional development for all staff.
- The use of exemplary Best Value value principles to guide very good financial management.
- The development and use of refined systems of self-evaluation and data gathering to inform the very good strategic plan.
- The governing body carry out their role well and they have the expertise to further develop their contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

Commentary

31 The schools runs very well and all of the staff help to create the calm and well ordered environment. No time is wasted during the busy day and the senior managers are very evident around the school. Management is very good at all levels in the school and this has a positive effect on the good standard of teaching and learning in the school. This is also illustrated by the fact that the entrance to the school is very attractive, the school is very clean and there are very high standards of catering. All of this contributes to a good initial impression of the school that is confirmed by spending time in the company of the staff and pupils. This positive and caring ethos is equally clear in relation to the staff's management of the children and as a result the clear respect that the pupils have for others. The introduction of very good systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, has helped to make a significant improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. It is the view of the parents that the school is well led and managed.

32 This is a school where the members of staff clearly have the will and capacity for continual improvement in the quality and standards of its' provision. The head teacher makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school by his very good leadership and he is supported particularly well by the deputy head teacher. The head teacher is a very talented teacher and he is also very determined to ensure that the pupils get every opportunity to succeed. This clear sense of purpose is very evident throughout the school and clearly shared by the staff, governors, parents and pupils. The head teacher consults widely and takes the views of all stakeholders, including the pupils, fully into account. The impact of these strategies is the creation of a very positive ethos, where pupils make good progress in their academic and personal skills.

33 New staff are provided with a very effective induction programme that is very effectively managed by the deputy head teacher. Members of staff that have joined the school this term are already making a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in the school. The teachers appreciate that they are provided with very innovative support, including working time at home and this gives them every opportunity to manage their subject (s), plan effectively and teach

well. Very good performance management systems ensure that the staff's developmental needs are reflected in the whole school planning and are effectively linked to continual improvement.

34 The school's business manager makes an excellent contribution to the very good financial management in the school. She has an outstanding grasp of local and national initiatives and is fully involved in moving the school forward. A very high priority is placed on gaining value for money and the school is very successful in acquiring additional funding, raising money and attracting donations. The school is excellent in the use of best value principles.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£1,094,112	Balance from previous year	£190,016
Total expenditure	£894,815	Balance carried forward to the next	£199,297
Expenditure per pupil	£11,472		

35 The school is forward looking and the senior managers gather appropriate information to help in their analysis of future developments. They are aware that they are providing a high quality service in a changing world and are keen for the school to make a significant contribution, by effectively meeting a wide range of pupils' needs. The school's regular analysis of their performance is very well translated into their very clear and explicit development plan. This plan is a shared living document and the targets are monitored regularly with rigorous evaluation at the end of each year.

36 The governing body provide valuable support to the school and they also challenge and question the senior managers. They communicate well with the staff and are very focussed on fully meeting the needs of the pupils. The governing body has strength in depth and a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have the expertise and confidence to provide an increasingly effective contribution to the vision and future direction of the school. .

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic communication is encouraged extremely well in all aspects of school life.
- Learning support staff are very good at supporting the teaching.
- The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better but some work is not marked.

Commentary

37 In everyday communication skills the pupils' progress is very good. This is because the school has focused very well on developing speaking and listening skills, and on the alternative ways for pupils to understand what is being communicated to them. Teachers and learning support staff are very good at speaking clearly, signing, using symbols, and using objects that pupils associate with particular activities. They very effectively encourage pupils to respond as well as they can, trying to speak back, to make signs, and to choose from a selection of symbols. They also use electronic aids, such as switches, that speak recorded sentences. The most able pupils speak clearly in conversations, and have the confidence to take part in drama activities in front of the rest of the school. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties make good progress in understanding simple instructions and responding to them by making a clear choice such as "yes" or "no". Pupils' reading skills develop well. The least able pupils begin to recognise pictures and symbols, and they realize that written words have meanings, such as their own names, animals or vehicles. The highest achievers read story books, reference books and magazines capably, with good expression and variable levels of understanding. The pupils who have more complex learning needs do not understand that they can make marks on paper with crayons or paintbrushes. Others begin to make marks that build up towards writing skills, using crayons, pencils, brushes, and fingers in sand. The most able pupils write short sentences independently, about, for example, what they have been doing over the weekend, or what they did during a school visit.

38 A major strength of lessons is the contribution that the learning support staff make to pupils' progress. They are very capable when working with individual pupils and small groups. They know their pupils very well, and often are able to speak in the pupils' home language. Some take on additional responsibilities as well, such as using electronic aids, or developing the library.

39 Only rarely is the lack of English at home a disadvantage to pupils' learning. Much more significant for most pupils is their lack of understanding of any language, and the inability of many pupils to speak at all when they first come to the school. Staff have a very clear emphasis on using clear speech, getting good eye contact, signing, and using symbols and electronic aids. This helps to overcome pupils' difficulties as far as possible because these methods are almost "language free". With clear targets for each pupil, based on good assessments of their difficulties and needs, teachers and learning support staff are able to provide effective encouragement at all times. The most able pupils learn to speak English just as well as many of their classmates. Those with the most complex learning difficulties become able to understand what is being communicated to them, and how to respond so that their needs and wants are understood more fully. The school is

effectively managing the vacancy for a person responsible for the overview of English as an additional language.

40 The provision of English in the school is well led and managed. There is a clear view and very good planning for future developments in the subject. The library is attractive, but it is not used as fully as it could be in further extending the pupils' reading and writing skills. Other resources are also good, with many books spread around the school where they are needed most often, including a very good range of reading books, and "Big Books" for groups of pupils to read together. Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in all aspects has improved throughout the school; assessment is now effective and teachers make good use of the information that they gather. Drama is now an important part of lessons, which are now very well planned in accordance with national guidelines.

41 The good quality teaching and learning is as a result of very clear planning that follows national guidelines. Lessons are effectively prepared and organised, with teachers using a good range of equipment to help pupils' learning in imaginative ways. Teachers assess pupils' progress thoroughly, based both on the individual targets, and on a system of nationally recognised steps of progress. The information that is gathered is well used for planning teaching. Pupils are all well involved in lessons, and well encouraged to take part as fully as they can. This includes the pupils with the most complex needs, autistic pupils, and those who do not have English as their home language. Teachers organise activities that are suited to pupils of different abilities, so encouraging good learning. The teaching sometimes relies too much on worksheets, resulting in fewer opportunities for the more able pupils to extend their writing. Some of the pupils' written work is not marked, therefore missing opportunities to praise pupils, or to correct and guide their learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42 The development of the pupils' literacy skills is effectively developed across all aspects of the curriculum and during the pupils' leisure time. In particular the pupils benefit from the extensive use of the school's very good systems for promoting the pupils' communication skills.

Modern foreign language (French)

The provision for French is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have their entitlement to study French as part of their curriculum.
- The learning support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- There is too little use of conversational French.

Commentary

43 The pupils are now taught French on a regular basis and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, mainly in the spoken language. They learn to name the parts of the body, for instance, or learn some names of sports, or features of the weather. They co-operate well together, but are reluctant to try out their pronunciation with each other. Even some of the more able pupils are mainly guessing in lessons. Pupils do not learn a good and confident range of greetings and conversational words and phrases. At best, "written" work consists of one or two words copied under a picture. Quite often, pupils colour in pictures while the teacher is working with another group and these are weaknesses.

44 The teaching and learning are satisfactory with very good support from the learning support staff and the team work well to encourage very good behaviour from the pupils. Lessons are based around spoken French, but pupils mainly learn a selection of words, rather than learning greetings and how to hold a short conversation. Pupils forget their list of words easily, and teachers have to reinforce them many times each week. Teachers do not routinely use French words that would really help pupils to learn the spoken word, such as "Good morning," "Come in", "How are you?", "What's this?", "Try again". The teaching is well prepared and lively, starting and ending with

different games that reinforce the main learning, in groups, in the middle of the lesson. The activities are well planned to include all of the pupils. Pupils are interested and keen to answer questions, and the teacher makes good use of many cards with symbols. There is, however, too little use of general French language to greet, instruct or congratulate the pupils on their successes and this limits the development of the pupils' confidence to use the language.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make very good progress in their learning and achieve very well.
- The very good quality of teaching is enhanced by a highly effective learning support staff.
- Autistic pupils and those with more complex learning needs enjoy good provision.
- Teaching is well organised and stimulating.
- Computers are insufficiently used to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

45 Pupils start from a very low level of achievement. However, pupils in Year 2 are making very good progress in their understanding of shape and the function of number. An example of this is the pupils' ability to identify similar sized groups of objects. The higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can count up to five and recognise groups of five objects. Skills in the recognition of basic shapes are developing well and even the lower attaining pupils can correctly name basic shapes. Pupils in Year 9 are beginning to be able to apply their knowledge of number and shape to practical lessons, where they construct graphs and charts of data such as the height of pupils in the class or the amount of traffic using a road. Although some pupils require considerable support from staff, the concept is well established. This work is effectively continued into Year 11, where pupils are able to undertake simple calculations such as addition and subtraction. Some pupils can also recognise and name more complex numbers. Pupils with more complex learning needs and those pupils with autism also achieve well in their understanding of number and shape.

46 Teaching is very good and this is reflected in the high quality learning of the pupils. Effective assessment accurately identifies the needs of the pupils. These needs are met through well-planned and enthusiastic teaching which interests the pupils and ensures that they pay careful attention to their learning. The quality of their learning is boosted by the very effective team of learning support staff. They greatly enhance the teaching and are particularly effective in ensuring the high achievements of pupils, especially those with additional special needs.

47 The teaching provides interesting lessons for the pupils. This is seen in the use of tactile methods for pupils with more complex learning needs and those with Autism. An example of this is enabling pupils to handle shapes and numbers to develop an understanding of them. Similarly, the use of research and practical methods makes the subject interesting and challenging for the older pupils.

48 The provision of mathematics, as a taught subject, has made very good progress since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and training for staff has improved standards. The establishment of very good quality assessment and the development of resources have also contributed to improvements.

49 The subject is very well managed. There is a commitment to high standards and a strong desire to improve standards. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop the use of computers in the classroom as this remains an area of weakness.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50 The development of the pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects is very good. In the teaching of science, for example, there is frequent reference to the use of number in taking temperatures or measuring amounts of a liquid.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator is a science specialist and teaches all pupils
- The very good use of a range of systems to enhance the pupils' learning.
- The resources are very good although the science room is too small

Commentary

51 The science teacher plans the lessons very effectively and provides many opportunities for the pupils to be involved in practical work and as a result they make good progress in their learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are helped to explore the force of magnets. Pupils with complex learning difficulties respond well to explore their environment through push and pull activities in the light room and soft play. One pupil gives good eye contact to make a choice between two objects and another shows a puzzled expression when the metal attached to the magnet cannot be pulled off. Pupils with autism greatly enjoy viewing themselves in mirrors as they try on hats, crowns and feathers. They make good progress in looking and listening and take turns in order to explore the texture of different materials.

52 A visit to the zoo has given pupils in Years 7 to 9 first hand evidence of animals. The well-planned lesson and good use of digital photographs, seen on the computer, increases their understanding of animals in the wild and their habitat. Some pupils recognise farm animals and can say where they live. Excellent use is made of pupils' own language together with spoken English, signs and symbols to encourage understanding. The very good use of scientific terms encourages the most able pupils to understand the reading of a thermometer. Information communication technology is effectively used to record results, on a block graph, for temperature readings. During an experiment they concentrate well and make good progress to understand materials and predict heat loss from three beakers.

53 The range and quality of the resources are very good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 with more complex learning difficulties are beginning to indicate their preference for hot or cold sensations. A few pupils use switches or select a symbol card to indicate their answer. Their facial expression and body language show exactly what they think of the cold of ice packs or the comfort of a warm blanket. The science room is too small for the large number of pupils in some of the classes, although the staff provide good opportunities for investigative work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to develop their information communication technology skills.
- The computer suite is too small and this limits the time pupils can use this facility.
- The very good application of information communication technology for pupils with more complex learning difficulties
- The subject co-ordinator has good vision for both the discrete and cross-curricular use of information communication technology.
- Monitoring of the teaching of information and communication technology in all year groups is inconsistent.

Commentary

54 In the observed lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, the teaching and learning of information communication technology skills are mainly good, and sometimes very good and as a result the pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. They listen to instructions well, are keen to undertake the given tasks and persevere with them even, as in one case, when the inserting of clipart images takes too long due to a technical problem. Teacher/pupil relationships are very good and teachers' knowledge of individual pupils helps to ensure that tasks are appropriately matched to ability and this ensures that low achieving pupils also experience success. Pupils' relationships with each other are very good. They help each other and celebrate the successes of others. For example in a Year 8 class, where the pupils develop the skills to control a device through a sequence of instructions, others in the group celebrate a pupil's success in this task with loud cheers.

55 The comparatively large number of pupils in a class and the smaller number of computers in the suite results in classes having to use the suite half a class at a time. This is effectively halving the amount of taught time that some pupils receive on discrete information communication technology skills and has a detrimental affect on pupils' achievement and this is a weakness.

56 Hardware resources are good and there is good provision of augmented aids to communication and alternative computer input devices. These are used very well throughout the school to support the communication and access to learning for pupils, particularly those with more complex learning difficulties. For example, pupils use switch access to computer programs and communication devices to respond to teachers' questions. This latter was observed in one lesson by a pupil using such a device to say 'hello' during a registration session.

57 The subject co-ordinator provides good management and leadership and has a very good vision as to future development of the subject in both discrete and cross-curricular applications. For example, the schemes of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11, are being revised and rewritten to be appropriate for pupils and a base line assessment of pupils basic skills in the subject is planned. The monitoring of some class teaching and planning, particularly in Years 1 to Year 6, is underdeveloped.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58 Although instances of individual pupils using a computer during subject lessons in the classroom were observed during the period of the inspection, the use of the computer suite to support subject teaching and learning is inconsistent.

HUMANITIES

There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' achievements in **geography** and **history**. Only one lesson was seen in geography. The pupils' previous work was looked at for both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of humanities to help develop pupils' communication skills.
- Insufficient use of information and communication technology

Commentary

59 Spoken language is enhanced by the discussion of photographs, such as those of the rain forest. Good use is made of visits within the community to provide pupils with experience of museums and buildings. There is a need to further develop the use of computers within the subject.

Religious Education

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

Strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is well focused on several major religions.
- The use of some very good resources and the involvement of the pupils in role play.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Commentary

60 Pupils make good progress in understanding that there are many different religions. They understand the distinctive features of a number of important religions and their beliefs. Sometimes, pupils are not sure which artefacts or stories belong to which religion. They do, however, learn that religions have many beliefs in common, particularly ways in which we should behave in our communities. Pupils also understand that there is a great sense of spiritual awe associated with religion. The pupils with the most complex learning difficulties feel this very much, as do the more able pupils. Pupils are given daily opportunities for reflection and prayer. For example, during an act of worship at the end of the day, pupils are encouraged to think about what moods different colours meant to them.

61 The subject is well managed and as a result the teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well and use a very good range of resources. They work very well with the learning support staff, and use signing very effectively to help pupils' understanding. Lessons often begin with dimmed lights, some distinctive music from a religious or cultural source, and a significant object, or "object of reference" such as a candle. Pupils' learning in lessons is much helped by many opportunities to handle and wear the dress of several religions, taste some foods, visit places of worship, and act out some ceremonies and stories. Assemblies are a valuable aid to pupils' learning, for the religious stories that have a moral point, for the festivals they celebrate, and for the spiritual sense that comes from prayer and moments of quiet thought.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology for pupils with severe learning difficulties and with autism is **good**. Provision for pupils with more complex learning difficulties is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clarity of leadership and management but with insufficient opportunity to monitor the quality and standards in the subject.
- Use of food technology to teach the pupils about other cultures.
- The provision for teaching design and technology to pupils with more complex learning difficulties is under developed.
- There is no specialist room for the teaching of design and technology.

Commentary

62 The part time subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject. The present guidance on what teachers should teach is not fully appropriate for the pupils' needs and they are being updated. Base line assessment of pupils in Years 3 to Year 6 is planned to ensure basic skills are in place. Leadership of the subject is only satisfactory as the monitoring of some of the teaching does not take place.

63 The teaching and learning is generally good throughout the school and as a result pupils' achievements are good, particularly in food technology. Good examples of pupils' developing awareness of multi-cultural issues are evident when the pupils make and sample food from different countries.

64 Pupils with more complex learning difficulties experience design and technology but do not have opportunities to learn alongside their peers in the school. The fact that the school does not have a specialist facility for the teaching of design and technology does limit the range of opportunities provided for the pupils. Some of the pupils use a specialist room and equipment, in a mainstream setting, but this is not alongside their mainstream peers.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The provision for art is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and areas for development

- The majority of the pupils in Years 7 to 11 are taught well by a subject specialist in a mainstream school.
- The study and display of the work of other artists is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

65 Although there has been no subject specialist in post for the last 12 months, the generally good teaching and learning throughout the school has ensured that pupils are making satisfactory progress. Teachers are modifying the present programme, of what teachers should teach, through their medium term planning to make it more appropriate for the range of learning difficulties their pupils have. Teaching styles are good and learning objectives are taught in an age and ability appropriate manner. For example, a class of mainly Year 2 pupils, with more complex learning difficulties explore a green environment through green resources such as balloons and materials and these make it an enjoyable learning experience. Good progress in learning is shown by the pupils in Years 10 and 11 using, with support, symbols, text, digitised photographs and clip art in their design and making of programmes for their production of 'Joseph and his brothers'. The pupils with autism, are successful in designing and printing 'T' shirts.

66 In the absence of a co-ordinator the deputy head teacher has monitored all planning and also teaches the subject to pupils who have more complex learning difficulties. This has ensured the general continuity and progression of learning. However, the study and display of works of famous artists is inadequate. A subject specialist, based in a local secondary school, teaches pupils in Years 7 to 11, and they benefit from its resources, working in 3 dimensions by using a potter's wheel and firing clay.

Music

The provision for music is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator is a music specialist and as a result the quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The pupils respond very well to stimulating use of resources.
- Very good use is made of the expertise of visiting musicians.
- Pupils make very good progress in their understanding of the work of famous composers.

Commentary

67 The talented co-ordinator teaches music to all pupils and students and has written a creative and interesting long-term plan, which is very appropriate for all age groups. Pupils interact extremely well with the help of learning support staff and make good progress. In choir sessions pupils make very good relationships through singing and playing together. Photographic records show pupils and students have enjoyed productions of “Joseph” and singing and dancing activities at a local theatre.

68 Young pupils enjoy playing percussion instruments and singing songs. Year 6 pupils choose between two instruments and follow signs and symbols to create loud and soft sounds with beaters. Pupils with autism join in with other pupils and all show great delight at the loud sound of the drums.

69 The many visiting musicians and the wide range of exciting instruments ensure pupils participate fully. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 are fascinated as they listen to a visitor playing the didgeridoo. Pupils laugh with enjoyment and surprise as they listen to the deep sounds. One boy knows the music comes from Australia. They respond well to the bright songs and most can say the bird in the song is a kookaburra. Imaginative use of materials and music ensure pupils with complex learning difficulties fully interact with help from adults. For example, with hand bells on their wrists they enjoy the lovely “hello” routine to an African tune that is very uplifting and melodic. They give good eye contact, look at the instruments and shake and bang them with help.

70 Pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 are keen to share what they have found out about Mozart on the internet as part of their study of famous composers. They listen very carefully to music and can identify the instruments playing such as violins and cellos. Pupils show, by their answers, that they are making very good progress to research and appreciate the music of classical composers in a very mature way.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good and at times excellent teaching.
- The very good support provided for the pupils by a range of specialists.
- The pupils make good use of the limited range of high quality lunch time and after school sports opportunities.
- The very good opportunities for swimming and water experience.

Commentary

EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

The head teacher takes an excellent physical education lesson for pupils with more complex learning difficulties. The inspired staff give the pupils an exceptional opportunity to appreciate the excitement and competitiveness of teamwork.

The essence of this excellent lesson can be distilled into the outstanding relationship between staff and pupils, very clear planning, and the teacher's vision and determination that the pupils with more complex learning difficulties can engage in pacey, competitive, physical activity. The high level of praise for pupils' achievements is rewarded by real effort on each pupil's part to participate. Fleeting responses such as a weak push of a Physio ball across a circle, are instantly used by the teacher to encourage pupils to try again, and the smooth development of activities building up the concept of teamwork, again provoked the teacher to praise pupils with "Good looking" or "Good rolling" as pupils propelled and handled the Physio and Jingle balls. Throughout the lesson pupils' confidence clearly grows and one or two anticipate that, for example, a ball bouncing in a net will come to them, or that in an adapted game of Boccia, when they release a ball on the count of three, it will roll down a tube to their partner. The teacher is very aware of very small, but significant successes amongst the pupils, and instantly seizes on them to challenge each pupil further. The individual pupil on the autistic spectrum may only engage for a few seconds in an activity, but the teacher swiftly responds to that small window in his world, to try to repeat the success. All staff demonstrate an excellent knowledge of pupil's achievements and the evaluation of the lesson builds on the strengths and areas for development that are noted during the lesson. Overall, the lesson makes an excellent contribution to the pupil's social development in the wider world.

71 The teacher gives good demonstrations to pupils in Years 10 and 11 where they are developing skills to defend and attack in basketball. A lunchtime club provides further opportunities for competitive basketball games. A few pupils are very good at shooting into a goal and understand the rules. The very good resources in the outside play area encourages pupils to play ball games and explore the apparatus. The gymnastics club held after school encourages pupils to explore and sequence movement. During the school year, the post-16 students experience activities in a sports centre. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 recognise and respond appropriately to a ball. The attractive resources and excellent relationships encourage Year 6 pupils to look, track and push a swinging ball, showing great enjoyment and anticipation.

72 Pupils experience a wide range of challenging physical activities. There are opportunities for pupils and students to work with teams in the community, such as the Leicester Tigers rugby players, football and basketball players. They also take part in cross country running, orienteering, youth games and outdoor pursuits with other schools. All pupils enjoy the school sports day cheered on by parents.

73 The physiotherapist, occupational therapist and teachers work very well together and ensure that there are very effective movement programmes for the pupils with the more complex learning difficulties.

74 There are very good opportunities for the development of the pupils swimming skills and participation in experiencing water. At a local hydrotherapy pool pupils follow excellent water skills and movement programmes. Pupils with complex learning difficulties enjoy the warmth, lights and sounds of the spa pool. During swimming lessons groups of pupils work with a swimming instructor where they gain confidence to kick, splash and float. The most able pupils gain certificates for swimming distances. Pupils delight in each other's achievement when they demonstrate what they can do.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good school ethos enables the pupils to make very good progress in their personal development.
- Good use of the local community.
- Pupils do not get the opportunity to take part in residential trips or work experience until they are in Year 12.

Commentary

75 The school has made very good progress in the provision of personal, social, health education and citizenship since the last inspection. All aspects of the school make a valuable contribution to the pupils' very good personal development. The meal times are very well managed and the pupils have feeding or social development programmes that prepare them for eating and behaving well in the community. Break times also provide good opportunities for the pupils to play together and use the school's much improved facilities. The well-established School Council is a good example of citizenship in action where the elected members make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The pupils respond well to the available extra-curricular activities but the condensed curriculum time and limited time available during the short lunch break limits the range of activities that can be provided. When activities are provided after school they do make a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. The school having concentrated on the provision of a good curriculum is in the position to extend the number of after school activities.

76 Pupils are taught well to develop their road safety awareness. Pupils in Year 2 are given very good practical opportunities to practice and develop their road safety skill in the classroom before being taken into the communities. The pupils have very good attitudes during the activity and are keen to have a go at responding to the model signal but also understand the need to wait their turn. The very good contribution of the learning support staff is a strong feature of the lesson and they help to build the pupils' confidence to tackle challenging tasks. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for a café visit by watching a power point presentation. During their walk to the café the pupils are encouraged to take photographs and develop their confidence in using a digital camera. There is a strong emphasis on road safety and the parents are very appreciative of the opportunities that the school provides to boost their child's social skills.

77 Residential visits provide a very valuable opportunity for pupils to share each other's company and give them direct experience in the development and use of their independence skills. The school provides limited residential opportunities for the pupils but waits until the pupils are in the post-16 provision before a trip is planned. The student's response to these visits is often disappointing. The reason for this is that residential trips are not part of the school culture and the pupils' first opportunity to study away from home comes too late in the pupils' school career. Pupils' learning in areas of the curriculum such as geography, history and especially French is not enhanced by opportunities to provide for first hand experience and study whilst away from home. The school provides the pupils with limited opportunities to take part in a work experience placement until they are in Year 12 and this limits the development of their understanding of the world of work.

POST-16 PROVISION

The post-16 provision is **good**. The students now enjoy a relevant curriculum and have their own separate accommodation as recommended following the school's previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good opportunities for the post-16 students to follow externally accredited courses.
- Their English curriculum is good.
- The students' college links and work experience are good.
- The students are provided with opportunities to develop their independence skills but there is room for further development.
- The students' religious education course is good.

Commentary

78 The quality of pupils' work is reflected in their success in externally accredited courses such as ASDAN. Students in the post-16 provision learn and apply information communication technology skills through units in their accreditation courses. They make good progress in their use of money to calculate expenditure and understand the need for budgeting. They study art including the work of other artists such as Andy Warhol. They visit art museums and use information communication technology in the form of computer software to produce images from a digital camera

79 Students in the Post-16 unit make good progress in learning English skills. Their progress is particularly good in understanding what is spoken and signed to them, and in making their own wants and needs understood. Students achieve well in understanding symbols, especially as part of knowing what they will be doing in lessons each day. The teaching is good. Lessons are well-planned and organised, but students' work is often not marked. Teachers prepare their lessons very well, and use a good range of equipment well to enliven students' learning. Lessons often have a practical focus, such as how to use a telephone, write and post a letter, or read a menu in a café. In the Post-16 unit, although many pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, none of the pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Those who are able speak, in English just as well as in their home language. They hold conversations with staff and with each other, share jokes, answer questions, and make suggestions in lessons. Just as in the rest of the school, these pupils make good progress; staff are very well aware of their needs, and they plan their lessons well to meet those needs.

80 The students have good opportunities to attend college to follow a range of courses. They are encouraged to make choices about the courses that they wish to attend at college and their ability to state preferences is well developed. Equally valuable, vocational opportunities are provided for the students to take part in work placements. The school values the support provided for the students by Connexions. The students have their own common room and this gives them an appropriate identity as the seniors in the school. They can relax and enjoy each other's company during their break times. The students do have the opportunity to go on a residential trip but many of them do not take part in this worthwhile venture and lose the opportunity to further develop their independence skills.

81 In the post-16 provision, religious education is taught well. Pupils' learning is good, and they achieve well in the long term. Students learn that different religions have their own distinctive features, and also that they have things in common, such as special clothes, foods and places to go to worship. Lessons are very good opportunities to practice speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, as well as to gain a very good sense of the moral and spiritual lead that religions can offer.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	6
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	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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