

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OSWALDTWISTLE WHITE ASH SCHOOL**

Oswaldtwistle

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119894

Headteacher: Brian Frew

Lead inspector: Noreen Buckingham

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 258964

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 3-19  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 43

School address: Thwaites Road  
Oswaldtwistle  
Accrington  
Lancashire  
Postcode: BB5 4QG

Telephone number: 01254 235772  
Fax number: 01254 385652

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Dr S Perera

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oswaldtwistle White Ash School admits pupils and students who have severe learning difficulties and some who have very complex learning difficulties. An increasing number also have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The age range of the school is three to 19 years and there are twice as many boys than girls on the current school roll. The majority of pupils and students have low levels of attainment on entry to school which are significantly below national expectations. Some students are admitted into the post 16 provision having previously attended schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties or mainstream school. These students are more able than those who have spent their time lower down the school. There are 43 pupils and students on the roll and currently 23 students are in the post 16 provision which is just over half of the school population. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals which indicates the low socio-economic factors of the area pupils come from. All have statements of special educational need. There are 15 pupils and students from ethnic minority backgrounds and 11 at the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. The school has links with two mainstream primary schools for inclusion and also with colleges of Further Education to support post 16 students.

The school will become part of the Local Education Authority reorganisation of special educational needs in August 2005.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1672 2	Noreen Buckingham	Lead inspector	Science
			Art and design
			Modern Foreign Languages
			Physical education
1408 3	Andy Anderson	Lay inspector	
2740 9	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	English
			Information and communication technology
			Geography
			History
			Religious education
			English as an additional language
1893 2	Helen Jones	Team inspector	Foundation Stage
			Mathematics
			PHSE/Citizenship
			Design and technology
			Music

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited  
 14 Enterprise House  
 Kingsway  
 Team Valley  
 Gateshead  
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>7</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, 4 and POST 16</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Oswaldtwistle White Ash is a good school** that is well led and managed. It offers its pupils and students a good quality education, which promotes their personal development very well. Teaching is consistently good and as a result pupils learn well. The school has a positive ethos in which the care given to pupils is of the highest quality. The teamwork between all staff is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good achievements. Curriculum enrichment and links with the community and local schools are very good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teamwork between all staff has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- Enrichment of the curriculum is very good and pupils benefit from a very wide range of experiences both in and outside of school.
- The school's links for inclusion are very good for both work experience and integration into local mainstream schools.
- The school's continuing commitment to the professional development of staff is very good and this impacts positively on teaching and achievement.
- The care given to pupils and students is excellent which is promoted by very good relationships and understanding of pupils' individual needs.
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher and shared vision for the future with the governing body.
- Management of the post 16 provision is underdeveloped.
- Provision for pupils' all round personal development is very good.
- The limited range of appropriate accreditation available to the highest attaining students.
- The allocation of taught time during the day for mathematics and the length of some lessons is too long to maintain pupils' and students' interests.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection in 1997. All the key issues identified in the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The quality of pupils' individual education plans are good and pupils' and students' achievements are recorded accurately. Subject leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and undertake them effectively. The school has introduced a scheme whereby subjects are monitored in depth and is working through every subject in this way identifying areas for improvement. Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is well established with the result that teaching is now consistently good and often very good. Involvement in the Healthy Schools Initiative has been particularly effective and has enhanced the personal, social and health education of pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Year 11	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 13	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

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

Overall, in relation to their attainment on entry **pupils and students achieve well** across the curriculum and very well in some subjects, namely physical education and religious education. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas. All students in the post 16 provision have their work accredited showing a good level of achievement. However, although the level of achievement by the oldest higher attaining students prepares them very well for leaving school and moving on to college or training the current accreditation used does not fully recognise their achievements. A strong area of achievement for pupils with the most complex learning difficulties is their increasing ability to communicate and make choices, which gives them some control over what they want to do. However, the use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Schedule) for pupils with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) is inconsistent. Achievements in personal, social and health are very good mainly due to the many opportunities presented to pupils and students during the day. There is no difference between the achievements of boys and girls or those for whom English is an additional language. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are very good and they enjoy what the school has to offer. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved recently, most absences are due to illness.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education offered by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good with a high proportion that is very good.** As a consequence, pupils and students learn well and make good progress overall. The school provides a good curriculum which is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities both in and outside of the school day and which involves local mainstream schools. Their participation in sporting events is particularly strong. However the curriculum does have some restrictions due to use of time within the school day. Some lessons last too long and the time allocated across subjects is inconsistent. Links with local schools and colleges are very good and supports the school's very inclusive ethos. Teaching and learning are consistently good and pupils and students make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together and the teamwork is a significant feature of the good teaching. Assessment procedures are good and small steps in progress are recorded and used in future planning. The school has very good links with the community which provide work placements for the oldest students. There are also good links with local mainstream schools and colleges, where pupils and students attend for various sessions. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance learning. The provision for pupils' and students' care, health and safety is excellent. The support, advice and guidance they receive is very good. No formal system exists to gather pupils' opinions on a regular basis but their views are highly valued.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** Governance of the school is also good and the governing body works very well with the headteacher. Governors fulfil their role well and all statutory requirements are met. The proposed local education authority reorganisation of special education due for consultation in August 2005 limits any long term development. Some aspects of the management of the post 16 provision need further development. The management of the three classes is not effectively co-ordinated and for much of the time they operate independently. The monitoring of teaching and learning has led

to good improvements and subject leaders are now taking a more positive role in leading improvements in their subjects.

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

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. Parents' comments at the parents meeting and via the questionnaire support inspectors' judgements about the overall quality of education offered to their children. Parents feel the school supports them very well and gives their children the highest possible care. They are well informed about their child's progress and activities in the school.

Those pupils and students who were able to express independent opinions said they are happy in school, they enjoyed all the different activities and some said that it was better than other schools they had attended.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Extend accreditation opportunities for the higher attaining students in post 16 so that they are given appropriate credit for their work.
- Review how teaching time is organised during the school day in relation to the length of lessons and the allocation of time to some subjects.
- Develop effective management of the post 16 provision.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievements are good across the curriculum and very good in religious education and physical education. There is no difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language, in the early stages of the acquisition of language because of their special educational need, are making progress in line with other pupils in the school.

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

- Students in post 16 achieve very well but the work of the higher attaining students is not appropriately accredited.
- Across the school achievement for pupils and students with the most complex learning difficulties in developing their ability to communicate and make choices is very good but the use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Schedule) for pupils with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) is inconsistent.
- Pupils' achievements in their personal, social and health skills are very good.

#### **Commentary**

1 Because of the good and often very good teaching in physical education, along with the teachers' very secure subject knowledge pupils and students achieve very well. They enjoy the very wide range of activities and have fun, showing a great willingness to listen and learn trying very hard to improve their skills. Supporting the physical education programme and pupils' and students' achievements is the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities via Education) programme. This is well targeted at individual needs allowing those with the most complex learning difficulties to achieve well and improve their movements in small steps. In religious education the very good range of artefacts, some custom made for the school, and the high quality teaching, have a very good impact on pupils' and students' ability to increase their knowledge and understanding, resulting in very good achievement.

2 All students in post 16 achieve very well and have their work accredited by ALL (Achievement in Life and Learning). Modules include those for Leisure Sport, Communicating Aromas, Pet Care, Leisure Art, ICT, number and various communication modules. Students have opportunities to experience a wide range of activities related to the modules and their files show that they achieve very well. The higher attaining students work within the National Skills Profile guidelines but the quality of their work shows that the present accreditation system is not giving them sufficient credit for the high standard of their work and that many could have their work more appropriately recognised by a higher awarding body. One student has already gained an NVQ level 1 at college.

3 In every lesson pupils and students are encouraged to make choices by whatever means they can use. This may be eye-pointing, gesture, touching, reaching out, using a Big Mack or vocalising, and the crucial element is the staff's knowledge and understanding of each pupil's or student's method of communication. For some pupils, the ability to make a choice and have a measure of independence is a very good achievement and the staff consistently encourage pupils and students to communicate. All staff are skilled at interpreting pupils' every movement however small and use this to include them in their own learning and also to

interpret when pupils are uncomfortable or not feeling well. Young pupils choose foods in their “play café”, choose computer programmes, colours in art and design and in post 16 a 4talk4 device to choose food. For pupils with ASD the inconsistent use of PECS limits their ability to improve their communication skills and make precise choices all of the time.

4 There are very many opportunities during the day for pupils’ personal and social skills to be developed. They are promoted through lunchtime and after school clubs, whole school activities, visits into the community and integration opportunities with other schools. The oldest higher attaining students work very well together when preparing lunch for visitors. Young pupils on a regular visit to a local mainstream school integrate very well with their more able peers. Higher attaining post 16 students have volunteered to have regular responsibilities to assist younger pupils during lunchtime activities which they do very well. These same students organise themselves very independently during the day: they run a mini-enterprise, sell toast daily and help with the library. Many visitors and the many organised events promote pupils’ social development well contributing to the whole school community ethos.

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

Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance is satisfactory. Punctuality is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students are very interested in school life and the range of activities provided and are happy to come to school.
- The school promotes good relationships at all levels, including racial harmony, and behaviour in and out of school is very good.
- Pupils and students are very respectful of the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
- Pupils and students are developing a very good appreciation of their own and others’ cultures.

### **Commentary**

5 The school has good procedures to promote regular attendance, which the majority of parents fully support. As a result, attendance has significantly improved over the last two years. Absence is caused entirely by circumstances outside the school’s control, mainly as a direct consequence of many of the pupils’ medical conditions. Parents confirm that their children are happy in school and enjoy the very good range of different activities offered. Pupils’ and students’ attitudes in lessons are very good and they try their hardest to do as well as they can which has a positive impact on their achievement.

6 All pupils make good progress in their personal and social development. Older students are provided with a good range of responsibilities around the school, which they respond to very well. Pupils of all ages are learning to be considerate and helpful to others. For example, in a whole school assembly, two post-16 students were observed spontaneously assisting less able children to fully participate in the actions accompanying the singing. Staff provide very good role models in terms of making relationships and respecting each other resulting in very good relationships across the school at all levels. Parents consistently agreed that their children like school, are treated fairly and are not bullied.

7 Overall behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. However, the school does have some pupils who can, on occasion, display challenging behaviour and all members

of staff consistently manage these pupils very well. Individual behaviour management plans are clear about how to handle pupils and students and these are available to parents. There have been no recent exclusions from the school. Observations of pupils and students in other schools and community facilities showed that they behave very well which demonstrates good social development.

8 Opportunities for pupils and students to develop an understanding of other races and cultures is very good. These are particularly emphasised in art and design where good examples of this can be seen around the school. In religious education they celebrate a range of important festivals of other religions, such as Eid and Diwali, and visitors from other cultures are frequently invited into school for music and theatre. Visits are also made to museums and art galleries so that pupils learn about their own culture. They are encouraged to think about others and have raised money for a number of good causes, such as a school in Nepal. Visits to local churches also contribute to pupils and students spiritual development and their understanding of others values and beliefs.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (87.9%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.9	School data	0.2
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.*

## Exclusions

### *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	28	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	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 school provides a good quality of education which is enriched by a very good range of additional activities both in and out of school. Consistently good teaching means that pupils and students achieve well. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are very good and the school has a very inclusive ethos. The care for pupils is of the highest quality and parents hold the school in high esteem.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall with much that is very good or better. Where teaching is less than satisfactory it is because the pace is too slow and some activities last too long. Assessment procedures are good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teamwork in the classroom between all staff is very good.
- All pupils are included because of staff's good knowledge and understanding of them.
- Some lessons are too long, the pace slows down and pupils lose their concentration.
- Most lessons are planned carefully and well matched to pupils' individual learning targets.

### **Commentary**

9 Staff ensure that pupils are positioned comfortably so that all can be included in the activities of the lessons. Pupils in prone positions, supported standing frames or seated are all placed where they can see and hear so benefiting from maximum inclusion. All staff know the pupils and students very well and have developed very good relationships with them and this is used very effectively to support and encourage them to participate in activities. Teamwork between staff is very good and this is a significant factor in enabling pupils and students to make progress. All staff are aware of pupils and students individual targets and management plans enabling them all to take as full a part as possible in the activities. In every lesson staff make sure that every pupil and student is included and some very innovative and imaginative approaches are used to this end. The depth of knowledge staff have about pupils enables them to know when to intervene to encourage optimum learning and achievement. An example of this was in an art and design lesson when a pupil with very complex learning difficulties talked very quietly with a pupil who was reluctant to participate but with further encouragement he finally smiled and purposefully pressed the sponge shape on to the paper turning his head towards the teaching assistant as he did so demonstrating good achievement and communication.

10 Teaching and learning are good, and sometimes very good or better, because of the very good relationships and high level of interaction between staff, pupils and students. In all lessons pupils and students are encouraged to make choices using a variety of methods. These can be a verbal responses, eye-pointing, use of a Big Mack or gestures. Good resources, which are sometimes simple but effective, are used to motivate pupils and students to want to learn. For example, in a literacy lesson for pupils with the most complex learning difficulties, teachers dressed in pirate gear using a fan to represent the wind, fine water spray and party poppers to represent cannons. They maintained this momentum with a good pace so pupils did not become bored and lose interest while at the same time they ensured that all were involved. Secure subject knowledge is also a key factor in the very good teaching because, coupled with the very good knowledge of the pupils and students learning difficulties, teachers use it to reinforce and extend their knowledge and understanding. This was seen in both physical education and religious education lessons when very good coaching skills improved technique and when very well chosen resources were used very effectively to involve and motivate students.

11 There are some lessons which are very long making it difficult to maintain pupils and students concentration for that length of time. Pupils become tired and so the pace of the lesson slows down as more time is spent in re-positioning some pupils and because staff want to include all pupils. Some activities last too long and the momentum for learning is lost.

12 Plenaries are used very well to assess if lesson and individual objectives have been met and progress is recorded. Most staff are sensitive to the smallest improvement because they know the pupils so well and any evidence of progress is noted. Much work is annotated showing the levels of support and improvement. Lessons are planned well and most include pupils' individual targets, which are communicated to everybody at the start of most lessons. Evidence of progress is also photographed and pupils' and students' Record of Achievement files make a colourful account of their progress through school.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	15 (32%)	17 (36%)	11 (24%)	2 (4%)	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The curriculum provided for pupils is good overall with very good provision for higher attaining post 16 students. The curriculum opportunities are broad and balanced and pupils receive opportunities to learn in a wide variety of subjects both in the formal curriculum and beyond it in a very rich range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good as a result of the strong whole school ethos. The work on Healthy Schools has been particularly effective.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn outside the formal curriculum.
- The work of skilled, well trained and valued teaching assistants supports the curriculum well.
- Higher attaining students at post 16 are very well prepared for life after school through well targeted work experience and enterprise activities.
- Time is not well used during the school day in relation to the length of some lessons and there is also inconsistency in the amount of time allocated to some subjects, for example, mathematics.
- Higher attaining students at post 16 do not always have access to accreditation which sufficiently values all their achievements.

**Commentary**

13 The school offers pupils a wide range of opportunities in PSHE both in lessons and throughout the school day. An example is the Global Awareness afternoons which bring the whole school together to look at a specific area such as Sri Lanka or Blackpool. During the Blackpool afternoon all pupils were fully involved in a range of high quality activities which developed their community spirit as well as allowing them to support the work of each other and share in each others success. Not only did they socialise together well but learned different aspects of seaside life which supported their achievements in geography. The extensive work on the Lancashire Healthy Schools project has also given all pupils the chance to develop their learning in a range of topics, for example, drugs awareness, safety and healthy eating, and has given the opportunity for progress to be valued alongside that of other schools.

14 Pupils relish the opportunities to learn outside the formal curriculum. The Post 16 Youth Club provides higher attaining students with opportunities to follow their own and each others leisure interests, such as model making, to a high standard. A wide range of other opportunities such as weekly walks with the Oswaldtwistle rambles, visits from local theatre companies and special whole school celebrations such as an Eid Party also augment the curriculum very effectively.

15 The teaching assistants are very well trained, skilled and have very high morale as a result of their valued place in the school. This impacts very positively on the range of opportunities available for pupils. The accommodation of the school is well maintained and cared for and provides some good specialist facilities such as the gym, ICT suite and food technology room. The grounds are also a very good resource for pupils. However many classrooms are cluttered as a result of the lack of storage space and this reduces the effectiveness of the accommodation overall.

16 Higher attaining Post 16 pupils benefit from well chosen and supervised opportunities for work experience. These include work in a hairdressers, Christian Bookshop, Nursery and Care Home. Students travel independently to some of these placements and are aware of the appropriate clothing and safety procedures in their work place. They feel they have a choice of where to work and that their work is recognised by the providers. Some have moved onto full-time work in these placements. Within school a mini-enterprise has been provided making a range of greetings cards, keeps higher attaining students busy and many of these products are bought and sold commercially by local shops such is the high quality of their work.

17 The curriculum has some restrictions because of the use of time within the school day. Some lessons are timetabled to last 1.5 hours and this leads to a reduction in pace and the lack of engagement of pupils. Also the time allocated for some subjects of the curriculum is inconsistent in some classes. For example the amount of time spent on mathematics for some post 16 students reduces their curriculum entitlement. There is also an insufficient amount of time currently allocated to citizenship and the music scheme of work, which is in its infancy, gives pupils of all ages a very similar curriculum and so opportunities are missed to match different levels of work to different age groups.

18 The curriculum for post 16 students is accredited via ALL (Accreditation for Life and Learning) and for higher attaining students it is through the National Skills Profile. Whilst well chosen accreditation is in place for students, the same accreditation offered to the higher attaining students at post 16 does not allow this group the opportunity to have their very good achievements recognised. For example work in English and mathematics was seen which was well above that required to complete the National Skills Profile.

## **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are excellent. The provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent.
- Pupils and students have very good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- Pupils and students have very good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- Whilst pupils' and students' views are highly valued, there is no formal process for gathering their views on a regular basis.

### **Commentary**

19 The school provides an extremely high standard of care. The headteacher provides excellent leadership in this aspect, and is fully supported by dedicated staff who are totally committed to the welfare of the pupils and students in their charge. All members of staff have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral arrangements, and the procedures for first aid and medical support are excellent. Relationships between all staff and pupils and students are very positive and parents feel that staff work very hard in supporting pupils and know their difficulties well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are very well supported by the part-time bi-lingual assistant who has strong home school links with parents and their families and attends reviews on a regular basis when required.

20 Child protection arrangements are securely in place, well known and fully understood by all members of staff. The headteacher and the governing body take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously. All the required checks and inspections, including very thorough risk assessments are regularly carried out and properly recorded. There is consistent safe practice in all activities undertaken by the school.

21 The school makes excellent use of its own support staff and external support agencies. Teaching assistants provide excellent support to teachers and pupils. All staff know the children extremely well and support is directed to each pupil based on thorough assessment and monitoring of each individual's needs. This has a particularly positive impact on the pupils' personal development. There is strong emphasis on encouraging pupils and students to use every available method of communication so that they are able to participate in learning and express their wishes and choices. There is no formal forum such as a school council for them to discuss school life. However, all staff do listen carefully and interact with pupils and students very carefully and value their views. Parents and pupils are given very good opportunities to learn about the school prior to admission through visits to meet staff and to discuss any concerns they may have. Visits are also made to pupils' homes and very good liaison is maintained via the home/school diaries and the bi-lingual assistant when appropriate. Parents were very appreciative of the time taken to introduce their children to the school before they actually started which they believed made them feel more secure.

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



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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Information given to parents about the school and about pupils' and students' standards and progress is very good.
- Parents feel very supported by the school and procedures to deal with any concerns and complaints are very good.
- Links with other schools and the contribution to wider partnerships are very good.

### **Commentary**

22 Parents indicate that they are very pleased with what the school provides and have every confidence in the ability of the school to meet all the needs of their children. Home school diaries provide a very good means of communication, and their use indicates good support from parents for their children's progress at school and at home. The annual review of statements and an annual report plus a copy of their child's individual education plan give parents good information about how well their child is doing. The school's bi-lingual assistant visits parents at home and also accompanies them to reviews if necessary. Regular newsletters, with photographs, gives parents information about events and activities their child has been involved in, which is important when some are unable to give a verbal account. Parents are appreciative of the help and support given to their children. Because of the good and open relationships parents have with school staff they feel that any complaints are dealt with efficiently and that the school has appropriate procedures in place to do so.

23 The school makes very good use of the local and wider community to support the curriculum and pupils' personal development. Pupils and students enjoy a wide range of visits, including a residential experience for the older students, and visits and visitors are used well to enhance the curriculum. The school is held in very high regard by the community agencies with which it works.

24 Links with other schools and colleges are very good. Local schools are used very effectively to foster integration. The school jointly runs an after-school care club with a local primary school. The weekly sessions at another special school's hydrotherapy pool are particularly beneficial to pupils with physical disabilities. Very productive links with colleges help post 16 transition with a wide range of work experience placements and further education courses. These links have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and academic progress, and ensure smooth transition to life after school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The governance of the school is good. The leadership of the headteacher and of other key staff is good. The school is managed effectively.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteachers' leadership is effective and he is supported well by other key staff and the governors.
- Some aspects of the management of the post 16 provision are underdeveloped.

- The school's commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is very good.
- Staff performance management and its effectiveness in bringing about improvement are very good.
- The school's contribution to initial teacher training is very good and the continuing professional development of the staff is very good.

## Commentary

25 The headteacher is a good leader and invigorates the school. He has a clear vision of what is needed to take the school forward, matched with the ability and enthusiasm to do so. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. One of the key strengths of his good leadership lies in his ability to communicate well, and through this, he has the total confidence of all staff and governors. They are very supportive of him.

26 Procedures for monitoring performance data, reviewing patterns and taking appropriate action are good. However, this is less well developed in the post 16 area of the school because of less developed management systems. The roles and responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators have been clarified and developed since the last inspection and are now good. Each co-ordinator has a clear and detailed curriculum area annual plan, which has been costed, and targets for the following year set. Co-ordinators are allocated the time to check the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school but this is not consistently applied throughout the whole of the post 16 provision and areas for improvement are not identified.

27 Governors have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There is a good mix of experience and "new blood" on the governing body. Governors attend appropriate training and this keeps them up to date with any new initiatives. The governing body fully ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties. All the appropriate committees are in place and the school's performance is closely monitored. For example, governors with allocated curriculum responsibilities have close links with subject co-ordinators. The governors are proud of the strengths of their school.

28 The management of the school is good overall but there are shortcomings in the co-ordination of practices and approaches used in the three post 16 classes and in the accreditation methods used for the highest attaining students. Day-to-day procedures ensure that the school functions smoothly and without undue burdens on teaching staff. Administrative and office systems are securely in place and are efficient and effective. There is a strategic direction and development of the school set out in the school improvement plan, which is regularly reviewed and evaluated. Financial management is good. The school has a very detailed budget plan. The budget is administered very well and there is good budgetary control. The governors and headteacher have a good understanding of the principles of best value and ensure that these are applied to management and use of resources.

29 Teachers and teaching assistants have regular access to a very good range of professional development opportunities and performance management procedures are well established so that personal and whole school developments are appropriately managed. All staff are kept up to date in curriculum and welfare developments which results in good quality education and excellent care. The school encourages and supports teaching assistants extremely well in their training to become teachers.

30 The commitment and hard work of the staff is an aid to raising achievement and while the school is in agreement with the forthcoming local education authority reorganisation due to start in August 2005, it has a limiting effect on any long term developments.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	708878
Total expenditure	733361
Expenditure per pupil	17054

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous Year	129184
Balance carried forward to the next	104701

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Good team work between skilled staff who usually know the children well helps ensure they achieve well.
- Low numbers of children and shared teaching areas means there is no specific Foundation Stage curriculum but children have good access to the six areas of learning.

#### Commentary

31 Teaching for the three Foundation Stage children is good as it is based on clear short and medium term plans and staff have high expectations that children will always do their best. Activities chosen are engaging and artefacts are especially well used. For example, a religious education lesson about the things God has made in the world, and a literacy lesson when an extensive array of masks puppets and models of different animals were used. The use of magnifying glasses also enables children to develop their knowledge of seeds in an interesting way. The teacher has a very positive emphasis on helping children learn about choice by giving them extensive and relevant opportunities to choose in formal and informal situations. Any difficult or distressed behaviour is dealt with sensitively and consistently, ensuring that children's concentration is restored making optimum use of time.

32 There is a very good staff to child ratio who are all skilled at gaining children's attention and keeping up their levels of concentration. They all know the children well and challenge them to do their best as well as ensuring that their personal care needs are efficiently and sensitively met. The teacher ensures that all staff know what their role is and so sessions are well organised and productive.

33 Low numbers in particular age groups mean that the reception children are taught together with pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 and both groups follow a similar curriculum but tasks match individual needs. This provides a good framework for activities to develop mathematical awareness and communication, language and literacy but there is less time for structured and imaginative play to help children develop independently some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world and creativity. Different, less formal and directed opportunities in one room risk distracting older children in the group at times. However work is well matched to individual needs which enables children to achieve well overall.

34 Children achieve well in their **personal, social and emotional development**. They come into the classroom happily and settle quickly to well known routines. They take a keen interest in what is going on around them and willingly join in with group activities. Although their play is still mainly solitary or parallel they respond to adults attempts to make them more aware of others around them. They are developing increased independence at lunchtime and snack time and are encouraged to make choices for drinks and food.

35 In **communication, language and literacy** children achieve well. They are able to communicate their wants through a variety of methods including single words. Staff continually encourage the development of speech. In another lesson the children responded well to a well

chosen non-fiction book on animals relishing the chance to wear a lion mask and join in the story. They are keen to look at the pictures in books and follow the story.

36 Children achieve well in their **mathematical development**. They join in the numerous opportunities to count that are provided across the curriculum, for example, the number of children in the class but have not yet developed an understanding of the concept of number. They join in colour matching and shape sorting activities with good attention. One child could fit one large brick on top of another and did this with great concentration beaming with pleasure at his achievement.

37 Children achieve well in their **knowledge and understanding of the world** joining in sessions with the 6 and 7 year olds. They learn about plants and animals being particularly interested in looking through a microscope at a snail moving in and out of its shell. They would however benefit from opportunities to learn about the world through their own less formal exploration.

38 The classroom has a good outdoor play area with a good range of cars and bikes and this enables children to achieve well in **physical development** as does the range of opportunities such as cutting, sticking and painting which develop their fine motor skills.

39 In **creative skills** pupils achieve well, for example, in a lesson creating pictures in the style of Van Gogh. They participate willingly and show definite preferences for the colour and texture of paper they wish to use. They are happy to allow an adult to guide and support them when necessary.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 AND 4**

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

40 **French** is taught to two pupils in Years 7 and 8 once a week. Other pupils in Years 7-9 are appropriately disapplied via their statement of special educational need. The curriculum focuses on basic greetings, colours, numbers, food and everyday phrases. No lessons were seen during the inspection so no firm judgements could be made about the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' achievements.

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**

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

- There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching English and in pupils' and students' achievements since the last inspection as a result of very good leadership and good management.
- Achievement is good in reading and writing across the school.
- There is a lack of consistency in using PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Schedule) for a small group of pupils with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder).
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to help pupils and students develop their understanding of literature.
- The pace and time management of some lessons leads to pupils' drop in concentration and consequent loss of interest.

#### **Commentary**

41 Pupils and students of all abilities and additional needs achieve well. This is in line with the quality of teaching and is a significant improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory overall. This is largely due to the subject leader who has worked hard to secure this improvement. Staff have all been trained to structure lessons to follow the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy, however, some lessons are over long and slow in pace which results in teaching and learning not being as good as it should be. The subject leader has been monitoring all lessons and recognises the need to reorganise the timings of the lessons. There is accreditation at post 16 in the form of ALL (Achievement in Life and Learning) for the low attaining students and NSP (National Skills Profile) for the high attaining students. This accreditation benefits the low attaining students greatly, but the accreditation for the high attaining students is not challenging enough for them and they are capable of achieving at a higher level.

42 Achievement in communication, speaking and listening is good throughout the school. In the good and very good lessons communication aids such as PECS and Makaton signing are used very well to enable pupils and students to take a full and active part in discussions and for making choices. Pupils and students with the most complex learning difficulties achieve very well in using their individual communication skills and making their views known. When needed, signing is used consistently by all students, pupils and staff, for example, during a literacy session for Year 1 and 2 pupils the class said and signed the word raining and the days of the week. However, there is a lack of consistency in the use of PECs in some lessons. It is planned to address this later this year when the speech and language therapist has regular

two day input into all classes and support and training can be given to staff. The high attaining post 16 students can hold very polite and interesting conversations with visitors to the school. During a post 16 literacy session on poetry the high attaining students discussed ideas for similes, metaphors, rhyming couplets and quatrains.

43 When pupils arrive in the school there is a clear emphasis on reading. During a literacy session in the computer room pupils in Years 1 and 2 were encouraged to follow the story of 'Treasure' and 'Plant Wobble' using the large projector screen while following the story in their individual books. Objects of reference were used to illustrate the story and with support pupils matched initial letters and words. As pupils move up the school ICT plays a large part in helping them understand a story; for example, during a session based on 'The pirates of the Caribbean' pupils with the most complex learning difficulties in Years 10 and 11, with support, matched pictures of animals and insects found in the jungle with pictures displayed on the computer screen. The high attaining students in post 16 are very confident readers and took great pleasure in reading 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde,' in addition, they were able to discuss the merits of the story afterwards.

44 Progress in writing described at the last inspection as satisfactory is now good. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' motor skills needed for writing. When they arrive in the school younger pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) have regular opportunities to practise handwriting skills using pencils or felt pens and make good progress in learning to hold a pencil and make marks on paper. As pupils move up the school, a few high attaining pupils can form letters and under write simple sentences. The high attaining students at post 16 are very prolific writers and the poetry and creative writing that they have produced is a joy to read; for example, one student wrote very poignantly about his body image, whilst another student frustrated with his computer wrote 'Computers are a pest, even when I try my best logging on the Internet is a very risky test.'

45 Teaching and learning depends very much on the pace of lessons, when teaching is good or better teamwork is impressive and teaching assistants are fully briefed and involved. They show good understanding of pupils' and students' needs and make a significant contribution to the success of lessons. When clear planning, pace, challenge, enthusiasm and good assessment are there, pupils and students respond with interest and attention. Lessons when planning does not provide a clear structure, activities go on for too long, time is wasted and pupils lose interest and they do not achieve as well as they might. The subject contributes well to the development of spiritual, moral, cultural and social education in the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

46 Pupils and students are encouraged to listen carefully, join in discussions, make choices, read and complete a written record in most lessons. However, teachers are not always consistent in their demand for the clearest communication that the pupil or student can achieve. This is due to a lack of consistency in some groups of the communication aids such as the use of PECS and makaton signing for the lower attaining pupils or students. On the other hand the higher attaining post 16 students use their literacy skills very well during lessons, writing up recipes, organising lunch parties for visitors and on work experience. In addition, during a religious education lesson, post 16 students with the most complex learning difficulties were encouraged to use the Big Mack to state their preferences for the Hindu gods.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good overall with some very good achievement in some groups where teaching is rigorous and well organised.
- Skilled and well trained teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Detailed whole school monitoring of mathematics and the use of PIVAT's assessments for target setting make a constructive contribution to pupils learning.
- In some lessons the very slow pace reduces pupils' attention and motivation and so restricts their opportunities.
- The time allocated for mathematics is inconsistent across the school and this limits some pupil's opportunities for mathematical achievement.
- Higher achieving students do not have access to accreditation that recognises their achievements.



## **Commentary**

47 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop their knowledge of number in a session which involves singing a range of number songs and rhymes such as “one step, two step” and “one fish, two fish”. They are enthusiastic and are very keen to join in with the staff who provide appropriate support and challenge. In Years 4 to 6 pupils are able to use a simple Venn diagram to sort shapes into those which can be rolled or those which slide down a slope, although they have difficulty understanding the idea that there are some shapes which can do both. One more able pupil was observed using well chosen software to increase his knowledge of shapes by labelling and sorting for hexagons and circles. He was so motivated by this that he worked independently for five minutes. Lower attaining pupils respond very well to a very good range of individual learning opportunities based on money. One is able to independently and purposefully press a switch to play “Money, money, money” by Abba whilst another responds well to smelling money and listening to the chink of coins as an object of reference. This is a result of well organised and skilled teamwork by classroom staff who constantly assess pupils’ progress and attention and ensure high levels of activity. Well chosen resources are a significant element in pupils’ and students’ good achievement and are a result of the good planning by teachers. Students with the most complex learning difficulties were able to identify their favourite shape from a choice of objects in a feely bag and spontaneously explored the shapes in the sand. However the very slow pace of the lesson meant that whilst all were included, some pupils waited too long for their turn and lost interest. Higher attaining students at post 16 respond well to opportunities to use mathematical skills in real situations such as making greetings cards and keeping a check on the finances of their enterprise project. They are also able to use a local bank to deposit the money the enterprise has raised.

48 Staff in all mathematics lessons know their pupils well and teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils learning. They do this by noticing and responding quickly to known, almost unnoticeable signals of recognition or pleasure from pupils and helping to ensure that occasional problem behaviour is dealt with firmly and carefully. Teaching overall is good and as a result pupils and students learn well. In one very good lesson, the team work was especially commendable because of the way the teacher ensured the large number of adults knew exactly what their role was and supported them in carrying it out. All staff contribute well to the recording of pupils’ responses at the end of the lesson.

49 The system of detailed whole school monitoring of mathematics has ensured that the subject leader has a great deal of information about the subject across the school. The whole school recording and analysis of PIVATS data also helps set appropriate targets for groups and individuals. Higher attaining students at post 16 whilst achieving well in practical mathematics do not have access to appropriate accreditation which would give them credit for their achievements. The management skills of the subject leader are as yet underdeveloped across the whole spectrum of the learning needs of the pupils and students in the school.

50 Although the headteacher has agreed with staff the guidelines for teaching time in mathematics across the school these are not always followed closely enough. This means that pupils in different classes have less time than others in mathematics and this restricts their learning opportunities. For example in post 16, some students do not have an identified mathematics session and students with the most complex learning difficulties have no opportunity for accreditation in mathematics. However, they do have an opportunity to learn practical mathematical facts such as days of the week during daily welcome sessions and have some cross curricular opportunities, for example, in a module on pet care.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

51 There are many opportunities during the school day when mathematics is used quite spontaneously across subjects of the curriculum but they are not planned for. Many instances of counting were observed, for instance, during the Global Awareness afternoon, coconuts on the coconut shy were counted and recognition of shapes are reinforced when printing patterns in art and design. There are regular opportunities to count bean-bags and goals scored in physical education and students frequently weigh and measure ingredients in home management and when involved in their mini-enterprise activities. Mathematical language, such as 'bigger' and 'smaller', is reinforced in many activities.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good use of resources maintains pupils' and students' interest and supports inclusion during lessons.
- Lessons are well planned.
- The curriculum is well organised.

### **Commentary**

52 In all science lessons teachers use a wide range of relevant resources which motivate pupils and make learning interesting. For example, resources that pupils and students can smell, feel or hear are used to support learning which means that they are all included in activities. The lessons are well planned and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching because of their very good relationship and understanding of pupils' specific needs. Teaching and learning overall are good and consequently pupils and students achieve well. The effectiveness of using sensory stimuli was observed in an excellent lesson with a class of pupils with the most complex learning needs about changing materials using wax. Health and safety standards were very good and pupils were able to touch warm and cold wax. When wax was dripped on to paper pupils chose by pointing or touching a colour they wanted and their facial expressions and body gestures were a joy to see as their pictures emerged. Older pupils and students with the most complex learning needs show by facial expression and body language what they think, for example, when smelling plants, showing quite clearly which ones they liked and or disliked by pushing the teaching assistants' hand away. This was part of the "Communication Aromas" module in which they had already made choices about kitchen, cooking and cleaning aromas.

53 The curriculum includes topics that interest pupils and students and which also mean that the National Curriculum is well covered. There is a good emphasis on investigations and the practical tasks maintain their interest. Because of the practical opportunities they learn well and remember what they have learned. Some of the youngest pupils could name the basic parts of plants they had previously planted. They looked at snails moving over leaves and were quite engrossed by this. Their curiosity was aroused and they were reluctant to pass them on for others to investigate. There are good cross-curricular links, such as, investigating living things at the seaside linked to the geography and the history topic of holidays and the seaside. Good use in this lesson was made of resources borrowed from a local museum so that pupils could see what starfish, scallops and a range of shells looked like. Currently the subject is being led and managed by the headteacher due to the long term absence of the subject leader

but leadership and management continue to be good and he has maintained the good achievement made by pupils and students.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good subject leadership has had a strong influence on driving forward improvements.
- Teaching is very good in the classes for pupils who have the most complex learning difficulties and this enables them to achieve very well.
- Post 16 high attaining students achieve well with their 'Internet Research.'
- Accommodation and resources are very good.

### **Commentary**

54 Since the last inspection pupils' and students' achievement in ICT and the quality of teaching and learning have improved considerably because of the good leadership and management.

55 The overall quality of teaching is good and this enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers in the classes for pupils and students with the most complex learning difficulties make very effective arrangements for them to benefit from using specialised equipment. For instance a post 16 student succeeded in operating a special switch to play familiar Islamic music. In the remainder of the school pupils with similar needs receive good opportunities to utilise the very good resources. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties in Years 10 and 11 achieve well, for example, when persevering to operate switches to hear the story of 'The Pirates of the Caribbean' during a literacy session. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listened to a story about 'Treasure' relayed onto a white screen by a projector, and were able to identify characters and objects very quickly because it brought the story alive to them. The frequent use of the Big Mack is very useful for pupils to use to say 'Hello' when the register is called twice a day.

56 Pupils and students throughout the school are keen to learn and make good progress in most lessons. This is because teachers plan well to match the tasks to their needs and this ensures that they succeed well. Pupils in Years 4 to 7 enjoyed a pretend trip to the seaside, they went into the sensory room which was adapted to simulate the seaside: fun fair music, 'pretend sun' and general seaside sounds were activated by the pupils using a variety of switches. Post 16 students use the 'Dazzle' programme to copy an example from a modern artist in an art and design lesson. High attaining post 16 students regularly do Internet research, which helps them find out about events and facts on the Internet.

57 The subject leader has taken effective action to move the subject forward and has raised pupils' achievement well since the previous inspection. This has been achieved through improvements to equipment and the development of staff skills. She has ensured that all staff have received training and this is ongoing with more training planned for the Autumn term. This helps keep staff up to date with the rapid development of new ideas and engenders their enthusiasm for the further anticipated improvements. An efficient method of recording pupils' and students' progress is in place. Resources are very good and are used well by staff. In the classroom where the equipment has been enhanced with a permanent interactive large

screen, pupils have a greater opportunity to participate in lessons and consequently make very good progress. There are plans to extend this equipment to more classes to raise standards further.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

58 In most subjects, teachers ensure that lessons often provide opportunities for pupils and students to use computers and devices such as the Big Mack to support their learning. For instance high attaining post 16 students type their news using a concept keyboard whilst another student with the most complex learning difficulties traced his name with the use of a mouse. Pupils and students use ICT extensively in art and design both to produce interesting patterns for their work and to demonstrate technique. The Internet is used for high attaining students, for instance to search for information on Helen of Troy and 'the Solar System,' and they have compiled fact files about a wide variety of subjects. The Internet is used well to research the work of artists such as Klimpt, Klee and Dali.

### **HUMANITIES**

59 Two lessons were seen in geography. History was not taught during the week of the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching and learning or pupils' achievement.

60 There is clear evidence from the teachers' detailed planning that work in **geography** is varied and interesting and pupils study geography up to the end of Year 11. A good example was observed in a lesson for mainly non-communicative pupils in Years 4 to 10 and made very relevant by recreating a trip to Heysham beach using a polystyrene model of the northwest coastline. A coach journey was also recreated showing pupils large photographs of the countryside that they would pass through helping them appreciate the differences between rural and urban areas. This all culminated in a seaside experience in the light room when they could hear seaside music and feel the sand in their toes. One autistic Year 4 pupil could identify and describe the seaside features of rock pools, crabs and cliffs. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and still in keeping with the theme of holidays, pupils recounted a recent trip to Lytham St. Annes. They matched pictures of donkeys, seashells and windmills, listened to Greek and English holiday music, and identified differences between a Greek beach holiday and a typical English seaside holiday.

61 The subject leader is extremely enthusiastic and imaginative in planning learning opportunities for pupils that match their needs well. The subject contributes very well to pupils' cultural, spiritual and social development.

62 Colourful displays and scrutiny of pupils' **history** work throughout the school show that they have developed skills and knowledge systematically as they have moved up through the school. In a display of the Tudors, pupils in Year 4 have printed and stencilled Tudor tiles matching the actual tiles in Hampton Court. By the use of such exercises, pupils' awareness of the past and other peoples' lives is developed effectively, and this makes a very positive contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **very good**

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A very large collection of religious artefacts which relate to all the main world religions supports pupils' achievements very well.
- Teachers make very good use of these resources to support learning.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Religious education is very effectively led and managed.

## **Commentary**

63 Religious education has developed well since the last inspection and this is due to the hard work of the subject leader. After the last inspection she applied for funding to improve the subject from the Farmington Institute of Religious Studies and was successful. These funds have been used extremely well to build up resources, create an imaginative sensory scheme of work linked into the local Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. Visits and visitors from different religious faiths and places of worship come into school, for example, last year a Muslim teacher talked to the pupils and students about being 'a Muslim living in England.' There are close links with the local evangelical church in Oswaldtwistle and a team of young people from the church visit the school regularly to perform themed religious plays and assemblies.

64 Teaching is very good overall because teachers focus on the tangible artefacts, ceremonies and traditions of world faiths and work is well matched to pupils' special educational needs. Teachers create many stimulating opportunities for pupils to be practically involved in lessons and special events, through role play, drama, music, art and design and the stimulation of their senses. Teachers match activities well to pupils' learning needs. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 with the most complex learning difficulties used their senses to experience the importance of Hinduism by handling a Hindu dress, home shrines, and statues of the Gods such as Ganesh, the elephant God. During an excellent Year 10 lesson these pupils were learning the differences and similarities between the Christian and Muslim festivals of Christmas and Eid. They worked as a team, with support, to cut out and stick sequins, glitter and greeting cards and make a very colourful collage while listening to appropriate music celebrating both Christmas and Eid.

65 In their religious education lessons pupils respond very well to the calming moods that teachers create with music, light effects, candles and scents. Pupils and students learn to share, take turns and work together, for public performances of the Christmas story, for instance. High attaining post 16 students make cards to celebrate various festivals through the year such as Christmas, Easter and Valentines Day as part of their mini enterprise. Pupils and students learn about the traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. They wear authentic costumes, handle the artefacts, eat the food and listen to the music associated with these faiths. The subject contributes very strongly to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils and students in the school.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

66 Only one lesson of design and technology was seen so it is not possible to make secure judgements about provision or the achievements of pupils. However planning was reviewed and pupils' work and records were scrutinized.

67 In the **design and technology** lesson observed pupils were able to use a range of appropriate switches to work equipment such as blenders and were able to make a purposeful choice of umbrellas to put in the cocktails they had made. Teaching was very good as a result of enthusiastic, well organised and knowledgeable staff who ensured high levels of engagement of pupils with the most complex learning difficulties. Staff were constantly aware of health and safety routines in relation to hygiene and the use of equipment but did not let this restrict pupils' access to learning. There was a suitable pace to the lesson which gave pupils time to respond individually to activities but ensured that their attention and concentration was maintained. An analysis of work showed that higher attaining pupils at post 16 have opportunities in lessons and outside the formal curriculum to develop design and technology as a leisure interest through the use of model making and kits for items such as kites and gliders. Their next target is to build a model radio. Long term plans are in place for the subject which cover the content of the National Curriculum.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

68 Insufficient lessons were observed in music to enable secure judgements about teaching and learning or pupils' achievements to be made, however planning and a lesson in a local mainstream school, which a few young pupils visit for music, was observed.

69 The school employs an outside consultant to help develop the teaching and curriculum in **music**. This work is in its early stages and has already provided benefits in relation to the breadth of the curriculum offered to pupils and expectations of their work. Younger pupils visit local mainstream schools for music lessons. The pupils relish these lessons and are confident in the mainstream environment. One pupil repeated the theme to "Sun Arise" clearly and with accurate pitch in front of the mainstream class. The teacher had planned opportunities for him to be able to join in the lesson and he was very keen to do this. The school has a wide range of high quality musical instruments. These are well cared for and stored so they are accessible by the whole school. These include very large instruments, which are used with enthusiasm by the youngest pupils, and delicate instruments from other cultures. One of the music lessons seen was planned to last at least one hour and whilst there was a range of different activities these were introduced so slowly and with such little enthusiasm that pupils' attention was not engaged. There were also not enough activities allocated for the time available leading to a lack of engagement on the part of the pupils and missed opportunities for learning.

70 The new music scheme of work is under development. While the lesson plans seen were clear and covered the full range of learning, opportunities for performance and composition were based on the same plan with very minor alterations was in place for pupils across the full age range of the school. This leads to a lack of age appropriate content and weak progression in learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

Provision in art and design is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils across the school achieve well.
- The curriculum is varied and well organised.
- Good use is made of visiting specialists and visits to art galleries and museums.
- Art and design is often well linked with other subjects.

### **Commentary**

71 The good achievement results from thoughtful teaching which is well planned, and a range of interesting activities and resources which motivate pupils. All staff are very good at helping and supporting pupils, either individually or in pairs, to use paint, crayons or print. Young pupils in Years 1 and 2 made a large joint display representing Van Gogh's "Sunflowers". Showing a definite preference for colour and texture of paper, they painted, cut and glued before choosing where to place their sunflower. They were very pleased with the overall effect and the finished picture brightened their room considerably. Older pupils have worked in pastels to produce seascapes and others have made leaf prints. Examples of work around the school and in folders demonstrates the good achievement of pupils and the range of techniques they learn.

72 Files of pupils' work show the variety of techniques and styles offered to pupils. Colour and texture play a big part in the curriculum so that all pupils and students can be included and get the most out of the activities. Post 16 students have their work accredited through a "Leisure Art" module and have worked with clay and salt dough. Across the school pupils have opportunities to consider and work in the style of such artists as L S Lowry, Jackson Pollock and Anthony Goldsworthy. Some post 16 students make good use of a link with a local further education college for art and design and the school's youth club occasionally offers art and craft as an option. Art and design makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

73 A visiting artist worked with older pupils and students to make a beautiful, very effective colourful display of four large pictures in the style of Mark Rothko by layering one or more colours on top of transparent paper. On another occasion a potter worked with pupils to make garden ornaments. Visits to local art galleries and museums give pupils ideas when they return to school and they have reproduced paintings and prints inspired by looking at work by American Indians and in making Hindu masks.

74 In a science lesson pupils used a model of the seaside they had made and painted using "Modroc" for their topic about different shore life and the seaside, which also linked with geography. Another group of pupils with the most complex learning difficulties were helped to paint shells using increasingly dark colours to reinforce their literacy topic, "Pirates of the Caribbean". A multi-sensory approach gives them a very good awareness of the sea and shells as they look at and feel different shaped shells and a sea spray atomiser gives them a scent of the sea. Post 16 students used "Dazzle", an art package, to improve their ICT skills and also to learn about the work of Auguste Herbin. Some of them copied his work "Rain", successfully copying shapes and colours very well.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **very good**

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students are offered a wide range of activities both in and out of school.
- Specialist teaching enables pupils and students to achieve very well.
- The curriculum is very good and the subject is very well led and managed.



## Commentary

75 The enthusiasm and commitment of subject leader results in a very good curriculum which is considerably enhanced by a very wide range of activities and participation in local and regional events. He has organised many of these and is highly regarded in the area because of his expertise and determination that all pupils and students should be included. Pupils and students often compete with mainstream schools as well as similar schools, such as the Lancashire Youth Games which includes boccia, athletics and swimming. Recently post 16 students took part in a ten pin bowling competition alongside mainstream pupils and came away with the second prize. Inter schools cross country run and sports days, a wheelchair day of dance and residential visits in the Lake District complement school sports days, including trampolining, cricket and football. The adventure week in the Lake District gives students the opportunity to attempt activities such as caving and rambling and it also significantly supports their personal and social skills.

76 The subject leader uses his expertise and knowledge and understanding of the needs and abilities of the pupils and students to enable them to achieve as well as they can. They show great enjoyment and have fun as they are learning and developing skills for games such as basketball and football by practicing their aiming and throwing skills. Younger pupils delight in knocking down skittles and taking part in shuttle runs against each other. Patience along with good coaching skills means that they make very good progress during the lesson. The MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) programme supports pupils' physical development well and they make good progress towards their individual targets. Older pupils and students understand the importance of warming up before playing a game and listen very well to instructions and coaching points which they try to put into practice. An example of this was during a cricket lesson when they were learning the difference between throwing and bowling. Lunchtime clubs are popular with pupils and students when they can learn basketball skills and improve their athletic and football skills. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' social and moral understanding as they take turns and develop an understanding of fair play and rules of games.

77 The curriculum is very well organised and gives pupils and students many opportunities to participate in a very wide range of sports. Achievement is celebrated by way of certificates and the use of local sports facilities such as the swimming pool means that students gain some knowledge of them and can continue to use them when they have left school. The school achieved the standard for Physical Activities as part of the Healthy Schools Award.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78 The curriculum is not yet planned to cover the area of **citizenship** fully although there are some cross-curricular opportunities for the consideration of rights and responsibilities, recycling and global awareness. However, the overall programme of study restricts pupils learning in this new area of the curriculum.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **very good**

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong community spirit is very effective in developing pupils' self-confidence and self esteem. Planned whole school opportunities play an important role in this.
- The work for the Healthy Schools Award has enabled pupils' personal, social and health knowledge and skills to develop very well within a challenging context.
- Sex education taught by the school nurse with the support of other specialist staff significantly increases pupils' knowledge in this area.
- Higher attaining post 16 students have very good opportunities to develop their skills in a range of challenging community settings.

## Commentary

79 The school has a strong community ethos of concern for and respect for each other which strongly influences the atmosphere for learning. Higher attaining older pupils were regularly seen supporting less able pupils without being asked to in a sensitive and appropriate way. All staff show respect, awareness of and interest in pupils across the school in all classes. This was particularly seen at the Global Awareness day when pupils were deliberately placed in mixed groups for the afternoon and staff worked positively to ensure the groups worked well and supported each other. This afternoon also demonstrated pupils' pleasure in and recognition of the achievements of others including those less able than themselves.

80 The enthusiastic and hard working co-ordinator has worked tirelessly to achieve the standards of the Lancashire Healthy Schools Award and has succeeded in five areas of the scheme. This has enabled the work of pupils in these areas to be well focused and led to a very positive broadening of the curriculum. This work is excellently recorded through photos and pupils work and provides a very good record for pupils and visitors. The scheme has also enabled the work of pupils at White Ash to be credited with their achievements alongside those from mainstream schools. This has a positive effect on pupils self esteem and sense of achievement.

81 Sex education delivered by the school nurse and headteacher with outside specialist input is very good. It covers a wide range of topics and ensures pupils have the knowledge they need in this important area. The curriculum has a very appropriate focus on feelings, emotions and concern for pupils' safety and that of others. A particular good feature of the curriculum is lessons on breast awareness for young women and testicular health for young men.

82 Higher attaining students at post 16 have very good opportunities to develop their social skills in the community. They have the opportunity to choose a range of work experience settings and some travel to them independently taking responsibility for their punctuality and attendance. They know which clothes they need to wear and why and can discuss which jobs they preferred and why. These students run a successful small enterprise making high quality greetings cards that are sold in local shops. They work together well to make these cards, recognising each others' special skills and abilities. This enterprise also provides them with chances to practise skills that they will need in later life such as budgeting and banking. Students carry the banking out independently and confidently.

83 The youngest pupils learn to share equipment and take turns and to listen to others' contributions in lessons. This is supported by consistently good teaching, which focuses on pupils' social as well as their academic skills. Pupils with difficult behaviour are reminded how their behaviour affects others and are managed well. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are learning to take care of each other and how to behave appropriately in a group. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are learning how to respond to each other and become more aware of the world around them. This is reinforced by the very good one to one relationships pupils with the most complex learning difficulties have with staff who know their personalities and likes and dislikes very well. Post 16 students appropriately have more opportunities to develop their personal, social and health education skills and lower attaining pupils are very motivated by their work on a Pet care module in the ALL accreditation scheme. They are taught to understand why it is important to care for animals and remember basic facts about horses and dogs. Their learning was enhanced when the teacher brings his own two dogs into the classroom later in the day. Higher attaining students are able to work well co-operatively to make a meal for themselves

and visitors. They organise themselves into groups undertaking specific tasks and then work independently to complete them. The teacher and teaching assistant are available to support if needed. Students were observed using their prior knowledge and very good relationships with each other to produce, serve and clear up after a high quality meal.

## POST 16

Provision in post 16 is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good opportunities for students with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties to follow externally accredited courses.
- There is no clear co-ordination of the three post 16 groups, and they function very much as three separate classes.
- The students' college links and work experience are very good.
- Good relationships exist between staff. Students, receive good support and encouragement to improve their self esteem.

### Commentary

84 Students with the most complex learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties achieve a wide range of certification in ALL including modules in communication, cookery, visual stimulations, aromas, mathematics and ICT. This aspect of the post 16 provision is good because staff have a clear understanding of the students' learning, physical and emotional needs. For their part students have a very positive attitude to school and their views of the school are very favourable.

85 The high attaining students achieve certification in NSP and they achieve really well at this. However, this is not providing them with sufficient challenge in external examination level and the current accreditation does not give the level of work they do produce the credit it deserves. There are three very separate classrooms within post 16 and because the management of the unit is underdeveloped each class teacher works very much independently with separate rules and timetables. The management of the post 16 provision has insufficient input into the overall organisation.

86 The post 16 programme for the high attaining student is very varied and interesting. They have created a mini enterprise business which produces very attractive greeting cards sold in the school and in local shops. The money they earn from this benefits them greatly in being used to fund day outings to events such as scuba diving and enjoying a pub lunch at the end of each term. These students regularly go out on work experience one or two days per week, working for local firms and shops such as Matalan, the local old peoples' home, and the children's' nursery. In addition they attend college taster courses each week, for example, in plastering, tiling and woodwork. However, though these activities prepare them well for an independent life, because they do not travel independently to school more encouragement still needs to be done to ensure that they can travel independently to school, college and work placements.

87 The guidance students receive on the best routes to take on leaving school is good. They continue to have strong links with the Connexions service to prepare for the future and most go onto local further education colleges to access courses very relevant to their needs. In addition, they have the opportunity to gain employment from the many work placements provided. Enrichment of the curriculum for the post 16 students, particularly the high attaining group is very strong, and students are encouraged and supported in their choice of activity. There is a youth club held every week after school. Regular visits to cinemas and the theatre, visits to Blackpool and the Manchester Science Museum are just some of the extra curricular

activities open to all the post 16 students. All these activities help them mature and increase their self-esteem. Relationships across the unit between staff and students are positive and staff know their students very well. The accommodation overall is satisfactory. Some of the space provides well for the development of their social, recreational, independence and home based skills and is multi-purpose, including the kitchen, which is used by all the pupils in the school. However, the classroom for post 16 students with the most complex learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties is very cluttered and movement of wheelchairs is not always easy.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*