

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PARKWOOD HALL SCHOOL**

Swanley

LEA area: The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Unique reference number: 100548

Headteacher: Mrs H Dando

Lead inspector: Mr M G Whitehead

Dates of inspection: 3 - 6 November 2003

Inspection number: 258969

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Residential Special for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties.
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	8 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	70
School address:	Beechenlea Lane Swanley Kent
Postcode:	BR8 8DR
Telephone number:	01322 664441
Fax number:	01322 613163
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Harris
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Parkwood Hall School is a residential special school for pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties. Over the last two years the school has taken an increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, who now make up almost a quarter of the 70 pupils on roll (45 boys and 25 girls, aged 8 to 19). The school is on the outskirts of Swanley, in extensive grounds which provide an idyllic setting. The grounds are very well maintained. The building is carefully looked after and well respected by all staff and pupils. Approximately three-fifths of the pupils are resident and the remainder attend daily. There are 18 pupils from minority ethnic groups, but none speaks English as an additional language. Although the socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils vary considerably, the overall picture is average. There are three classes in the school, known as the 'Pathway' classes that are for pupils who have additional and very specific special needs. In many cases these are autistic spectrum disorders. There are, however, pupils with other specific learning or emotional difficulties. Pupils may move into these classes from other parts of the school if they are experiencing particular difficulties. When, or if, the pupil is then able to return to his or her original group, this is arranged.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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14226	Alison Willatts	Lay inspector	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English Citizenship French
25437	Andrew Redpath	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History
15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Parkwood Hall School is a good school.** The very clear vision and very strong leadership of the headteacher have created within the school a very positive ethos and a secure education based on a very good curriculum. The school has been faced with some difficult staffing problems since the last inspection, but in the last two years, following the appointment of the new headteacher, there has been considerable improvement and many of the difficulties have been resolved. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and it is very successful in meeting the needs of the increasing number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders and more complex needs. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the school is very effective in promoting equality of access for all pupils and ensures that all pupils are included in all activities. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The very good work of the staff results in very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The school provides a curriculum that meets pupils' needs very well.
- Residential provision is good and promotes independence and responsibility.
- There are very strong links and relationships with parents.
- Parents are very happy to approach the school at any time.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, provides very strong leadership.
- Other leaders provide good role models, and promote strong teamwork amongst staff.
- There is a very good range of after school activities, which include sport, music, crafts and outings.
- Monitoring of teaching by senior staff and subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped.
- Pupils' progress is not monitored or assessed closely enough.

Progress since the last inspection has been good. The nature of the special educational needs of the pupils at the school has changed significantly since the last inspection. The school is making good progress in meeting this changing pattern of needs. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed substantially. However, the school improvement plan does not yet link targets to costs sufficiently, and not all subjects have effective development plans.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The following table shows the total number of students who took examinations and the numbers of students who were successful at each level in each subject.

Examination Results Summer 2003				
AEB Junior Jets				
Total No of students	Level	No of students attaining each level		
		Reading Skills	Writing Skills	Listening Skills
7	Foundation Level	1		7
5	Level 1	1	1	3
5	Level 2	3	2	5
8	Level 3	7	1	8
AEB Literacy				
3	Level 1	2 passes		
6	Level 2	3 passes		
6	Level 3	3 passes		
AEB Numeracy				
14	Level 1	14 passes		
14	Level 2	8 passes		
English Speaking Board				
		Very Good	Good	Pass
14	Level 1	1	9	4

Achievement throughout the school is **good**, and all pupils make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are **very good**. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is very good and time-keeping is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of teaching is good overall and there are examples of outstanding teaching across the school in a range of subjects.**

Particularly good teaching was seen in English, mathematics, music and food technology. Teachers showed that they had a very clear understanding of the individual special needs of the pupils and made sure that the questions and challenges that were put to the pupil were appropriate which kept them well motivated and interested in their work. Occasionally the teaching is less inspiring and the pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the demands of the teachers. In these situations the pupils lose concentration and interest.

The school provides a very good curriculum that is carefully matched to the needs and interests of the pupils. There is also a good range of accredited courses for pupils to follow and a wide range of activities that take place outside the school day. Post 16 students benefit greatly from very well organized and managed visits to a nearby leisure centre to follow a 'leisure skills' course. The accommodation is very good and there has been considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection. Refurbishment and improvement has taken place in many parts of the school and the residential provision.

The school is very effective in ensuring that all pupils are considered and their views are acted upon. This is strengthened through the work of the school council, which meets regularly and is successful in representing the views of the pupils. The school provides an overall satisfactory level of care, welfare, health and safety. It also provides good levels of support advice and guidance to all pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is well supported by her deputy headteacher and the senior staff. Management is satisfactory and developing. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher is a further help to move the school forward. The governors are effective and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They work corporately to set the direction of the school for the benefit of staff and pupils. Overall governors are satisfactory in their work and support the headteacher in implementing changes to improve the school.

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

Parents are very pleased with the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and find the school day stimulating and enjoyable. Parents like the way their children gain in independence during their time at the school. Parents also appreciate the ways in which the school meets the very special needs of their children

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- introduce systems for monitoring teaching and sharing good practice across the school;
- create a system of assessment that will enable the progress of pupils to be clearly identified.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Throughout the school pupils and students achieve well.

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

- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good and they all make good progress.
- It is difficult for the school to identify the individual strengths and weaknesses of each pupil, because assessment systems are not yet developed sufficiently to allow this to happen.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils in the Pathway classes achieve particularly well; these pupils have the most complex learning difficulties and special needs. Standards in all subjects are well below national averages, because of the learning difficulties that the pupils and students experience.
2. Pupils and students learn well; they gain from the 24-hour curriculum which has been carefully devised and is well presented by the school. Unfortunately, the school has not developed a suitable assessment system whereby the individual progress of each pupil can be carefully measured. Therefore the school is not in a position to give detailed explanation of the progress being made by each individual or their achievement during each term. Following a pilot project, 'Pathway' classes are to use new assessment procedures.
3. Pupils with complex needs learn well because of the very knowledgeable way in which the teachers work with them. Teachers are highly skilled in working with pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and severe learning difficulties; consequently the work is carefully matched to the wide range of ability within each class group. The curriculum is organised very well to meet pupils' additional needs with particular emphasis on speaking and listening skills.
4. Teachers have a good understanding of the progress of each individual pupil, but this information is not recorded systematically. The data is not being collected and presented in such a manner as to give information about whole school trends or any patterns that may be evident amongst different groups of pupils. For example, it is not possible to compare the attainment and progress of the boys with that of the girls, nor is it possible to compare the progress that is made by pupils of different age groups within the school. The school is aware of this shortcoming, and has definite plans to address this issue in the very near future. This is an area of high priority in the school improvement plan.
5. The examination results for this year show clearly that pupils and students are successful in their studies. The school is gradually increasing the opportunities for accredited courses; these are focused on the needs of the majority. However, the school needs to match the wider range of ability shown by the pupils. There is the possibility that some of the older and most able students could be following courses leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).
6. The increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders has a significant impact on the school and the overall attainment of the pupils. In the case of Parkwood Hall, the attainment levels of the pupils on entry to the school are very much lower than the attainment levels of pupils in mainstream schools. However all pupils achieve well and there is no significant variation between boys and girls or any groups within the school whatever their ages.



## Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9

Standards in:	
English	Pupils were assessed by the teacher only
mathematics	7 pupils were assessed by the teacher only; 1 pupil gained level 2, 1 pupil gained level 3 and 1 pupil gained level 4.
science	6 pupils were assessed by the teacher only; 2 failed to register a level and 2 gained level 3.

*There were 10 pupils in the year group.*

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

Attitudes and values are very good throughout the school.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Attendance figures for the last academic year are very good.
- There is a very effective school council.
- Pupils' social and moral attitudes are good.

### Commentary

7. Attendance exceeds 96 per cent of available sessions, which is above the national average. Pupils are keen to attend and most of them look forward to coming to school. The school day starts promptly and there is very little loss of time between lessons despite the fact that no bell is rung between sessions, as unexpected noise can upset some of the pupils. The school has effective procedures for maintaining good attendance. The systems for registration have improved since the last inspection.
8. Pupils are happy and well behaved in and around school and enjoy their lessons, especially art and music. The majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire acknowledge that the school promotes good attendance and are pleased with the expectations of good behaviour in the school. Teaching and support staff encourage good behaviour through their own good example. Pupils relate well with one another and with the staff. The residential pupils have a warm and informal relationship with the care staff. During the inspection residential pupils had been to a local fireworks display and had enjoyed this very much. When they came back to school they were tired but happy and had had a lovely time. They settled quickly to the normal evening routine. Pupils can always be involved in a variety of activities after school, which are run by the care and teaching staff. Care staff are careful to ensure that residential pupils are calm and quiet at bedtime. Pupils greet visitors courteously and are happy to talk about their school life.
9. Incidents of bullying are swiftly and effectively dealt with when they arise. An effective anti-bullying policy is in place and parents are happy with the way staff cope with any potential or actual bullying. Overt racism is not seen as a problem; any incidents are dealt with in a calm manner. Pupils can understand that others may make remarks, which may be seen to be racist, without fully understanding their implications.
10. The school council and house meetings are held regularly. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to voice their opinions about school life at these meetings and make positive suggestions for improvements. For instance the school council enabled pupil representatives to discuss the possibility of getting a lift for the girls' residential accommodation and express their appreciation of the new kitchen in the girls' residential area in the main building. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for various tasks around the school. The Pathway pupils take turns in being the 'Pathway helper'. Tasks for these pupils can include taking the registration sheet to the office and

feeding the classroom fish. Older pupils have more responsibilities and are encouraged to become as independent as possible as they move up the school. Pupils enjoy 'circle' times and personal, social and health education sessions. They know their views are valued and their contributions are important. Staff encourage this attitude as part of the pupils' independent learning and have the support of the pupils' parents and carers who see this as part of the positive attitude to learning the school promotes. Older pupils work or study in the local Further Education colleges or local businesses. They cope well with the challenges these placements put upon them.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002/2003*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.0
National data	7.7	National data	2.4

*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	52	1	0
White – any other White background	6	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	1	0
Chinese	2	0	0

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

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The self-knowledge and spiritual awareness that pupils have is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong.
- Staff provide good role models in their relationships with the pupils.
- Pupils receive a good variety of cultural experiences.

### Commentary

11. Pupils have opportunities to learn about other faiths through personal, health and social education (PHSE) and religious education lessons and from assemblies taken by people with faiths other than Church of England. The governors are currently reviewing the religious education curriculum, which will include visits from leaders from other faiths to talk to pupils. Whole school assemblies are broadly Christian in content, though there is not always time for reflection for the pupils to absorb the theme or content of the assembly.



12. Pupils and students look out for one another and generally treat each other with respect. There was no evidence of discrimination from anyone during the inspection. Staff show respect, tolerance, care and a good sense of humour with the pupils, which enhance the pupils' sense of security and belonging to their community.
13. Pupils and students visit various interesting places and receive visitors to the school who bring a wide variety of differing cultural experiences for the pupils to explore. For instance a group of African drummers visited the school and pupils were able to experiment with the drums. Pupils go on various residential visits such as camping trips, which can only enhance their life experiences. Older pupils undertake work experience, either in the local community or within the school supported by outreach workers. These placements have a positive effect on the pupils' social skills, and increase their confidence for the challenges of life beyond the school.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers make sure that the work is very carefully matched to the individual capabilities and interests of the pupils.
- The teaching assistants work very effectively with groups and individuals to help them take a full part in every lesson.
- Teachers make sure that there is a very good range of resources available for the lessons.
- The special educational needs are paramount as teachers plan the lessons.
- Numeracy, literacy and communication skills are taught very effectively and teachers use a picture exchange communication system where it is appropriate for the pupils with more complex difficulties.
- Occasionally, expectations are not as high as they should be, especially for the most able pupils in the groups.

### **Commentary**

14. Pupils with complex needs are taught in ways that are very appropriate. Teachers explain clearly and slowly using appropriate language and make very good use of resources to present learning tasks in a visual and interesting manner.
15. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together in support of the pupils. The teaching assistants have a very clear understanding of the individual special needs of the pupils and are able to ensure that all pupils take a full and active part in every lesson. Teachers rely greatly on the support that they receive and they work in harmony with their assistants. Sometimes teachers give direction to the assistants, but for the most part there seems to be a natural and professional understanding between them. This is a prime example of the high quality of the teamwork that takes place in the school.
16. The school is well resourced and the teachers make sure that, for each lesson, materials and equipment are available and used well to support their teaching and the learning of the pupils. In many cases the resources are available because of the individual special needs of the pupils. Aids are available to give the best possible opportunities to all pupils. This is true not only in lessons, but also between lessons, at break times and lunchtimes.
17. There is a very significant amount of exceptionally good teaching in the school and during these lessons teachers use every ounce of ingenuity, inventiveness, passion, commitment and pure skill to present their lessons. They make the learning of communication skills and numeracy skills into spiritual experiences for the pupils. Consequently, the pupils are besotted by learning; they thrive on it and really look forward to their lessons.

18. There are some lessons where the teaching is not so inspiring; here there is sometimes a lack of rigour and expectations are not high enough, especially when focusing on the most able pupils in the groups. There are some pupils and students who are in need of a more challenging programme of work as they are finding the tasks a bit too easy to complete. In such situations there is always a risk that the pupils or students will lose motivation.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (11.1 %)	10 (18.5 %)	21 (38.9 %)	16 (29.6 %)	1 (1.9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

19. The above table clearly shows the strength of teaching that there is within the school. There is a very high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching. This is a reflection of the commitment that is shown by the teachers and teaching assistants. However, there is not enough opportunity for teachers to witness, enjoy or share these experiences. Teachers do not get the chance to watch each other at work or work alongside each other. These are opportunities that are missed when staff could well learn a great deal from each other.

### **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is very good. It is enhanced by the good opportunities provided for pupils to enrich their learning experiences and develop their interests throughout the school day and after school. Resources for learning are good. Accommodation is very good and a significant strength of provision.

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

- The curriculum provides very well for all pupils.
- There is a good level of external accreditation.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning experiences outside the school day.
- Post-16 provision prepares students well for employment or further study.
- The National Strategy for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 has been well used to raise standards of literacy and mathematics in a range of subjects.
- Learning activities in the residential setting are not formally linked to the targets in pupils' individual learning plans.
- Accommodation is very good.
- Staff teamwork is a particular strength of provision.

### **Commentary**

20. The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils. It is well accredited, and contains a very broad range of worthwhile curriculum opportunities that cater very well for the interests, attitudes and particular needs of the pupils. There is a significant emphasis on social skills acquisition and providing teaching through real life experience. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and religious education meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. The Key Stage 3 strategy, although not yet fully implemented, has been very well used to raise standards of all pupils in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, where it is well established.
21. The school provides very well for pupils with complex needs, and has developed four new specialist classes for them staffed by teachers and learning support assistants trained in appropriate techniques of teaching and communication.

22. Pupils have taken a range of accredited externally validated examinations by the time they are 16. The curriculum prepares pupils and students very well for employment and further education. Provision includes 'Link Courses' at local colleges. College lecturers visit the school to ensure smooth transition. All students are enabled to become familiar with the world of work by an interesting and well-supported programme of work experience, a high proportion of which is provided by the school. The French café is run as a mini enterprise, which helps pupils to further understand the world of work. A specialist agency visits the school to give pupils individual support and guidance.
23. Post 16 provision is well-organised and provides a suitable and separate environment and a good curriculum for the young adults. The good personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is now well integrated with a satisfactory level of provision for citizenship. The governors have approved the school's sex education provision, but the policy for substance abuse exists only in draft form. Pupils are left in no doubt, however, as to the dangers of taking illicit substances. The school has developed a School Council which has a real say in what is provided for all pupils and students, and this aids their personal development. The school is inclusive and makes very good curriculum provision for all its pupils. In its support of those with complex needs, the school has taken account of both accepted and innovative practice.
24. There are good opportunities for enrichment. Day pupils are allowed to join in the extracurricular programme of the residential pupils on two evenings a week and they take full advantage of this. The school consistently supports participation in sports, the arts, and pupils' interests. The school provides good opportunities for residential experiences, some under canvas and some abroad. Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory.
25. There has been a very good measure of improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is now well balanced, and all subjects have sufficient time, with the exception of French. Curricular innovations since the last inspection have included new provision for pupils with complex needs and those in the sixth form. Subject policies and schemes of work have been rewritten, although not all are yet in place. A new timetable structure has been developed. School courses are now well linked with those available in college. Formal links between care plans and Individual Education Plans, however, still require review.
26. The skills and experience of teachers are well matched to the needs of the curriculum, although not all have special needs as part of their initial training. Plans are well advanced to remedy this. Recent training has taken place in specialist techniques for those who teach pupils with complex needs. Learning support assistants are largely untrained. There are funds for four to be trained this year. Their number has been increased since the last inspection to comply with the DfES recommendations. All pupils have link-workers. Teamwork between all staff groups is a strikingly effective feature of provision.
27. Accommodation is very good; the building is impressive. The interior is clean, tidy, welcoming and well decorated. The well-kept extensive grounds are well used by the school for sports and environmental study. Since the last inspection there has been a very good level of improvement. Accommodation for music has been improved, and there is now a separate room for ICT. The accommodation has been extensively refurbished. An attractive art gallery has been achieved by converting a corridor. The chapel serves also as a theatre and a gym. The school has been rewired, and a specialist fire alarm system has been installed. Toilets and bathrooms have been refurbished, and locks have been renewed although some were broken at the time of the inspection. A medical suite is currently being developed, and a lift installed. There are no toilets or showers for disabled pupils as yet, but these are planned.
28. Resources for learning are good in all subjects, a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Science rooms are now fully equipped. There is one computer for every two pupils, a good ratio which nevertheless includes some elderly machines. The library contains well in excess of the number of volumes recommended by the School Library Association for schools of similar size and type. These are catalogued on the computer. Further volumes are distributed in

classrooms. Supervision and help are also on hand when pupils choose their books. Plans are well advanced to develop a learning resource centre.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Both teaching and non-teaching staff provide a very high standard of care for the pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good relationships between pupils and care staff.
- Child protection procedures are in place.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk to any adult in the school if they have problems.
- Arrangements for, and the guidance that pupils and students receive, concerning transition to college or work, are very good.

### **Commentary**

29. There are some difficulties in maintaining a safe environment for the pupils due, in part, to the extensive grounds in which the school is sited. However, staff know the pupils and supervise them very well without denying them their independence, thus allowing them to gain confidence as they move up the school. Most pupils are aware of the various possible hazards within the school environment, to the extent that they point these out to visitors. The school building is clean, tidy and storage facilities are adequate. Procedures for evacuation in the event of a fire are good. A new system of fire alarms has recently been installed and fire drills are carried out each half term. Provision for first aid is adequate. Two staff members have up to date first aid training and others are to be trained in the near future. Detailed records of any accidents are kept.
30. One member of staff oversees the pupils' health and administers medication for those who need it. This arrangement is not entirely satisfactory as this member of staff has a full-time commitment within the residential section of the school. However, pupils are familiar with the routines and cooperate with the arrangements for the administration of medication. The school plans to employ a member of staff to take on the specific responsibility for health matters. Pupils are encouraged to exercise and eat well as part of their health programme.
31. Pupils have, in general, very good relationships with all the staff. Care staff tend to be the ones that residential pupils turn to for guidance. This is a satisfactory arrangement between teaching and care staff who 'hand over' residential pupils at the beginning of the school day and in the evening. Any ongoing behavioural problems can be sorted out at these times. Residential pupils attend house meetings where they are able to express any opinions about their daily routines. Pupils have support and guidance from all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Policies to support the welfare of pupils are in place and staff monitor pupils' physical and mental wellbeing carefully.
32. One member of staff is responsible for child protection and, in her absence, the headteacher and deputy headteacher take responsibility for this. All these staff members have had suitable training and are due to update this soon. All staff members are aware of these arrangements; the staff handbook has this information and supply staff are kept informed. All pupils have access to the general help lines such as 'Childline', and can contact an independent listener if they feel this is necessary.
33. The school ensures that pupils who are referred to the school are given the opportunity to visit the school and spend some time there before coming.
34. The procedures the school has in place for the transfer of pupils from school to further education are very good. Each pupil is assessed and placements which are judged to be appropriate are also assessed with the pupils' and parents' / carers' consent. The SLIM (Student Liaison and Inclusion Manager) leads this process and keeps in touch with the parents and carers in order to maintain contact between the school and the further education or employment organisation.





## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between parents/carers and the school is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very effectively with all parents/carers to support pupils' learning.
- Parents appreciate the commitment that the staff show to working with their children.
- The school has a thriving 'Friends of the School'.
- The relationship between the school and the local community is good.
- Arrangements for students to move from school to work or college are very good.

### Commentary

35. Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress through meetings with class teachers, Individual Education Plan reviews and annual reports. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said they were satisfied with the education and care their child received from the school. The school sends out fortnightly newsletters so that parents and carers are informed about the activities their child can be involved in and general school news. Parents and carers are informed about the complaints procedure through the prospectus. Staff and the headteacher are always available to discuss the progress of pupils. Parents appreciate this commitment from staff and use this relationship to reassure themselves about the progress their child is making.
36. Parents and carers are involved in the decision making about their child's future together with the school and outside agencies. A review meeting observed showed that a pupil and her parents were able to make a positive decision about her future career in ICT and business studies. She had overcome her acute shyness and lack of self-esteem during her time in the school.
37. The 'Friends of Parkwood Hall School' support the school, raise money for the school and organise social events. All these events are fully supported by pupils, staff, parents and carers. Year 13 students were making Christmas decorations and pickled onions for the Christmas sale. They were enjoying the experience of producing these items for the sale.
38. The school invites the local community to use the school grounds and sports facilities. Brownies, Guides, and various sports clubs use the school for their meetings together with keep fit and yoga clubs which use the school hall. The hall is also used for parties and celebrations by the local people.
39. Pupils make visits to museums, art galleries and other attractions. A residential visit is organised each year for senior pupils, sometimes in challenging conditions. Photographs were available showing a camping trip in less than ideal circumstances. The weather could have been better but, judging by the pictures, all the pupils involved were enjoying the experience.
40. Induction arrangements are good. All pupils have an arranged place at the school and can spend some time in the school to meet staff and find out about the day-to-day routines before they start.
41. The arrangements for students who are eighteen or nineteen and need to move on to further education or employment are very good. Staff discuss with parents and carers and the student the options available and arrange for the students to experience various skills, in both a residential and non-residential setting. Care and guidance are given to pupils and students and their families throughout the last year the pupil or student is at the school. Local colleges of further education help with this decision making process by supporting pupils and students in work experience placements which give those who take part some experience of managing in an environment outside school. Those who do not feel confident enough to work outside the school have tuition in various skills such as horticulture and arts and crafts from outreach tutors. They gain confidence in their own abilities in this environment.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher and her deputy provide very strong leadership for the school. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of considerable change and has set in place new management arrangements which form a good basis for further improvement.

Management is satisfactory and developing. Several changes have only recently been introduced but are already helping to move the school forward.

Governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body is aware of issues facing the school and has supported the headteacher in implementing recent changes.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She sets a clear direction for the school and is committed to improvement.
- Other leaders provide good role models, which promote strong teamwork amongst staff and a shared, respectful approach towards pupils.
- Monitoring of teaching by senior staff and subject co-ordinators is under-developed.
- Information is not analysed sufficiently to enable the progress of individual pupils or groups to be clearly identified or to highlight trends and patterns.

### Commentary

42. Governors are clear about the future direction of the school and have supported the headteacher in introducing staff and curriculum changes to meet the needs of a changing pupil and student intake. Governors bring in valuable expertise, for example in finance and education, and there is a committed Chair who regularly visits the school and works closely with the headteacher. Other governors are beginning to visit classrooms and report back to meetings. However, their involvement in monitoring the welfare of pupils and students in the residential houses is under-developed, and current information they receive on pupil performance is not sufficiently detailed to enable them to understand fully strengths and areas for improvement in the school.
43. The headteacher is a very good leader with a clear sense of purpose. She has an inclusive style, which respects the views of staff and pupils and encourages them to participate in decisions. The headteacher is supported well by other senior staff who have created strong teamwork across the school and in the residential provision. This has facilitated the successful introduction of a curriculum for pupils with more complex needs, teaching methods based on the Key Stage 3 strategy and improved accommodation in the residential houses.
44. The headteacher and other leaders provide good role models, which promote a consistent, respectful approach towards pupils and students and ensure all are included.
45. Management of the school is satisfactory. There has been an extended period without a deputy headteacher and some management arrangements have only recently been introduced.
46. The school is beginning the process of self-evaluation and has worked closely with the local education authority on a rolling programme of reviewing different aspects of the school's work. However, the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff and curriculum co-ordinators and the use of assessment data to analyse trends in pupils' progress are not yet established. This limits opportunities for best practice to be shared with colleagues and for intervention to be targeted on areas needing improvement.
47. Appropriate priorities are listed in the school improvement plan. Although broad areas in the plan are linked to the school budget, individual initiatives lack detailed costing which reduces the ability to measure the impact of additional resources.
48. Professional development for staff is satisfactory. Most staff have benefited from recent training in working with students and pupils who have more complex needs and all residential staff have

completed, or are completing, a professional qualification in care. This programme has not included recent child protection training, and although care staff have supervision time, there is no formal system for reviewing their performance. There is a clear induction programme for administrative staff and arrangements are developing for other staff. The creation of senior teaching assistant posts to recognise their increased level of skill and responsibility is a positive step.

49. The school has good financial management procedures. Governors are given regular budget updates, which identify trends in expenditure and enable them to make informed decisions. Some recommendations from the last audit report still require action, however, such as the establishment of a school inventory. The principles of 'best value' are applied very well. Several areas of the school's work have been reviewed by the Head of Business Resources, headteacher and governors, and more efficient alternative arrangements put in place. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining staff and levels of teachers, care staff and teaching assistants are generally well matched to the needs of pupils and students.
50. Since the last inspection school leadership has improved and several changes to move the school forward have been introduced successfully. The strength of leadership and teamwork aid the raising of achievement. The staff are aware of areas requiring further improvement and they are adapting well to meet the more challenging needs of pupils being admitted to the school. The lack of time for senior staff to monitor teaching and share good practice was a barrier to improvement, but with the appointment of a deputy headteacher, opportunities are now available.
51. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has recently taken up post. Initiatives are now in place to sharpen the IEP targets. Already, the SENCO has produced guidelines for staff to help them formulate improved IEP targets. The SENCO meets formally with senior teaching assistants half termly to discuss issues, the outcomes of which are then relayed to all teaching assistants.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,083,255	Balance from previous year	62,732
Total expenditure	1,996,271	Balance carried forward to the next	86,984
Expenditure per pupil	29,112		

## RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Residential provision is good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn to take responsibility and develop increasing independence.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with staff and with each other.
- There is a very good range of evening activities.
- There is a very strong staff team, which displays a consistent, respectful approach towards pupils and students.
- Care plans do not formally link activities with the achievement of pupils' individual targets.

### Commentary

52. In the residential areas of the school, pupils and students have very positive attitudes. They show respect towards each other and towards staff. Pupils are very tolerant of their peers who have complex and challenging needs. However, they are also able to discuss any concerns about the

behaviour of these pupils in a reasoned manner. Pupils and students express their views with confidence and listen well to those of others. These skills are very evident when they take part in house meetings and representatives feed back information from the school council. There is a relaxed atmosphere in the houses with pupils and students engaging in amiable banter at the breakfast table or when they get ready for bed in the evening.

53. Staff treat all pupils and students with respect and listen to their views. This has been particularly successful where pupils and students were involved in designing the new bathroom areas and planning changes to the dining arrangements. Staff encourage pupils and students to take responsibility appropriate to their age and level of ability, which helps them develop increasing independence. They take responsibility for laundry and washing up, prepare snacks and go shopping. Pupils and students learn to make choices, as when selecting evening activities or choosing house representatives for the school council. Post 16 students regularly shop and cook meals for the group and appreciate being treated as adults.
54. There is a very good range of after school and evening activities which include pottery, trampolining, swimming, steel band, youth club, shopping and visits to a golf driving range. The success of these activities is evident from the large number of day pupils and students who attend. Some of the activities also provide good opportunities for pupils from different houses to mix socially and develop friendships. Links between the residential and education curriculum are under-developed because the pupils' targets are not addressed sufficiently out of lesson times. There is not enough focus on continuing education during evening activities. For example, pupils have literacy and numeracy targets on their Individual Education Plans and these could be developed through activities and 'chores' in the residential setting. Care staff share information well with teachers in the morning at the staff briefing meetings. At the end of the day arrangements are less secure and rely on the individual initiative of teachers. Activities in the houses are effective in helping pupils and students develop their independence and social skills. However, the impact of this work is limited since care plans do not formally link activities with the achievement of pupils' targets.
55. Accommodation is bright and cheerful and bedrooms are personalised by pupils. Common rooms, bathrooms and kitchen areas have all recently been refurbished. Dormitories are still cramped but staff have made very good use of available space. There are reasonable arrangements for privacy, although during the inspection the locks on some bathroom doors did not work.
56. There are good arrangements for caring for pupils and students. All have a linkworker who, they understand, is there to help. There are good formal arrangements for pupils and students to contribute their views through house meetings, representation on the school council and the review of their care plans. 'Childline' information is displayed prominently around the houses to provide contact with an independent listener, if one is needed.
57. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring behaviour and sanctions. Sanctions are rarely used, but any incident is logged and signed by a senior member of staff.
58. There are good links with parents. Pupils and students are encouraged to telephone home and relevant information is passed on by staff.
59. The residential provision is well led. Senior staff are approachable and there is good communication between all pupils and adults. Individual staff contribute fully to running activities and discussing the needs of pupils and students. This inclusive approach has created good professional relations and a very strong staff team. Management is satisfactory. Since the school recently changed to weekly boarding, staffing has been reorganised to produce more efficient deployment. This generally works well; however, the allocation of night staff at the post 16 house is being reviewed in the light of the changing needs of the students.
60. There has been good improvement since last inspection. Accommodation is of a much higher standard and pupils now have formal opportunities to discuss their ideas. The head of residential

education is aware of areas for further improvement and has produced a plan with appropriate priorities for development.

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

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3, 4 and Post 16.**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Eight lessons of English were seen covering Years 6 to 14. The work of the pupils was scrutinised and discussions took place between inspectors and teachers. Two lessons of French were also observed.

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils across the school achieve well in all areas of English, particularly in the skills of speaking and listening.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Post 16 classes and very good in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- There is very good provision for pupils with complex needs.
- Assessment of pupils' work is variable in quality and does not allow the school to track progress.
- Although leadership and management are satisfactory, roles and responsibilities are currently unclear.

#### **Commentary.**

61. Pupils do very well in Years 7, 8 and 9 in response to excellent teaching, which demands a great deal from them. The teacher has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well to aid achievement. Lessons are very well structured and challenge all pupils as a result. Higher attaining pupils in these years begin to approach the national expectation, especially in speaking and listening. They listen carefully and politely to the teacher and to each other, and participate orally in the lessons with interest and vigour. Pupils have good skills of collaboration and these help them to learn. Higher attaining pupils read simple age appropriate books for interest and pleasure. Lower attainers persevere and succeed with phonics and are beginning to learn to read. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well.
62. Most pupils do well in Years 10 and 11, although the teaching is uneven and some achievement remains only satisfactory because expectation is too low and tasks too simple. Assessment can be unreliable for some of these pupils, so that teachers find it difficult to pitch learning activities at the right level. Achievement in speaking and listening is very good, with pupils entering into pleasant, interesting and informative conversations with each other and with adults. Higher attaining pupils read such books as the latest biographies of sportsmen. The highest attainers enjoy broadsheet and tabloid newspapers. Pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended writing, however, and are content to answer simple structured questions or write a short paragraph. This does not allow them to develop fully their ideas. Pupils find externally validated examinations, at which they succeed, highly motivating at this period of their study.
63. In the post 16 groups, all students sustain consistently good achievement. Speaking and listening continue to be a strength as students learn the social use of language. All aspects of English are taught through the setting of real tasks, which they find interesting and motivating. Students use their skills learned in English lessons to help them to cook meals, prepare for work experience and plan outings.
64. Pupils and students with complex needs do very well in all years in response to a very good curriculum, which enables them to learn successfully in very small steps. Teachers develop pupils' communication skills by using specialist classroom techniques in an effective manner.

Symbols help them to read, specially adapted ICT programs based on symbols help them to write, and pupils and students are helped to understand the spoken word with the help of signing. Assessment in these classes is of a good quality, so that teachers are able to organise exactly the right learning activities to help pupils to make the best possible progress.

65. Teaching varies in quality and is never less than satisfactory. The best lessons were seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 and in the classes of pupils with complex needs. High expectation and challenging and interesting activities characterise these lessons.

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

An outstanding lesson was seen in a class of very young pupils with complex needs. The teacher's reading of "The Jolly Christmas Postman" entranced pupils. The teacher made very good use of symbols at this point to help them to predict what might happen next. She used a large glove puppet to conduct the rest of the lesson. Some shy and inarticulate pupils could not wait to talk to it, and when they were given glove puppets themselves, engaged enthusiastically in simple but imaginative dialogue. This improved their speaking and listening skills and helped them to communicate with each other. Letters were found tucked into the pages of the book, and pupils were fascinated when they were read out and passed round. This formed the basis of some good specific instruction on writing their name and the school address, which, the teacher insisted, was properly punctuated and had appropriate capital letters. Varying degrees of help enabled the class to succeed. All were eager to receive a letter, which was to be sent by the teacher's puppet via the postal service, and this spurred them to work hard, which resulted in excellent achievement for all pupils.

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Day-to-day organisation goes smoothly and resources are good. The school uses the services of an adviser to monitor teaching. Co-ordination and management of the subject are in need of further development.
67. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. The department has adapted its provision well to the changing needs of pupils. Teaching has improved in Years 7, 8 and 9, in some lessons in Years 10 and 11 and all lessons in the post 16 classes.

#### **Language and Literacy across the Curriculum.**

68. Provision for pupils and students to extend their skills of literacy and communication are central to the work of the school. Speaking and listening are significant strengths. Teachers listen respectfully to pupils, and this helps them to communicate. Pupils greet the teacher confidently and are prepared to join in lessons orally in response to the teachers' adept questioning. Their capacity for collaboration helps them to learn from the teacher and from each other. Pupils take turns to speak, and some, including those with complex needs, confidently address the whole school at assembly. In mathematics, pupils discuss what they should choose in their buying and selling activities, and this helps them to develop socially. Pupils and students with complex needs respond very well to signing and the use of symbols, and some are able to make their needs known by giving a simple illustration of what these needs are, to an adult. Drama lessons give pupils good opportunities to develop confidence and articulate their feelings. Speech therapy makes a further invaluable contribution to the achievement of some pupils in this regard.
69. Pupils and students are helped to read the simple texts put before them in lessons. All pupils love stories being read to them. Older pupils browse through magazines, which reflect their leisure interests. The most able of the older pupils and students enjoy the sports pages of newspapers. One or two read the news in broadsheet newspapers. Post 16 students follow instructions and are capable of reading a menu, or following a recipe. Younger pupils copy and overwrite simple words and phrases. Older pupils and students write their names and addresses independently. They fill in worksheets, write lists and captions, produce very simple diaries and autobiographies and write a simple letter. They present their work using a variety of means including printing, cursive writing or by word processing.

## French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The weekly experience of the French café gives pupils a valuable insight into a different culture.
- Teaching and learning are variable because not all teachers and learning support assistants know enough French.
- The curriculum is supplemented by good opportunities for pupils to visit France

### Commentary

70. Achievement is satisfactory within the allocation of time given to the subject. Pupils greet each other, using correct French. They know simple vocabulary to do with eating and drinking, and with help can ask for what they want from a limited range. They realise that when they visit France they must pay in Euros, which they must buy with their pounds and pence.
71. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was very good in one class of pupils with complex needs where pupils responded very well to a series of photographs of their café. This helped their recall of vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils used a simple lotto game in this lesson, matching the pictures with vocabulary. Others were helped to use a buying and selling game to consolidate their knowledge of numbers from one to ten in French.
72. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Plans are well advanced to improve the supply of French artefacts available to pupils and to upgrade the accommodation available in the French café. Pupils have regular opportunities to visit France. Pupils and students also make regular visits to the local French markets that are held in Gravesend, Swanley and Dartford
73. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory, taking account of the changing needs of the pupils.

## MATHEMATICS

Nine lessons of mathematics were observed covering pupils from Years 6 to 14. The work of pupils was also scrutinised and discussions took place with the teachers.

Provision in mathematics is **good with some very strong features**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with more complex needs through practical activities very effectively promotes their understanding of money and number.
- The use of the Key Stage 3 strategy to inform teaching promotes pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning mathematics.
- Pupils and students have very positive attitudes to mathematics.
- The co-ordinator does not monitor teaching and learning sufficiently.

### Commentary

74. Pupils enter the school with complex needs but achieve very well in relation to their individual needs. By the end of Year 6 pupils recognise numbers up to five and match objects with pictures. Some count in twos and are beginning to recognise signs for addition and multiplication. By the age of 14 pupils exchange money for items of food, some using pictures to help convey their meaning and make choices, others count small amounts of change independently. Higher-attaining pupils construct a tally chart to count and organise data. They increasingly use mathematical vocabulary, such as 'least', 'most' and 'total' and some know their 5 and 10 times



multiplication tables. In Year 11, higher-attaining pupils know all tables and can measure in millimetres. They calculate the area and perimeter of triangles and squares using squared paper and construct a bar chart showing the popularity of different pets. By the age of 18 students with more complex needs are able to recognise and use money in practical situations when they follow the 'Life and Living Skills' programme. In 2003, 14 students achieved well and gained the Associated Examination Board Numeracy Certificate Level 1, and 8 students gained a pass at Level 2. This represents good achievement.

75. Overall the teaching of numeracy is good. In the best lessons teachers ask questions appropriate to pupils' level of ability, which enables all to join in and feel pleased with their contribution. Teachers and assistants use praise well, which helps pupils feel proud of their achievements. Teaching is especially good in lessons for pupils with more complex needs where teachers match tasks well to individual needs and provide a good range of work sheets, puzzles, cards and pictures to support learning. This provides suitable challenge and holds pupils' interest. Pupils are given responsibility for taking out and putting away equipment which helps to develop their independence and there is good use of photographic evidence to record the progress of those pupils who are at the earlier stages of learning. Exemplary practice occurs when pupils purchase fruit and drinks to develop their understanding of the use of money and number.
76. Lessons informed by the Key Stage 3 strategy provide a brisk pace and variety which promotes pupils' interest and enjoyment in learning mathematics. Teachers have good mathematical knowledge and consistently use appropriate vocabulary. The plenary is used well to review what pupils have learned and enable them to share their ideas with the class. There are several ICT programmes, which are used well to support pupils' and students' mathematical development.
77. In a small number of less successful lessons for older pupils and students, learning is hindered because planning is not linked to individual targets, the pace is slow, and teachers do not review what pupils or students have learned.
78. Leadership is good in mathematics. A very good curriculum has been introduced to meet the needs of more challenging pupils and is having a considerable impact on raising standards. The use of data to track progress over time is under-developed. However, a new method of assessment has recently been adopted which is very appropriate for fulfilling this task. There is a good range of resources, particularly for the pupils with more complex needs, and suitable ICT software to support learning.
79. The co-ordinator is an extremely able practitioner and has used the Key Stage 3 strategy very well to inform teaching. Appropriate areas are identified for further development of mathematics in the school. Opportunities for sharing good practice are being developed and the monitoring of the subject is under review.
80. Since the last inspection the teaching of mathematics has adapted well to changes in the needs of pupils. A new curriculum for pupils with more complex needs has been introduced successfully and teaching has improved through adopting the Key Stage 3 strategy.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

81. There are some good examples of mathematics skills being developed across the curriculum. In French, pupils use pocket money to buy items at a café; in physical education (PE), when pupils discuss distances in swimming; and in football they talk about angles when passing the ball. Pupils and students also develop practical mathematics skills well in the 'independence curriculum' when they plan and shop for a meal or calculate the cost of a trip to the leisure park.

## SCIENCE

Five lessons of science were seen and pupils from Years 6 to 11 were observed. Discussions also took place with the teachers and the work of pupils was scrutinised.

Provision in science is **satisfactory** throughout the school and **good** in Years 4 to 6 for pupils with complex needs.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson planning and resources are good.
- There is a good scheme of work to support the Key Stage 3 strategy.
- Good use made of ICT to support subject teaching and learning.
- Teaching is not always appropriate for the pupils and this has a negative impact upon the pupils' learning and achievement.
- Assessment schemes and procedures are underdeveloped.

### Commentary

82. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work show pupils' achievements as satisfactory. However, teaching, although mainly satisfactory, is causing many pupils to underachieve. Although lesson planning is good the lesson objectives and teacher's expectations are not always clearly set. Consequently, some pupils become confused as to the teacher's expectations of them and of the tasks they have to undertake, although in the latter the good support that the experienced teaching assistants provide, mainly for the lower attaining pupils, helps to resolve this for them. However, as a result of previous feedback, in a later lesson objectives and expectations were given more clearly. Teaching points and opportunities are not always developed. In one Year 9 lesson, on the expansion of air when heated, the teacher missed a pupil's reference to a hot air balloon, and the experiment set up, passing heated air through water, had no real outcomes for the pupils with little reference to the learning objective. Appropriate direct questioning to guide pupils' learning is underused.
83. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are satisfactory. They mostly pay attention and complete the set tasks. At other times, when they are unsure of the set tasks, or the pace to the lesson slows they become restless. Their relationships with the teaching assistants are good.
84. Pupils having complex needs who are based in the Pathway unit achieve well because they are taught by the unit teachers who are experienced and understand the learning needs of these pupils. In a lesson on the senses, good use was made of praise, encouragement and tactile and visual aids all of which helped the pupils to learn. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They respond to their teachers' praise and teacher pupil relationships are good.
85. The co-ordinator has helped to develop a new scheme of work that meets the requirements of the Key Stage 3 strategy. This is also linked to the performance indicators (P levels) and National Curriculum levels. Medium and long term planning show that the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum are being covered. Pupils in Year 11 prepare for the Edexcel Certificate of Achievement in Science.
86. Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory and there is no policy for the subject. Assessment procedures are in need of further development in order to identify progress amongst pupils and students. The use of ICT for scientific enquiry, sensing events and data logging, especially to challenge the older, higher attaining pupils, is underdeveloped. Provision is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Five lessons of information and communication technology (ICT) were observed, the work of pupils was scrutinised and discussions took place with the teachers.

Provision for ICT is **good**

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and very good in the post 16 provision – an improvement on the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievements are good.
- Specialist teaching enables students to learn well.
- Resources are very good.
- Leadership is very good.
- Management is satisfactory, but assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
- The use of ICT to support subject teaching and learning and the use of software need further development to enable all staff to have access, especially in Years 4 to 6.

### **Commentary**

87. The experienced subject co-ordinator undertakes the teaching of ICT skills from Year 7 to Year 14. In Year 7 to Year 11 lesson preparation is very good and the teacher makes good use of age and ability appropriate questioning to guide pupils' learning. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons. This, together with good teacher pupil relationships, promotes pupils' learning and results in pupils achieving well. This is even more noticeable in the post 16 provision. The teacher has built up a very good relationship with the students, and the very good rapport with them motivates their learning, helping them to achieve well in their Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) studies.
88. In all observed lessons, learning objectives were generally well matched to the wide range of ability amongst the pupils. The lower attaining pupils receive good support from the experienced support assistants, although, at times, this support is too controlling.
89. Pupils in Years 4 to 7 are amongst those having complex needs who are based in the Pathway unit and are taught by the unit teachers. Problems with accessing appropriate software are now being resolved. Consequently, it was not possible to observe teaching of ICT for these pupils. However, analysis of the evidence available and talking with teachers and pupils suggest that pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
90. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is both dedicated and experienced and has a good vision for the subject. All the computers based in teaching areas are linked to the school's server; those in portable classrooms via wireless links. The installation of a 'Broadband' connection for the internet is planned. However, management is satisfactory. In the post 16 years assessment, linked to accreditation, is good but assessment systems and the recording of pupils' learning for pupils in Years 7 to 11 are underdeveloped. Consequently, there are no data on the continuity of pupils' learning and progress to help in planning or provide information about pupils' achievements. This is unsatisfactory. The present program used for control is not appropriate for the type of learning difficulties experienced by the pupils.

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

91. The use of information communication technology to support subject teaching and learning is underdeveloped. Observations during the inspection and teachers' booking of the computer suite indicate very little such use by subject teachers. Discussions are taking place concerning the use of appropriate commercial software to encourage such use.

## HUMANITIES

It is not possible to make a judgement about overall standards in geography because it was not possible to see enough lessons. The teaching of history alternates termly with geography up to Year 10, over a three year rolling programme. During the inspection geography teaching was observed in two secondary classes. Four lessons of religious education were also observed.

## GEOGRAPHY

92. Geography is taught up to Year 9 and at post 16 through environmental studies. Geography and history are taught alternately and at the time of the inspection, geography had not yet been taught in the current academic year. Recent work was not available for scrutiny and no lessons were timetabled for the week of the inspection.
93. However, students' work on the environment as part of the 'Life and Living Skills' course was impressive. They have improved the school environment, by painting classrooms, gardening and recycling paper cans, newspapers and bottles. These achievements are well recorded in students' folders and supported with good photographic evidence.
94. The leadership of geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is only recently in post but has drawn up a policy, mapped the subject across the school and is developing a scheme of work with support from the local education authority adviser. Monitoring of the subject is not in place and the co-ordinator has not benefited from recent professional development in teaching geography. There is a satisfactory range of resources, which includes globes, atlases and books on the weather.

## HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory** with some strong features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and enjoy history.
- Teaching is generally good, although some work does not sufficiently challenge higher-attaining pupils.
- Photographic evidence is used well to support pupils' understanding of past events.
- Mapping of the subject currently does not fully secure continuity and progression.
- Co-ordination and monitoring need further development.
- A system for assessing pupils' progress is not yet in place.

### Commentary

95. Pupils achieve well. By Year 6, pupils are able to discuss past events and, with the aid of family photographs, construct a simple timeline. Pupils with more complex needs are able to use pictures and symbols to order the day's events. By the age of 14 pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of life in Ancient Egypt. Most can identify the River Nile on a map and describe pyramids and the sphinx. Some pupils are able to use simple hieroglyphs to make their name. Pupils in Year 10 can compare different occupations and use the computer to search for further information about life in Ancient Egypt. Some pupils need help to complete these activities and work well with teaching assistants to achieve at their level.
96. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good resources to support the lessons, such as photographs, graded work sheets and computer software. They use questioning well to ensure all pupils understand the task and are included in the lesson. As a result, pupils work consistently and achieve well. They enjoy history, contribute their ideas and listen well to others. Work is generally well matched to individual pupils' needs. However some tasks are routine for the higher-attaining pupils and opportunities are missed for extending their independent writing. ICT is used well to support learning in some lessons.

97. The leadership of history is satisfactory and developing. The co-ordinator is only recently in post but has drawn up a policy and is completing a scheme of work with support from the Local Education Authority adviser. Mapping of the subject is developing and although following the National Curriculum, some history topics covered in secondary classes correspond to Key Stage 2 Programmes of Study and progression is not secure.
98. Monitoring of the subject and a system for assessing pupils' progress are not yet in place and the co-ordinator has not benefited from recent professional development in teaching history.
99. There is a satisfactory range of resources, which includes topic boxes on Ancient Egypt, Rome and the Victorians, artefacts and books. Photographs are used very well to record events and support pupils' understanding of past events. There are some very attractive displays around the school showing a recent visit to the British museum and a record of pupils' early memories. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good** throughout the school including the post 16 age group.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and very good in Years 4 to 6, and as a result achievement is good.
- Schemes of work are extended in Years 10 and 11 to include environmental issues and citizenship.
- Leadership is good.
- Resources are unsatisfactory because there are insufficient artefacts.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and planning.

### Commentary

100. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and very good in Years 4 to 6 in the provision for pupils with complex needs. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, they use age appropriate vocabulary well and, in their teaching, they show experience in working with pupils with a range of special educational needs. As a result, pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. In Years 4 to 6 Bible stories are used well to illustrate moral issues and the pupils are aware of some of the main differences between Judaism and Christianity. In Years 7 to 9 they are encouraged to reflect on the wonder of God's design in creation through Bible stories and the food we eat. Environmental issues are linked to learning in citizenship in Year 10 and Year 11 and pupils are able to discuss the problems from a well-informed base of learning. Students in Post 16 debate moral issues and study the customs observed during Divali. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for the low achieving pupils and, together with teachers, encourage pupils' learning.
101. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and vision for subject development. The locally agreed syllabus has been adapted to accommodate the changing needs of the school's pupils. Medium term planning is very detailed with suggested activities, careful selection of appropriate tasks, resources, opportunities for assessment and links with citizenship. Both the provision for students in post 16 groups and for the pupils having more complex needs in the Pathway unit have separate curriculum maps.
102. Management presently is unsatisfactory. Although there is assessment at the end of each key stage this is based upon an assessment test in the absence of consistent formative assessment and the recording of pupils' learning. This is to be remedied by the future use of 'small steps' to provide a consistent approach to assessment. Teachers' planning is monitored and advice given on resources.

103. Resources for the subject are underdeveloped. The school has very few resources and artefacts. Resources from the local education authority are no longer available. Good use is made of ICT to support the subject teaching and learning. Use is made of a video cartoon series to teach Bible stories and subject specific CD ROMS are used. However, the use of the Internet for research and information gathering is insufficient. No judgements were reached in the previous inspections due to lack of evidence.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Six lessons of food technology and resistant materials were observed. The work of pupils was scrutinised and discussions took place between the teachers and the inspectors.

### **Food Technology**

Provision in food technology is **very good**.

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

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- The school ensures that equipment and resources are available and of good quality.
- Teachers have a very good knowledge of the pupils and their individual special educational needs.

#### **Commentary**

104. All pupils and students benefit from the specialist teaching that they receive during their food technology lessons. All lessons are very well planned and take full account of the wide range of ability amongst the pupils and students. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and are able to motivate them extremely effectively. The school benefits from some very good quality resources and the accommodation has improved tremendously since the time of the last inspection; there are plans to improve this even further.

105. **During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed was extremely high, ranging from very good to excellent. This was clearly reflected in the way in which the pupils and students learnt. They are proud of what they achieve, they are delighted to take a full and active part in the lessons and they are pleased to be gaining in confidence and competence in the subject.**

### **Resistant materials**

Provision in resistant materials is **good**.

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

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- There is a good range of materials and resources and a very good workshop that is very well equipped.
- Teachers make sure that the work is well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils and make sure that pupils can succeed in the tasks that they are set and the learning upon which they embark.

#### **Commentary**

106. **The pupils and students are fortunate in having the services of a specialist technology teacher for resistant materials. Lessons are well planned and the work is so designed as to ensure that pupils will succeed in completing the task that has been set.**

107. **The course is designed in the light of the National Curriculum and lessons are planned to make sure that the appropriate skills are being taught. Pupils and students now follow the approved design procedure for the practical tasks they are set.**
108. Pupils and students enjoy the workshop facilities that provide a good variety of working environments. This enables each individual pupil to work at his or her own level and follow their own interests. Pupils and students have the opportunity to work with timber, natural and manufactured, acrylics and some very limited experience of working with metal
109. Pupils are keen to be in the workshop and respect the good quality provision that there is. They are very attentive during lessons and thoroughly enjoy the design elements within the subject. There are some very good pieces of work on display around the school and pupils are pleased and proud to leave their work in school after it has been completed so that it can be seen by other people. The subject is well managed and there has been good progress since the last inspection and the curriculum is now well matched to individual pupil needs and abilities.
110. There has been good improvement in design technology; the curriculum is now carefully matched to the changing needs of the pupils. The quality of teaching has improved even further and the facilities are better than they were. The subject is well managed and co-ordinated to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **ART**

Two lessons of art and three lessons of music were observed during the inspection. The wide variety of art work on display was scrutinised and inspectors held discussions with teachers.

Provision in art across the school is **good**.

- The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge.
- Materials and resources are very good in quality and variety.
- Lessons are interesting and enjoyable.

### **Commentary**

111. The work of pupils and students can be seen around the school and this shows their interest and ability in the subject. There is a wide range of materials and media being used and the teacher skilfully encourages pupils to gain inspiration from the great masters. He has carefully devised methods by which certain classic approaches to the design process may be followed.
112. Lessons prove to be very active and the pupils all enjoy wearing protective clothing in order to protect themselves. In one lesson observed, pupils were very busy as they were creating a decorative design using masking tape and one colour, in order to make and paint a decorative wall mirror using mirror tiles and plywood pieces that can be shaped by the individuals in the group.
113. The subject enjoys a very good purpose built workshop and a reasonable amount of equipment; this gives it a head start over any other vocational subject for the sixth form community. Pupils achieve well and enjoy a wide variety of different experiences. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and art continues to enjoy a high profile in the school.

## MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and learning results in very good achievement.
- School steel band is a strength of the school.
- Very good teacher/pupil relationships enable pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

### Commentary

114. The co-ordinator teaches the subject throughout the school. Only two lessons were observed, in Year 9 and Year 10, the latter including some Year 12 students. These, together with an observation of the school's steel band, and scrutiny of pupils' work, show teaching and learning to be very good in Years 7 to 10. It was not possible to observe any pupils in Years 4 to 6. This is very good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' progress was judged to be only satisfactory. The teacher uses age appropriate language; this was particularly noticeable in a class of pupils with complex needs. In this lesson, the teacher provided excellent learning opportunities. Pupils achieved very well and at the same time learning was interesting and fun for them. In both of the observed lessons, there were smiles of achievement and enjoyment on pupils' faces and they were reluctant to leave at the end of the lesson. The teaching assistants supported pupils very well, particularly the low achievers. This contributed greatly to the pupils' learning and enjoyment.
115. The steel band is a strength of the school. This is an extra curricular provision that is attended by some 25 pupils and students from across the school, including those with complex needs. The session is led by the music co-ordinator and supported by other teachers and teaching assistants; the latter in their own time. All pupils and students appear to have found their own niches within the band. Some pupils read simple notation and are supported by teaching assistants. Others show greater confidence and independence. The music co-ordinator continuously circulates around the band giving individual advice and encouragement. Pupils and students follow instructions very well, all starting and stopping together; they show pride in their considerable achievements. The performances are of a high standard and are an exceptional and moving experience. This is the result of total dedication by the music co-ordinator and her colleagues and the extremely well motivated pupils and students.
116. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management, and shows very good vision for the development of the subject. A new scheme of work has been introduced recently, which relates well to the Programmes of Study for the subject and has also inbuilt assessment opportunities which the co-ordinator has related to both P (performance indicators) and National Curriculum level descriptors. The use of ICT is presently underdeveloped but the co-ordinator intends to introduce a program that teaches musical notation in a pictorial form. Music is taught to Year 10 but not Year 11 due to the pupils' college and work experience commitments. Resources and accommodation are both good. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Four lessons of physical education were observed during the inspection and discussions were held with the teachers. Records of pupils' achievements were also scrutinised.

Provision in physical education is **good**.



## Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall; this results in good achievement by pupils.
- Provision for swimming is very good.
- All pupils and students follow Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) accredited courses in swimming and diving.
- Dance activities are underdeveloped.
- Assessment procedures are not in place.
- There is no development plan for the subject.

## Commentary

117. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good post 16. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection when progress in Years 7 to 9 was only satisfactory. Pupils and students enjoy their learning and they are achieving well. Team teaching is working well although there needs to be, at times, more demonstration of skills. There is a good pace and vigour to the lessons. Good use is made by teachers of praise and encouragement, which successfully motivates pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are generally directed well and provide good support to pupils in their practice of taught skills.
118. There is no specialist accommodation for the teaching of the subject. The school chapel is used both as a gymnasium and a school hall. However, the school has made good efforts to overcome this problem by using the local recreation centre facilities. At the centre the pupils have access to racquet courts, a fitness suite and the swimming pool.
119. The swimming is led by the school's resource officer who is also a qualified ASA teacher. Very detailed assessment undertaken by the teacher shows that the majority of pupils are making very good progress in their learning of swimming skills and are achieving very well.
120. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has produced the school's own scheme of work to provide for its pupils. However, dance activities are underdeveloped. This was an observation at the previous inspection and remains unsatisfactory.
121. Management is unsatisfactory. There is no development plan for the subject; there is presently no system or provision for the assessment and recording of pupils' learning. Consequently, there is no data on the continuity of pupils' learning and progress to inform future planning or provide information about pupils' achievements. This is not the case for swimming where all pupils take, and are assessed for, ASA accredited grades and awards. Post 16 students use the centre as part of their leisure skills. Resources are satisfactory with several useful items of large apparatus including a horse and a trampoline. This is evidence of satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons of PSHE were observed and the work of pupils was scrutinised. Discussions took place between teachers and the inspectors.

Provision in PSHE and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The curriculum is good.
- Resources to help learning are good for the younger pupils and very good post 16.
- Management of post 16 provision is good, but arrangements in the rest of the school are not as well organised.

## Commentary

122. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in PSHE and citizenship. As a result of their study of PSHE, pupils with complex needs in Years 7, 8 and 9 know why they must keep the kitchen clean. In citizenship lessons, they pick up litter in the grounds and help to recycle a variety of glass and paper. They recognise the value of these activities. In their preparation for work experience, Year 11 pupils achieve well in realising the dangers of some of the machinery they will encounter. They have some knowledge of the Employers' Liability Act, the Health and Safety at Work Act and other laws. From this knowledge, high ability pupils realise that as employees, they are covered by stringent legal protection.
123. **Teaching is consistently satisfactory with much that is based on practical action, accessible to all pupils. The citizenship curriculum has been well integrated into the PSHE curriculum. Co-ordination is satisfactory, but assessment is informal and requires to be put on a surer footing. Citizenship as a subject has been introduced since the last inspection. PSHE was not inspected separately at that time.**

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	2	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	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	3
How well pupils learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	2	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	4	4

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