

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS SPECIAL SCHOOL

Fareham

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116618

Headteacher: Mrs S Chalmers

Lead inspector: Mr J Plumb

Dates of inspection: 21st – 25th June 2004

Inspection number: 258995

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Special Community
Age range of pupils: 2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 95

School address: Patchway Drive
Oldbury Way
Fareham
Hampshire
Postcode: PO14 3BN

Telephone number: 01329 845730
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Eric Nixon

Date of previous inspection: 13/10/1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Francis is a special school, which currently educates 94 pupils and one girl who attends part time aged 2 to 19. Boys outnumber girls very significantly. Ninety-one pupils have statements of special educational needs and seven are undergoing statutory assessment. Attainment on entry is well below the national average. The school is designated as a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties but also caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and pupils on the autistic spectrum with very complex communication and behavioural difficulties. The medical needs of pupils, particularly children in the nursery, are more complex than at the time of the last inspection. 13.27 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are average although a few experience considerable disadvantage. Four pupils are in public care. There are few minority ethnic pupils and very few pupils with English as an additional language. The family support services are a strong feature of the school's multi-agency work. The school has embraced the government's strategy: *'Every child matters'*. The school has successfully achieved the *'Investor in People'* status and an *'Achievement Award'*.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16930	Mr J Plumb	Lead inspector	English as an additional language, science, religious education
9173	Ms S McDermott	Lay inspector	
17848	Ms B Clark	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history
28106	Ms M Majid	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education, citizenship, post-16
20024	Mr P Wright	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with a number of very good features. It provides good value for money. Teaching and learning and achievement are very good in the Foundation Stage and good throughout the rest of the school. The leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The curriculum, quality of teaching and achievement in the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Teaching and learning is good throughout the rest of the school.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher inspire and empower all staff.
- The provision for additional special educational needs is very good because of the high quality support pupils receive from the special needs assistants.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not receive a programme in modern foreign languages.
- Not all subject co-ordinators consistently monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects for which they have a lead responsibility.
- Achievement in independence and relevant life skills is very good.
- Links with parents are very good and with the community are excellent.
- Achievement in communication is good but higher attaining pupils could do better in writing.
- Inclusion opportunities in mainstream schools and colleges are excellent.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good. Very good co-operation and planning between health and education means that both medical and educational needs are met under one roof.
- Although pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory they do not have enough time to develop their skills in individual lessons.
- Achievement is very good in physical education because of the very good teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures to show very small stepped gains in learning are not sharp enough.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is good. There has been good progress in respect of all of the key issues identified for development then. As recognised by the school there is room for further improvement in assessment procedures and for better consistency in the information provided for parents. Other important aspects of the school's life are better than at that time, particularly the quality of teaching and achievement. Opportunities for pupils with complex needs to work alongside their peers in classes are better than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall. In the Foundation Stage it is very good. Throughout the school achievement in PSHE is very good. Achievement in pupils' development of independence and relevant life skills such as shopping and preparing a meal is very good. In communication, mathematics and science achievement is good but high attainers do not always achieve as well as they could with their writing because there is not always sufficient challenge. Pupils with additional

and complex needs achieve well. Achievement in physical education and swimming in particular is very good. Overall, achievement in ICT is satisfactory because pupils' experience of ICT is sometimes too narrow. Achievement in the further education centre is good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Relationships are excellent. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the rest of the school including the sixth form it is **good** overall. Teaching of PSHE and swimming is very good. In English, mathematics, science and religious education teaching is good. Insufficient use is made of ICT in teaching subjects across the curriculum. Although assessment is good overall it is not sufficiently refined to demonstrate the very small gains pupils who appear to be standing still in their development make in their learning.

The curriculum is good except for the lack of provision for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. The school takes very good care of the pupils. Partnership with parents is very good. Links with the community are excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and inspire and empower all staff. Management is good overall. Many aspects of management are very good. Not all subject managers consistently fulfil the full role expected of a co-ordinator of a subject. Overall, governance is good but the challenge from governors is not always sharp and not all statutory responsibilities are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers speak very highly of the school and consider that the care provided for their children is very good. A few parents expressed a concern about inconsistency in the use of the home/school book to keep them up to date on a regular basis and inspection findings support what they say. The pupils enjoy coming to school and they really like their teachers. They consider that they are well taught and valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the management skills of subject co-ordinators and ensure that they monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
 - Raise standards of achievement in writing.
 - Ensure that ICT is used more consistently across subjects and so improve pupils' achievement in ICT skills.
 - Fine tune assessment procedures to demonstrate small stepped gains in all core subjects.
- and, to meet statutory requirements:
- Ensure provision is made for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9.
 - Ensure that the minor omissions in the school's prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are addressed as discussed with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. Throughout the rest of the school achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities to enable pupils to develop their independence and relevant life skills.
- Early communication skills, speaking and listening and reading are promoted well but there are fewer opportunities for higher attaining pupils to develop their skills in writing.
- Achievement in mathematics is good.
- Pupils with additional and more complex needs, including those with autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties are supported well in developing their skills.
- Although pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in other lessons.
- Achievement in swimming is very good.
- The lack of teaching of modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 results in unsatisfactory achievement.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the development of important social skills and relevant life skills is very good across the school because every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' independence and to prepare them to cope in life. In the Foundation Stage children's self-help skills and social behaviour are developed well through very good feeding programmes. By Year 2, many pupils sit and eat lunch sensibly and all are beginning to learn to wash their hands with support. By Year 6, pupils have learned to use a wide range of household equipment safely and Year 9 pupils have developed basic cooking and shopping skills. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have developed good communication skills and relevant life skills such as being able to wash and dry their hair and iron their clothes. Post-16 students gain in independence as they are encouraged to shop in the local supermarket and plan and prepare healthy meals for lunch. Pupils with complex needs experience as much independence as possible, as evidenced by a pupil with complex communication and behavioural needs who was encouraged to change independently for physical education. Because of these excellent opportunities a further education student is able to find his way across a complex college campus and access the computer suite quite independently. As far as is possible pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are encouraged to make independent choices, for example by rolling on to a switch and making a statement in the sensory room: *'by stating I don't want those lights on any more'*. Through the use of a picture exchange communication system (PECS) pupils with autism are encouraged to make independent choices about what they want at snack time.
2. Achievement in early communication skills, speaking and listening and reading is good across the school. In writing achievement is satisfactory. Effective use is made of signing and pictures to support pupils in gaining confidence to communicate with increased confidence throughout the school. However, there is not always sufficient challenge and planning is not yet robust enough to consistently develop the writing skills of the highest attainers. Through its own self-evaluation the school has identified that not all teachers consistently expect higher attaining pupils to go that one step further with their mark-making skills and begin to form the shape of letters. Too little use is made of computers to support writing and this at times impedes learning.

3. In mathematics achievement is good across the school. As pupils move through the school they become increasingly confident in the use of real money. They also gain in confidence in telling the time. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are fully included in all experiences. Higher attaining pupils make good gains in beginning to understand mathematical words such as longer and shorter when planning journeys over different distances. Achievement in science is good across the school. Not only do pupils with very complex medical needs make rapid gains through experiencing a push and a pull they also improve their muscle tone as physiotherapy is built into their activities. With guidance and careful support higher attaining pupils begin to carry out investigations with increased independence in a safe environment. The highest attainers are beginning to record their findings. Although achievement in ICT is satisfactory overall, the experience that pupils have in a few classes is too narrow and this impedes learning. Despite the deficiencies that still exist achievement is much better than at the time of the last inspection and is improving rapidly as teachers gain in confidence in using ICT.
4. Achievement in physical education is very good, particularly in swimming. Higher attainers in Years 7 to 9 swim 400+ metres using a range of different strokes. Pupils with complex communication and behavioural difficulties make very good gains in confidence in the pool because of the very well planned swimming sessions. All pupils experience the water and have much fun through play activities which make a valuable contribution to their learning. In religious education achievement is good because teaching is relevant and learning is fun and enjoyable. An imaginative and creative approach enables pupils to learn through play and to use their senses to experience cultural diversity. Too little evidence could be gathered to make secure judgements on achievement in other subjects but it is clearly evident that pupils have a rich experience, except for modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 and so achievement is unsatisfactory in this subject.
5. Because of a dynamic and exciting programme based on play and fun in the Foundation Stage achievement amongst children is very good. The use of sensory stories and the tactile approach to teaching results in these children making rapid gains in communication and the development of their social skills. Achievement amongst post-16 students is good and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Achievement in reading in the further education centre is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. However, as recognised by the school, achievement in literacy and numeracy in the further education centre could be better and there is a plan to bring about improvement.
6. The achievement of pupils with additional and complex special needs is good as measured against the targets on their individual education plans in relation to their complex needs. Pupils with autism are exceptionally well managed and included in relevant learning experiences such as the science lesson on forces in Key Stage 2. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve well and this is a significant improvement on that found at the time of the last inspection and reflects the improved teaching. Skilful and meticulous planning results in pupils with visual impairment, hearing impairment and complex medical needs being well catered for and so they achieve well including the pupil who is so severe in his needs that he requires a constant physiotherapy input. The few minority ethnic pupils and those with English as an additional language achieve well measured against their starting point when they enter school. Everything possible is done to ensure that pupils in public care achieve their very best.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils have **very good** attitudes and behaviour. The promotion of personal development is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is extremely successful in teaching pupils to know right from wrong and to behave appropriately in social situations.
- The confidence and self-esteem of the pupils is bolstered by very effective and straightforward use of praise and rewards.
- Relationships are excellent.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to the wealth of activities on offer.
- The school successfully strives to encourage all pupils to be as independent as possible.
- Opportunities are missed to extend pupils' appreciation of beauty and understanding of issues beyond the material and tangible.
- Pupils do not have enough chances to experience multi-cultural United Kingdom.

Commentary

7. The promotion of moral and social development is particularly strong and effective with resulting very good behaviour. This aspect has improved further from the last inspection. Throughout the school day teachers and special needs assistants work very effectively with pupils to show them how to behave sensibly in a variety of different situations. A very good range of trips out of school and visitors into school give pupils very valuable experiences of interacting with other people. The regular integration of many pupils into local schools and colleges is proving very useful in introducing the pupils to their mainstream peers. During the inspection pupils got on very well with peers visiting from the local primary school and behaved impeccably with them in the soft play room.
8. The management of behaviour is very calm and consistent. Staff do not make excuses for inappropriate behaviour and are firm and fair in explaining why certain actions are not acceptable. The management of often complex behaviour is very effective. Teachers and support staff are very good at reading the signals when pupils start to become unsettled and are quick to find strategies to remedy the situation and keep the pupils interested in the task in hand. Last year the school reluctantly excluded one pupil permanently after a great deal of close work with the family and support agencies because it was considered the pupil would be better schooled elsewhere. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment anywhere in the school.
9. Teachers and support staff are very positive with the pupils. They are constantly finding reasons to praise and say "well done" to pupils. Staff know how much they can stretch the pupils and even very small steps, sometimes imperceptible to the visitor, are given due praise and attention. Pupils try hard because they are delighted when they please the adults. Parents say that their children are very proud to receive certificates at the end of the week for good behaviour or work. The confidence and self-worth of the pupils comes on in leaps and bounds due to the excellent relationships between pupils and their teachers.
10. Pupils love their time at school. They arrive very happily in the morning and go willingly to their classes. The youngest pupils settle in very quickly and are soon able to say good bye to their parents or escorts without tears. The older pupils who completed questionnaires especially like the rapport they have with their teachers and support assistants. As one pupil said "I like teachers; they are friendly". Pupils participate very enthusiastically and confidently in an exciting range of activities. They look forward to the regular outings in the minibuses and have few qualms about leaving the familiar surroundings of the school environment. At Fareham College the older pupils thoroughly enjoyed an energetic game of football and returned to school full of their achievement on the football pitch. The staff act as very good role models for a very positive outlook on life.
11. The promotion of independence is very much at the heart of the school. Parents are particularly keen to see their children become as self-reliant as possible and appreciate the very good work done by the staff. Around the school pupils are given a good range of small jobs and responsibilities. For example in an art lesson the Key Stage 3 pupils helped to fetch

the water, put out the paint and found the over-shirts as part of the lesson preparation. Lunchtimes are pleasant occasions when pupils learn to be sociable and independent in their choosing and eating without too much obvious help and assistance. Outside the pupils are allowed to have free run of the spacious grounds, so learning to look after themselves as they have a go at running, climbing and swinging. The careful eyes of the support staff are not far away, but they only step in to help when necessary.

12. Overall the promotion of spiritual development is good, with a particular emphasis on self-worth and self-esteem. However, there are sometimes chances missed in lessons to draw the pupils' attention to the wonder of the world or the sheer joy of learning. Candle time provides a useful forum for pupils to discuss happenings in the day, but the abler pupils would be further stretched if they were given more opportunities to put themselves in the place of others and talk about these others' feelings and beliefs.
13. Cultural development is good. The school is working well to foster the pupils' understanding of other countries and their life styles. Visiting story tellers and dance workshops give a good flavour of different cultural backgrounds. Display around the school shows understanding of art, music and ways of life from around the world. The area which needs extending and which would complement the pupils' very good social development is providing more of a chance for the pupils to meet and experience the wealth of different peoples who now live in the United Kingdom.

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	78	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	1
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	11	0	0

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

Attendance

The attendance of the pupils is **very good**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons sometimes do not start sufficiently promptly at the published start of the school day because of difficulties with the transport.
- Many of the pupils' care needs are met in school so they have few days off for medical reasons.

Commentary

14. Considering that many pupils have complex medical needs, the attendance rate is very good. It has improved over the past few years and features very little unauthorised attendance. The very good attendance is the result of the school working very successfully to be the hub for pupils' care and education, so reducing the number of days pupils need to have off for medical and therapy appointments.
15. Most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day. However, a significant number of pupils are late, mostly for transport reasons beyond their control. Staff are always glad to see the pupils whatever time they arrive, but the school is not methodically recording lateness so that they have a useful bank of information should they need follow up persistently late transport.

	National Special Average %	St Francis Special %
Attendance	89.9	93.9
Authorised absence	8.8	6.0
Unauthorised absence	1.3	0.1

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The curriculum is very good in the Foundation Stage and good throughout the rest of the school. The school provides a very good level of care and guidance for pupils. Links with parents and carers and other schools and colleges are very good. Links with the community are excellent.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are **very good**. Throughout the rest of the school teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment in the core subjects is **good** and improving. This is a much improved situation from that found at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is challenging in the Foundation Stage and is based on a very effective multi-disciplinary approach.
- Special needs assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning and enable those with the most complex needs to be fully included with their peers in lessons.
- Challenging behaviour is very well managed.
- The teaching of independence and relevant life skills is very good.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support teaching across the subjects.
- Expectations in the teaching of writing are not always high enough.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to swim because teaching of swimming is very good. The teaching of physical education is very good overall.
- The opportunities pupils have to be included with their peers in mainstream schools are excellent.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (7%)	22 (37%)	24 (41%)	8 (13%)	1 (2%)	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.

16. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science is good. Pupils make rapid gains in communication skills and in their reading because of the effective strategies used to develop these skills. Good use is made of signing and symbols to support pupils in developing their communication skills. The writing skills of higher attaining pupils are not always taken on as far as they could be because they are not always challenged to take their mark-making that one step further and form correctly shaped letters. In mathematics pupils gain relevant life skills such as using real money when they go shopping and developing the skill of telling the time. Science teaching enables high attainers to experience conducting investigations with a high level of independence and through fun activities involving pushing and pulling, the muscle tone of those pupils who need it is strengthened. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory. Not all teachers are yet sufficiently confident to use ICT to support them in teaching the range of subjects they have to teach. Opportunities are missed to use computers to support pupils with their writing. Teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and physical education is very good. There are very significant strengths in the teaching of swimming. In religious education teaching is good overall, but not all teachers are secure in their subject knowledge when it comes to making the locally agreed syllabus relevant to the pupils. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
17. Teachers know pupils well and are particularly successful in encouraging them and engaging them in their learning. In a very good science lesson on forces the special educational needs assistant knew just the right moment to engage a pupil with very challenging behaviour so that he made the maximum gain possible in his learning. In another lesson excellent teaching by a special educational needs assistant enabled the therapy needs of the pupils to be met as they pushed a 'tummy cruncher ball' as well as enabling them to take turns in a meaningful science activity. Excellent teaching in a religious education lesson resulted in just the right question at just the right moment engaging a high attaining pupil and taking him forward in his knowledge and understanding of an Egyptian myth.
18. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively to manage challenging behaviour and pupils on the autistic spectrum begin to share and take turns on a few occasions because of the patience shown to them. All teaching focuses on developing pupils' independence skills and no opportunity is missed to improve a pupil's capacity to work independently.
19. Dynamic, exciting and imaginative teaching in the Foundation Stage enables physiotherapy to be delivered through very good learning experiences. The quality of teaching in the further education centre is good and improving. The further education teacher develops students' life skills exceptionally well through a range of interesting activities but recognises the need to improve further the quality of provision for literacy and numeracy.
20. Throughout the school the promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are included successfully with their peers and because of teaching tailored to their individual needs their achievement is good. For reasons of dignity and respect no matter how complex the needs of an individual may be she/he is not allowed to get away with bad behaviour. There are considerable strengths in the teaching of pupils with additional and complex needs. Very good use is made of the sensory room to support pupils with severe visual impairment as they track light as part of their science experience. Skilful intervention from a talented special needs assistant enables a post-16 student with extremely challenging behaviour to access as many learning experiences as possible. A Key Stage 3 pupil with complex difficulties accessed a meaningful swimming experience because of the high quality support he received in managing his behaviour and in enabling him to relax into the experience. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils in public care and they are taught well. Minority ethnic pupils and those with EAL are taught well.
21. Assessment procedures are good. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Clear objectives emerge from annual reviews and are used to inform targets on individual education plans. These plans are used to monitor the progress pupils make in

relation to their first special educational need and this system works well. A system has been introduced to monitor the very small stepped gains pupils make over time in PSHE, communication, numeracy, science and ICT. But because the system is cumbersome to manage it is not used consistently across all classes. The school has identified that its assessment system needs to be revised to record more accurately the small steps of progress pupils make and intends to adopt a refined scheme being developed within the county. A scheme is being developed that breaks the P scales down more intricately so that the incredibly small steps made by pupils can be recognised and celebrated.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the breadth of curriculum opportunities has improved since the previous inspection the school still does not give pupils in Years 7 to 9 the opportunity to study a modern foreign language.
- The school caters well for the special educational needs of all pupils, particularly those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- A very wide range of enrichment activities is provided to make learning interesting.
- Planning for pupils to develop their personal and social skills, and their understanding of citizenship, is very good.
- The new building for the post-16 students provides a very good space for these older pupils to learn to be independent. However, there are still deficiencies in the accommodation that restrict the learning experiences that can be offered to pupils.

Commentary

22. The school provides a good range of learning experiences for pupils which is relevant to their needs. Most subjects have detailed planning which enables teachers to plan work systematically, so that pupils make good progress. Significant developments in curriculum planning have addressed most of the deficiencies identified in the previous report. However, the school has failed to address the statutory requirement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 to study a modern foreign language.
23. Curriculum provision for pupils who have additional educational needs is very good. Good planning and very good attention to individual needs ensures that pupils and students with additional or especially complex needs have full access to a wide range of learning opportunities. For example, there are specific sessions set aside for pupils to be trained in the use of signing while others receive very good speech and language support from therapists and fully trained support staff. Detailed and practical individual education plans and behaviour management plans have also played a major part in meeting their needs. This means that they can participate very well in lessons.
24. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. All pupils are given access to a wide range of visits and activities which make the curriculum relevant and stimulating. The school has very good contacts with local sports clubs, including Southampton and Portsmouth Football Clubs and Hampshire County Cricket Club. The arts are well served by many visits to theatres and galleries and by having artists, theatre groups and musicians in the school.
25. Pupils have access to a very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. As a result, pupils make very good progress developing their independence, personal care, communication and social skills. In addition to the taught curriculum, staff make the most of every opportunity to encourage pupils to learn relevant skills. For example, at lunch

time and when changing for physical education, pupils are patiently helped to become more independent. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are prepared well for leaving school. Careers education, links with college and workplace learning all make an effective contribution to pupils' education.

26. Accommodation is satisfactory. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection, with the building on site of the attractive and practical further education unit and the addition of the combined library and parents' room. However, many classrooms are under the recommended size for pupils with severe learning needs and there is still no area for Key Stage 4 pupils to use for recreation and to improve even further their skills of independent living. The room for design and technology is too small and so is not adequate to accommodate pupils who are less mobile. The outside area is very good and gives pupils a good level of independence in safe and secure surroundings. Resources are satisfactory overall. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good. The number of special support assistants is very good. They work very closely with the teachers to provide expert support to the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **very good**. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance. The views of pupils are valued and they contribute well to daily community responsibilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff know the particular needs of each pupil very well and give them very close care and attention.
- The trust between pupils and staff is extremely well established and leads to confident pupils who are at ease with learning.
- More opportunities could be provided to enable pupils to understand how to make democratic decisions for the good of the school community.

Commentary

27. The safety and security of all pupils remains paramount at St Francis. The deputy headteacher is meticulous in assessing all activities for the best possible safety of the pupils. Not only activities and resources in school but also trips out of school are rigorously checked with the particular behaviour and quirks of each individual pupil in mind. Child protection procedures are very well established and are known by all staff. With the safety and health of both the pupils and staff in mind, significant and well directed amounts of money have been spent on training staff in the lifting, handling and restraint of pupils. First aid and medical needs are very well supervised by the resident school nurse. In the knowledge that there are very secure health and safety procedures, staff are confident to give pupils an extra level of independence for the benefit of their personal development.
28. All staff are very well versed in the pastoral and care needs of each and every pupil. The few children who are looked after in public care or foster homes are tracked very effectively and they are achieving as well as their peers. The excellent communication between all adults in the school ensures that any changes in a pupil's development, medical or home circumstances is picked up extremely quickly and threaded into daily care. The school staff and professionals in the therapy centre work very effectively together to dovetail education and care. As far as possible medical and therapy attention fits around the education of the pupil. The valuable bonus of having many care professionals on site means absence for medical reasons is kept to a minimum. The school continues to give high quality pastoral support and guidance, although there is still room to improve the accurate and "small step" tracking of pupils' academic progress.

29. Pupils look up to the staff in the school and have great belief in their advice and support. All pupils can turn to at least one adult, and often many more, if they have a worry or concern. They have a go at a great variety of activities because they know that they are safe and they trust their teachers' faith in their ability. Right from the time they join the school in the Nursery class strong relationships are built up between the pupils, staff and very importantly the parents. As a parent of a child in the nursery commented "I have absolute trust in how the school looks after my daughter", a confidence which rubs off very effectively on her child. At the other end of the school the older students are prepared very well and they move on confidently to further education.
30. The staff are very quick to react if any pupils seem agitated or have a concern which they articulate. On a one-to-one basis the worries of pupils are sorted out very effectively. However there are insufficient opportunities for the older or more able pupils to have a say in how their school is run. The school council is currently in abeyance and apart from the recent Ofsted questionnaires there has been no formal survey of pupils. The development of citizenship within the very good PSHE programme would be strengthened with a more structured forum for pupils to learn about democracy and take decisions for the good of their school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is **very good**. Links with the community are **excellent**. The school has **very good** links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wealth of stimulating and varied links with the community is an excellent asset to the personal and social development of all pupils.
- The school is proactive in finding innovative ways to help parents receive the best possible support in an accessible and cohesive way.
- Parents are very appreciative of the school and support their children's learning very well.
- Regular visits to a good range of schools and college extend the experiences of the pupils very well.

Commentary

31. St Francis is a very outward looking school. It has a very high profile both in the local community and within educational circles. The headteacher and her staff go out of their way to introduce the pupils to as many experiences out of school as possible. These outings and trips provide a definite boost to the pupils' personal and social development and extend their learning in many other areas of the curriculum. Local businesses, charities and organisations are very good supporters of the school and keenly fundraise for extra resources for the pupils. The building of the new Jo Collet House and the establishment of the sensory area in this post-16 area have both benefited enormously from local fund raising. The links with the community have improved even more since the last inspection.
32. The school is very much alive to the concerns and stresses of parents with disabled children. The headteacher has been single minded in spearheading a pilot project to provide "joined up" support for parents with a single access point for health, social services and education. Not only does this mean less time consuming duplication for parents and a better service for the pupils, but also demonstrates the school's strong commitment to the recent government paper "Every child matters". The role of the parents is greatly valued and home and school work together in a very effective partnership for the good of the pupils. On a daily basis staff are open and available to parents for advice and guidance. Particularly strong support is given to parents of the older students who are moving on from St Francis. Staff allay their fears and provide them with confidence that their children will continue to thrive in college.

33. The school works very effectively with parents for the good of their children. The Ofsted meeting and questionnaires revealed high levels of parental satisfaction with all the school does for their children. Parents are keen to see their children become as independent as possible and they take on the school's suggestions positively. Nearly all parents turn up for the parent teacher meetings and attendance at end of term celebrations and productions is impressive. The school is quick to respond to requests from parents or to sense where training might be needed. Recently useful workshops have been held on Makaton and the "Confident Parent, Confident Kids" course has been successfully adapted for parents of children with severe learning needs. The Friends of St Francis not only raise significant amounts towards resources, but also provide a welcome support group for parents of special educational needs children to share concerns and ideas. Partnership with parents continues to be a strength of the school.
34. The school has established very useful links with special schools, mainstream primary schools and further education colleges. When individual pupils are considered independent and confident enough, they are given the valuable chance to join local primary school classes for part of the week. Here they can benefit from socialising with their mainstream peers and participating in the full primary curriculum. The return visit of primary school pupils provided excellent opportunities for pupils to learn and play together sensibly and boost their social skills. The Fareham College link is particularly beneficial in familiarising the students with adult education before they move on.
35. Overall parents receive a good amount of information about school events, although there are still legally required items missing from the prospectus and annual governors' report to parents. The teachers give detailed accounts of pastoral and personal development, but the annual reports do not all consistently give a clear message on how each pupil has improved in each subject area over the year. Most teachers are conscientious in completing home/school books regularly. However a few parents, who cannot rely on their children to keep them up to date because of communication difficulties, are justifiably concerned that they do not receive daily feedback in the home / school book.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Management is **good with some very good** features. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher with the support of the deputy has enabled the school to fulfil its aims to ensure that all members of the school community are valued.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.
- Additional complex special needs are very well managed, including challenging behaviour.
- The management of inclusion opportunities in mainstream schools and college is excellent.
- The school development plan is good.
- Financial planning is very good.
- Governors do not fully meet their statutory responsibilities.
- Not all subject co-ordinators are sufficiently consistent and robust about monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and so cannot always share the best practice in subjects across the school.
- Performance management is closely related to continuing professional development.
- Induction procedures for staff new to the school are very good.

Commentary

36. The headteacher provides a very clear sense of direction for the school. In partnership with the deputy headteacher she has successfully created a distinct identity for this school which empowers staff and inspires them to be innovative. The aims focus on enabling all pupils to have a wide range of experiences. They access excellent opportunities in mainstream schools. Pupils with profound difficulties are included in all experiences with their peers in school. Improvements since the last inspection have been good, particularly the provision for post-16 students and for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Because of the very good leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher staff morale is very good. Teachers and teaching assistants consider that their work is valued and so give of their very best to support pupils' achievement.
37. Overall, management is good. The management of the Foundation Stage is very good as is the management of students with challenging behaviour throughout the school. The management of the post-16 provision is good although the school recognises that there has not yet been sufficient time for the leadership of the new teacher in charge to have had its full impact. The management role of subject co-ordinators is inconsistent across the school, particularly in respect of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects for which they have a responsibility. Sickness has been a barrier to improvement. The deputy headteacher has doubled up as site manager, manager of the Foundation Stage and co-ordinator for religious education. Quite understandably he has not had the time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in religious education.
38. The management of additional special educational needs is very good. Joined up thinking and planning enables the medical, therapy and educational needs to be met in school. The headteacher has been successful in enabling the school to be developed as a 'one stop shop' to meet the medical and educational needs of the pupils on site and so is ahead of the game in respect of the strategy as outlined in *'Every child matters'*. Although the school has a suite of therapy rooms and as appropriate pupils are given 1:1 therapy to improve their communication skills and to meet their physiotherapy needs, the overriding culture within the school is to provide therapy through the curriculum. The excellent special needs assistants are central to making this philosophy work and their high performance justifies the high spending on them. During the inspection they were observed teaching at an excellent standard, skilfully managing very challenging behaviour and as a result making a very valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils.
39. The school development plan is good. Priorities in the plan focus on improving the quality of education and raising standards for pupils. Financial planning is very good. The headteacher and governors are adept at tapping into additional pockets of funding in the interests of the students as evidenced by the development of the excellent accommodation for the further education centre on site. Financial control is excellent and the small carry forward is targeted on improving the accommodation for pupils in Key Stage 4.
40. Governance is good. A number of governors are new and are rapidly establishing themselves. Their support and help is a strong feature and the chair of governors visits the school regularly. The culture of challenge is developing well but is not yet sufficiently robust and not all statutory responsibilities are met both in respect of the curriculum as outlined above and there are minor omissions in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents as discussed with the school.
41. Performance management and continuing professional development are very good and the school has been accredited by *Investor in People*. Both teachers and support assistants benefit from performance management. Although development is focussed on pupils' needs, the school is very interested in the personal development of the individual and special needs assistants are supported in gaining a NVQ in *Education and Child Care* and some have been encouraged to embark on a degree course. Induction procedures are very good for new staff.

A recently appointed special needs assistant said: ‘ *My induction was brilliant and I have never been in a job before which is so fulfilling*’. The headteacher is creative in recruiting teachers from mainstream and training them in the school and so recruitment of staff is not an issue.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,180,355
Total expenditure	1,194,496
Expenditure per pupil	12,844

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	61,814
Balance carried forward to the next	47,673

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Sessions were observed in all the areas of learning and a visit to a local park was seen. Children's records and their work were analysed and discussions were held with key staff.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** in all the areas of learning. The majority of children of nursery and reception age are in the nursery class. Only one child in this class attends full time. The eight others attend on a sessional basis, with most attending at least three sessions each week. The other four children of nursery and reception age share a class with pupils in Year 1. All the evidence gathered shows that children achieve very well, as a result of the individualised nature of the high quality support they receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well as a result of very good planning for individual needs.
- Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage.
- All staff involved work together very well as a team to help children meet their personal targets.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Home-school links are very effective.
- Children are given a good range of experiences through the effective use of the very good accommodation and resources.

Commentary

42. Children's' achievements in all the areas of learning are very good because the quality of teaching is very good in each area. Very good planning allows all children to experience all the areas of learning at their own level. Children achieve very well as they move through the Foundation Stage. All children make as much progress as could be expected, given the very complex nature of their special needs and many make even more progress than would be expected.
43. The school puts a very high priority on the development of **communication, language and literacy skills**. All staff encourage children to communicate at every opportunity, using signs, symbols and speech, as appropriate. Children's contributions are valued and celebrated and video records enable staff and parents to see for themselves the very good progress made. An example of this showed one pupil at the early stages of using picture exchange communication system (PECS), needing a great deal of adult support. Later clips showed her progress, through to her pointing to the relevant picture on her own. In literacy, a pupil was enjoying a story about "Thomas the Tank Engine" and showed real pleasure in it by smiling and blowing raspberries excitedly. Staff mark the start and finish of each activity with chimes and bells, which helps to attract the children's attention and adds to their sense of routine.
44. **Mathematical development** is very well promoted through stories and rhymes which are used exceptionally well to introduce the concepts of counting and numbers. Space and shape are emphasised across a wide range of activities and mathematical language is used well by staff. Routines are emphasised to show the passage of time, "What comes next?" In a cookery session, children add ingredients and hear words like "more" and "less". Teachers' planning and children's records show that this area of learning is embedded in individual learning programmes. For example one pupil is able to take hold of some plastic, 3-dimensional shapes and post them into a tub. Another is able to reach out and hold onto a plastic shape.

45. Very effective planning ensures children's **personal, social and emotional development** is very good. Children respond well to the familiar routines and settle into school quickly. They are encouraged to be as independent as possible. A few children can indicate preferences by pointing and a few can use pictures or symbols to do this. Feeding programmes, devised in consultation with speech and language therapists, develop communication and self-help skills, as well as social behaviour. As part of the normal classroom routine, children all sit in either their chairs or in specialist seating at certain points during the day for short periods. This reinforces the social nature of the group. All are able to co-operate with staff in a one-to-one situation. Children take a real interest in each other. For example on a trip to the park, one child showed real excitement at watching one of her class running excitedly around with a member of staff, even though she could not join in herself.
46. **Children's physical development** is very good. Photographic, video and written records show that children make very good progress. All staff in the multi-disciplinary team are very skilled in using a very wide range of support to enable children to experience and contribute to activities. Time is carefully planned for and built in to the curriculum for re-positioning children and making them comfortable so that it contributes very well to children's physical development. The outside play area is well constructed for the needs of this group of children and is used effectively to develop physical skills. It is supported by visits to local parks where children are given opportunities to extend their physical skills.
47. **Creative development** is very good, with music playing a particularly important role in all aspects of learning. Music and singing form part of most sessions and children have opportunities to handle and play different instruments. All, including those with the most complex needs, are helped to touch a big drum and feel the vibrations. Children have chances to dress up, but the nature of their difficulties makes imaginative play problematic for the majority of them. One pupil spent a very happy morning walking round wearing a striking feather boa. The staff are very skilled at allowing the children time to explore the experiences on offer and to respond and reflect in their own way. This patience on the part of staff makes the whole experience much more meaningful for all.
48. Children have very good opportunities to develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world** around them. They are encouraged to smell different scents and touch and explore a range of materials. Regular outings provide first hand experiences of different environments, for example, local parks. Access to ICT is very good and individual records show that children are learning to use switches to indicate choices. One pupil quickly made the connection between moving the computer mouse and the fact that this made something happen on the screen. She then proceeded to practise this skill by bursting 73 balloons on the screen. Staff use direct teaching well, in one instance playing Hide and Seek with a piece of brightly coloured cloth to very good effect. At all times, staff are alert to the opportunities available for children and make the most of them. Staff enable children to satisfy their curiosity, using all of their senses. Bubbles, music, tinfoil sheets and gentle massage were all used together with one child to very good effect.
49. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. Lesson planning is very thorough and is appropriately focused on individual needs. This enables children to learn very well. All staff including visiting staff and therapists, know the children very well and help them to build on earlier learning. They work together very effectively in caring for children and helping them to explore their environment through a wide range of multi-sensory activities. Staff work very effectively with individual children to establish a routine suited to individual needs, so that all children can participate well and make sufficient progress. Progress is recorded throughout the day and signs and symbols are used where appropriate to help children to understand the structure of the day.
50. Links with parents are very good and home-school books are much appreciated by parents. A few parents bring and collect their children themselves and where this is possible, very good information exchange takes place. Good information is received from parents and other

professionals when children enter the school. Staff carry out a period of further assessment before drawing up individual targets for children. Their assessment information is then used as a firm basis for planning and measuring progress during the Reception year. Very well equipped and attractive classroom areas and very good outdoor play facilities contribute particularly well to the very good achievement seen in children's physical development. Facilities for toileting are good and specialist equipment such as hoists and standing frames are well catered for.

51. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and reflect the commitment of all staff involved to enable all children to participate fully in all areas of their learning and to be successful. Staff celebrate children's achievements and share this celebration with parents.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 to 4

ENGLISH

Seven English lessons were seen and Inspectors looked at pupils' work in all year groups. Pupils do not have opportunities to study a modern foreign language.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' literacy targets within their individual education plans are used to effectively guide and monitor their individual progress.
- Pupils receive frequent opportunities to improve their skills in communication and reading.
- Writing skills are not practised as well as they might be.
- Teaching is effective in ensuring that all pupils achieve well.
- ICT is not being used effectively enough to support pupils' learning.
- The subject managers are clear about how they want to develop the subject further

Commentary

52. Pupils achieve well in English. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when achievement was mostly satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in their development of communication skills in class, around the school and in the community. Throughout the school day, teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills and encourage pupils of all abilities to express their views and preferences. For example, Years 10 and 11 pupils enthusiastically participated in a discussion on how shadows are formed. Many pupils also receive additional and effective support in the development of their communication skills through working with speech therapists. However, the use of ICT is not sufficiently planned for to reinforce pupils' learning.
53. There has been good improvement in pupils' reading since the previous inspection, when reading overall was judged to be satisfactory. It is now good. This is because pupils receive frequent opportunities to improve their reading skills through the use of adapted texts. Lower attaining pupils are helped with their reading by the extensive use of a picture exchange communication system and symbols.
54. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in writing. Younger pupils with severe learning difficulties have regular opportunities to practise handwriting skills using pencils or felt pens and make good progress in learning to hold a pencil and make marks on paper. A number of higher attaining pupils can form letters and write simple sentences. Pupils with additional needs learn how to make purposeful marks on paper and teachers effectively develop these skills into early writing. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11 produce

meaningful print when they trace over and copy under the teacher's writing. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently well to develop pupils' mark-making skills into the formation of letters because there is no overall plan for developing writing across the school. The school has suitable plans to address this area.

55. Due to consistently good teaching, pupils of all abilities, including those with additional needs, achieve well. Because teachers plan individual programmes of learning, the needs of those pupils who have additional special needs, such as visual or hearing impairment, physical needs and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are met well and they make good progress. However, there are occasions in lessons when higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and consequently their achievement in these lessons is satisfactory rather than good.
56. Leadership of the subject is good and the co-ordinators have a very clear vision of future developments. For example, the promotion of writing skills has correctly been identified as a priority for all pupils. The procedures to assess and record pupils' achievement are thorough and show clearly the progress that pupils are making. The time allocated to communication, language and literacy is effectively used. The co-ordinators have insufficient time to effectively monitor teaching and the curriculum across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Literacy is well supported across the curriculum. Most lessons throughout the day provide pupils with good opportunities for using and developing their skills in speaking and listening and reading. Staff refer to pupils' literacy individual education plan targets in their planning which ensures that pupils receive appropriate support. Pupils are helped to express their views and join in class discussions. However, pupils do not always have sufficiently planned opportunities to develop skills in recording their work.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with the pupils and as a result pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Achievement is good throughout the school because of the good teaching.
- The subject is well led and the co-ordinator has designed an effective scheme of work.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent.

Commentary

58. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teachers' very good use of resources and the excellent relationships ensure that pupils make very good gains in their learning. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils can count out and match numbers from 1 to 10, sequence numbers to 20 and match coins up to 10p to their value. Lower attaining pupils are developing their understanding of numbers 1 to 5 and learning to sort objects by colour and big and small. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are very well included. The good teaching enables pupils in Years 3 to 6 to made good progress as they consolidate their knowledge of numbers. Higher attaining pupils are able to add one onto a group. In a good lesson observed, lower attaining pupils made good progress in sorting shapes and using the word "same". Teachers refer constantly to the pupils' individual education plans and give them individual support to achieve their targets. They ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are a part of all activities.

59. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress. The challenge for pupils at all levels is realistic as was the case in one lesson where the higher attaining pupils were able to draw half past the hour on a clock face, ensuring that the hour hand was in the correct position. All pupils were concentrating very well on their work and were confident when asking for support from the teacher. The input from the special needs assistants was particularly effective. Resources are used well for practical mathematics activities to reinforce learning. ICT was used well to support learning in one lesson where pupils worked individually on an appropriate mathematics programme with support from assistants. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to achieve well, because teachers and support staff have very good knowledge of the pupils' individual needs and there is good individual teaching. Higher attaining pupils make good progress with tens and units, as they build on their number skills. They are beginning to understand concepts of time and make progress in learning about money. They understand simple vocabulary of length, describing lines that are 'longer' and 'shorter'. During a very good lesson with lower attaining pupils, activities were well matched to the pupils' needs and resources were very well used to ensure that pupils achieved well. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties are building on their knowledge of basic number skills.
60. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and special needs assistants have very good relationships with the pupils and planning is good. As a result, pupils are interested in their work and try hard. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged and subject specific computer programmes are used appropriately. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Pupils have numeracy targets in their individual education plans and in most lessons, these are referred to by teachers and support staff. There is good on-going assessment, but this is not carried out consistently. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is part of a special schools' working party to improve the quality of assessment.
61. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has produced a well-thought out plan based on the National Numeracy Strategy and P-levels. However, the co-ordinator has not had the time to monitor the teaching and learning throughout the school and ensure that what is taught is consistent. She gives support to other staff when needed, but this is not done on a formal basis.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Numeracy is not clearly identified in other subjects, but it is referred to throughout the day. For example, in a physical education class for younger pupils, they were encouraged to count the number of obstacles they were able to climb over or move around.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are challenging and fun.
- The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils with complex and additional needs make good progress in science and also in relation to their special educational needs.
- Special needs assistants are outstanding and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Assessment is not always consistent across all classes.
- Leadership has been effective in encouraging teachers to be imaginative in their teaching but the co-ordinator has not recently monitored the quality of teaching and learning to see how this is working.

Commentary

63. Pupils enjoy their science work. They find their game activities to be fun and their investigations interesting. Consequently they concentrate hard and make good gains in their learning. In an excellent lesson in Year 1 taken by a special needs assistant, pupils with very complex speech and language difficulties and challenging behaviour because of their autism all pushed a large 'tummy cruncher ball' independently by the end of the session because of the skilful and well planned teaching. By Year 2 the highest attainers communicate using appropriate language to describe movement and all have experienced the sensations of push and pull using their bodies. By Year 6 pupils have experienced that some materials change when you heat them and the highest attainers have experienced melting wax and allowing it to cool in a mould to make a candle. With support pupils by Year 9 participate in experiments to discover how plants grow and by Year 11 pupils experience how shadows are formed. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
64. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is characterised by high expectations, a cracking pace and very good subject knowledge coupled with an in-depth knowledge of the individual 'quirks' of the pupils in the class. Teachers know how to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem and there is an excellent balance between support and challenge. Skilful behaviour management resulted in pupils with very challenging behaviour benefiting from the teaching in all classes observed. There is a strong emphasis on developing independence, as for example when a Year 6 pupil was encouraged in a safe environment to place wax in a boiler himself and to make an observation of what happened. Physiotherapy programmes are integral to the teaching in the subject and so pupils with poor muscle tone and motor skills difficulties are well supported through the practical activities they experience in their work on forces. Pupils with severe visual impairment make good progress as they track light in the sensory room. Special needs assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Effective use is made of ICT to support pupils in their learning, as evidenced in a Year 9 lesson when a lower attaining pupil used a touch screen, with hand on hand support, to experience the noise made by a cow. Assessment procedures are good but they are not consistently used across all classes and so it is easier to monitor pupils' progress over time in some classes than others.
65. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator has inspired staff to try out new approaches to their teaching. Management although satisfactory has some weaknesses. A good scheme of work has been developed taking on board the requirements of the Key Stage 3 strategy. The level of resources has been improved. However, no monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place recently and so the co-ordinator does not know where the best practice in teaching and learning occurs and so is not poised to share that best practice across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The assessment of ICT is not consistent throughout the school.
- Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in their use of ICT and their attitudes are very good.
- In some classes, the use of ICT is narrow and it only covers word processing.
- The accommodation for ICT is unsatisfactory.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to enrich other subjects in the curriculum and there are too few opportunities for specific ICT lessons.
- The individual teaching of pupils with additional educational needs is good.

Commentary

66. Pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory. The school has addressed the issue in the previous report and there is now an effective scheme of work. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.
67. Pupils have a programme to follow which is suitable for their individual needs. However, there are limited opportunities for discrete lessons to take place, which limits the time pupils spend on the computer. Planning is inconsistent, although it is very good in Year 1, where individual programmes of work are clearly identified. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use switches to make choices. By Year 2, most pupils use a switch or a mouse and relate cause and effect. They can operate a remote car using a simple joystick control. A higher attaining pupil is able to click on an icon to choose which talking book he wants to listen to. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are able to use switches to create effects in the multi-sensory room. Each pupil has one formal individual lesson a week, but for some pupils this time is very limited. By Year 6, pupils are becoming more confident on the computer and are able to control a floor turtle by making it move forwards and backwards.
68. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 can find their way around a keyboard, hold a mouse and manoeuvre around the screen. Higher attaining pupils can copy a simple sentence with help, change font sizes and print out their work and most pupils can copy their own name. Most of pupils' experience in ICT is centred on word processing, but pupils have also had opportunities to use programmes that support other curriculum areas. Pupils can control a CD player unaided and lower attaining pupils enjoy activating sounds using the OptiMusic system. By Year 11, pupils are learning to search for information on the Internet. For example, in preparation for a trip to France, pupils found a map of France and a picture of the Eiffel Tower. A higher attaining pupil can use word processing independently, altering the font and using a spell check. Pupils have created artwork using copy and paste and rotate and flip functions. Lower attaining pupils can use the touch screen successfully to manoeuvre around the screen. With help, they can create a picture on the computer and move a floor turtle forwards.
69. Teaching was good in all the individual lessons seen, where pupils were withdrawn from other lessons. Overall though throughout the school the quality of teaching is satisfactory because not all teachers are yet sufficiently confident in the use of ICT to support their teaching. Assessment is inconsistent, as teachers are not always sure about the IEP target and achievements are not always dated on the key skills sheets. In some cases, assessment does not allow recording of small steps achieved.
70. The management and leadership of ICT throughout the school are good. The co-ordinator has addressed the issue in the previous inspection and there is now an appropriate scheme of work for ICT. The co-ordinator has a clear plan of action for improvement. He has ensured that teachers took part in the New Opportunities Fund training and staff have found this effective in improving their confidence with computers. Staff have also been trained in the effective use of the digital camera. There is an effective network which is very well managed by the technician. There has been a very good improvement in the range of equipment and software available for staff. The co-ordinator has monitored the planning for ICT and has made recommendations to staff. However, assessment is inconsistent and ICT is not used sufficiently to enrich other areas of the curriculum. The accommodation for ICT is unsatisfactory because it is so cramped which limits the time pupils can spend using computers. Resources are satisfactory and are improving.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. During a mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 used the computer individually with help from a support assistant. One pupil displayed very good mouse control as he matched numbers to objects and identified "one more". He was able to work independently and was very pleased with his success. In science, a lower ability pupil made good progress as he gradually became more independent when

using a switch to control events. The use of ICT resources is identified in other subjects in Years 10 and 11. An identified activity was using the Internet to research travel to France.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. It was agreed with the school that **geography** and **history** would not be an inspection focus. Only one lesson was seen in history. No provision judgements are being made about geography and history.

The evidence from curriculum planning and teachers' records, together with discussion with the teacher responsible for **history** and **geography**, shows that the subjects have been well planned for. Resources and displays around the school contribute well to pupils' learning in these subjects. Both subjects are taught through a themed approach, for example, "Victorian Schools" and the "Ancient Greeks". There are lots of photographs showing pupils dressing up and cooking is used as a vehicle for teaching and learning. Most classes go out on a focused visit once a week. A focus on "Seafarers" was enhanced by a trip to Portsmouth Dockyard for example. ICT is used well in both history and geography. Programmes are selected according to their relevance to the current themes. For example, "Village Life in India" was used to support a topic on rivers and water.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is imaginative and well supported by good planning. As a result pupils enjoy the subject and make good progress.
- The provision for pupils with additional complex needs is good.
- Not all teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is weak.
- Assessment is not well developed.
- The subject makes a valuable contribution to raising pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

Commentary

72. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. An imaginative and creative scheme of work has been developed. It is based on the locally agreed syllabus and has been adapted superbly to meet the needs of pupils with very complex communication and behavioural needs. The range of methods used for teaching are fun and exciting and ensure that all pupils including those with autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties are fully included and receive a rich learning experience.
73. Achievement is good. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 learn well because of the effective use of sensory stories. Through tasting and smelling foods shared during religious festivals within different faiths they have first hand experience of what Hindus do at the time of Holi and what Christians do at Easter time. By Year 9 the higher attaining pupils grasp that Christians believe that God created the world. All experience the idea that Christians believe that God cares for His Creation by exploring the strength and might of trees. One pupil was heard to say when hugging a tree: *'It makes me feel very comfy because it is so strong'*. By Year 11 pupils experience the relevance of faith in peoples' lives. Because of the very good use of visitors they experience what an officer in the Salvation Army does and also how Franciscan monks conduct their lives. Through their experience pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is raised and moments are provided for their spiritual development.
74. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the majority of lessons learning is made fun and effective use is made of play to engage pupils' interest. Challenging behaviour is very skilfully managed and pupils with autism are included in practical activities. Teaching is delivered at a cracking pace and very good use is made of visual cues, as evidenced in the Year 1/2 lesson on the parable of the sower. In an excellent lesson in Year 5/6 on the Egyptian story of Isis and

Osiris, skilful use of questions and meticulous planning resulted in the highest attainers deepening their understanding of the story and all pupils making independent choices about which instrument to play to reflect sad and happy feelings. Pupils make good use of digital cameras to support their learning. Where teaching is satisfactory the teachers' knowledge is not sufficiently secure and the pace of the teaching drops. On these occasions pupils lose concentration and their learning suffers as a result.

75. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Since the last inspection resources have been improved and a relevant programme has been put in place. Teaching techniques to include all pupils have been developed. However, because the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning he has not been in a position to discover where the strengths and weaknesses lie. Through his support to colleagues he knows that not all teachers are confident about teaching the subject but because of other priorities it has not been possible to provide staff training in recent years. He also recognises that assessment requires development and refinement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

*It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in **art and design, music and design and technology**. However, teachers' plans, as well as examples of their work indicate that teachers provide enough suitable opportunities for them to achieve. An in depth inspection of **physical education** was undertaken.*

76. In **art and design** the planning and pupils' work were analysed. Evidence emerged to show that the curriculum is well planned enabling pupils to experience a wide range of relevant topics. Pupils enjoy a varied curriculum, including textiles, printing and clay. Teachers have a good understanding of the strengths of the sensory elements in art and exploit these well to involve pupils in developing their attention and interest. Younger pupils in Years 1 to 6 explore the use of brushes, sponges and objects to create pictures and prints. Older pupils in Years 9 to 11 have produced abstract prints using fruit and vegetables and have considered the work of famous artists. Work from a wide range of cultures is included effectively in curricular plans.
77. Learning opportunities in **design and technology** have been extended since the previous inspection, when curriculum opportunities were judged to be narrow. The design and technology curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements. It is now properly planned and provides a suitable foundation for the continued development of the subject. Pupils have the opportunity to follow a good range of topics throughout the school. Lessons are planned in detail and match pupils' individual abilities. For example, in a Year 10 food technology class, because of very good relationships, staff were able to challenge a group of lower attaining pupils to follow the symbol and picture instructions for making fruit scones. However, the school's accommodation is still unsuitable for teaching pupils about working with resistant materials. Learning opportunities in food technology are good.
78. In **music** pupils cover all the required elements of the National Curriculum and there is a strong and appropriate emphasis on developing their musical appreciation and their singing ability. All pupils benefit from performances given by groups of visiting musicians. Younger pupils encounter a range of musical experiences and learn how to sing and perform using percussion instruments. They are motivated well and enjoy participating because lessons are fun and appropriate for their age. The presentation of the subject is well adapted to ensure the inclusion of all pupils by, for example, using flash cards to replace musical notation to ensure that all pupils can participate. The good level of resources provides all pupils with the opportunity to perform and benefit from lessons. Pupils are confident to take part in events such as the Christmas school carol concert and Easter celebrations.

Physical education

Five lessons of physical education were observed and pupils' individual records were scrutinised.

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve well in this subject as the result of the very good planning and the close link between pupils' individual needs and lesson activities.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in sport because activities are well planned and include links with other schools and community leisure facilities.
- There is a high level of care and respect for pupils.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

76. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is very good. This is good improvement from the previous inspection when achievement ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. There is a good, relevant scheme of work. Lessons are delivered at a cracking pace and the strategies used to support pupils are imaginative. All staff work as very good teams ensuring that all pupils including pupils with additional special needs are suitably encouraged to improve their performance through activities that are well matched to individual need. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond to the enthusiastic encouragement from staff and celebrate each other's success.
77. The achievement of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is very good because they are supported very effectively by the work of physiotherapists. For example, during hydrotherapy sessions they make very good progress following individual programmes planned by the physiotherapist. Pupils are very well supported and quickly develop confidence in the water. Through encouragement, they begin to move limbs, taking great delight in kicking out and attempting to splash.
78. Very good links have been established with other special schools to give pupils opportunities to compete in sporting events. For example, the school came first in the Hampshire Parallel Youth Games Boccia competition. Pupils also achieve very well in inter-school football events. In swimming lessons, each pupil has a specific swimming target. These targets are promoted well by the specialist teacher and staff record their achievements. The quality of teaching in swimming is very good. Pupils gain in confidence in the water, and improve their communication and social skills through interaction with staff. Achievement in swimming is very good and some higher attaining pupils swim 400 metres using a range of strokes and controlling their breathing to good effect. Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible when changing for lessons and those who require support are treated with care and respect. Pupils are proud to show visitors their photographs of participation in sporting events and games in the community.
79. The subject is very well led and managed.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of PSHE and citizenship are very good.
- Teaching and learning in PSHE and citizenship are very good.
- Candle time is not always used effectively.

Commentary

80. PSHE is taught in all key stages through a rolling topic plan and there is a curriculum map giving learning objectives and ideas for activities. Sex education is taught in the upper school following consultation with parents as to the content of lessons. In a good lesson with lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11, pupils were able to look at photographs and discriminate between girls and boys. To contribute to citizenship, the school has set up a Challenge Award for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Citizenship for younger pupils offers them the opportunity to be independent and to respect the school environment and the community in which they live. Achievement is very good throughout the school because of the very good teaching.
81. By Year 2, pupils are becoming increasingly confident and their social skills are improving. They learn to sit and eat lunch sensibly, say good morning in circle time and, as part of their citizenship programme, do something for someone else. Lower attaining pupils are learning to wash their hands with help. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are learning about the dangers of smoking. As a result of the very good teaching and the very good relationships in the classroom, pupils are at ease and confident and, therefore, their achievement is very good. They are able to understand that pregnant women, athletes and footballers should not smoke. The very good resources enable pupils to learn very effectively about body parts and their uses. By Year 6, pupils have learned about safety in the home and how to use a wide range of household electrical equipment.
82. By Year 9, pupils are developing self-help skills when cooking or shopping. They are learning about jobs and careers and enjoy listening to different guest speakers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn essential skills for independent living. In a good lesson, pupils were able to wash and dry their hair and learned how to iron clothes. They are making very good gains in relevant life skills and so their achievement in PSHE key skills is very good. They are following the school's personal relationships and sex education programme. In citizenship, pupils are working on the School Citizenship Challenge and as a result some have had valuable community experience which has included travelling in Fareham and asking for the correct bus fare. Lower attaining pupils are helped to achieve the award by being responsible for class jobs and being involved in whole school experiences, such as school productions.
83. Teaching of PSHE and citizenship is very good and as a result pupils make very good progress. This includes the stress on personal development and independence that runs through the whole curriculum. For example, snack time and circle time are used to reinforce suitable behaviour and give pupils experience in taking turns. The integration of four junior pupils from a local junior school into a Years 5 and 6 classroom provided an excellent learning experience, with its particular emphasis on social skills and meeting and interacting with other pupils. During this session, attitudes and behaviour were excellent. Pupils' achievement is assessed well using individual education plans, key skills documents and through the annual review.
84. Leadership and management of PSHE and citizenship are very good. The co-ordinator is part of a support group and is in the process of achieving the Healthy Schools Award. There is a very good scheme of work including essential elements such as sex and drugs education. However, the co-ordinator does not regularly monitor the effectiveness of key times such as candle time and so ensure that all teachers consistently use these times to their full advantage.

PROVISION FOR POST-16 STUDENTS

Provision for students in post-16 is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good promotion of independence skills and preparation for life.
- The accommodation is very good and considerably enhances the quality of learning.
- The special needs assistants make a valuable overall contribution to students' learning.
- The curriculum is relevant to the needs of the students.
- The literacy and numeracy programmes are not sufficiently robust.
- The department is well led and managed with a clear plan for developing the curriculum.

Commentary

85. The post-16 provision is based in very good and new accommodation and this is appreciated by both students and staff. All students, including those with additional needs, achieve well overall, particularly in their social development and life skills. The curriculum is centred on the promotion of independence and is based on the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). As a result of the issue in the last inspection, there are now more opportunities for students to improve their reading skills and students are encouraged to communicate appropriately. The students are all very relaxed, confident and happy with the provision
86. A good range of learning opportunities is offered through the ASDAN award scheme. Achievement in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory but there is scope for development and the senior teacher is aware of this and has appropriate plans in place to address this issue. There is a lack of breadth as there are few opportunities for students to appreciate their own culture through literature. Students make good gains in speaking and listening, as they have specific targets which are encouraged by all staff during the school day. In discussion sessions, very good questioning by the teacher encourages students to speak in sentences. In numeracy, students are encouraged to understand the practical aspects of money and this is reinforced by visiting the supermarket. Students are learning to use the calculator to add up sums of money.
87. Students make satisfactory progress in developing their ICT skills. There are two computers in the classroom that students can use in their free time. One student was able to access a numeracy program which she used with enthusiasm to improve her number recognition. Students know how to use the Internet to search for information, for example looking at the college website so that they are familiar with the environment before they visit.
88. Students with additional needs make good progress. Records are kept through ASDAN of their sensory experiences and one of the special needs assistants has drawn up an effective sheet to assess responses to different activities. There is a small sensory environment created for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties
89. PSHE, including citizenship, is supported well throughout the curriculum and students' achievement is very good. The skills students need for everyday life are promoted very effectively, both through timetabled sessions, such as shopping trips and learning to prepare food. Health education ensures that students know how to care for themselves, for example, students know that hand and nail care is very important and can say that germs must be washed from hands before cooking or eating. The very good accommodation available gives them good opportunities to practise their skills. Throughout the day, students are expected to be as independent as possible. They are treated as young adults and they respond in a similar fashion.
90. The quality of teaching and learning is good and students receive effective individual support. The senior teacher and special needs assistants work very effectively together and the special needs assistants are a valuable asset to the group. There are high expectations of behaviour and relationships are very good. As a result, students respond very positively and their attitudes and behaviour are very good and often excellent. Students displayed this excellent behaviour when visiting the local Leisure Centre for exercise activities in the gymnasium. They know how to behave in the minibus and how to cross a road safely. They are polite; hold doors open and

show consideration for each other. Work is assessed through the ASDAN award scheme and there are also comprehensive skills sheets for such activities as preparing lunch.

91. The post-16 unit has a very good partnership with local colleges and students are very well prepared for their college placements. Students access the college website where they can look at the different rooms such as the cookery room and the sports hall. One student is now able to find his own way across a large campus to the computer suite, where he is making very good progress and is very proud of his work. Most students make very good use of the local community, using the supermarket to buy items and paying at the cash desks. There is good communication with the students' homes, especially with the home/school books which are used effectively to promote listening and speaking skills. Students are prepared well for transition to college or day services when they leave and great care is taken to ensure that all students move on to suitable further provision.
92. The senior teacher in-charge has been in post since the beginning of the school year and her good management is leading to a steady improvement in the provision. She has a clear insight into the needs of the students and as a result, they are well prepared for adult life. The very good accommodation and enthusiastic and caring staff ensure that there is a challenging, yet supportive, environment in which students are able to make choices, take responsibility and become more independent.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.