

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST GILES SCHOOL

Derby

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 113045

Headteacher: Patrick Walsh

Lead inspector: Alan Lemon

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th March 2004

Inspection number: 258996

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	74
School address:	Hampshire Road Chaddesden Derby
Postcode:	DE21 6BT
Telephone number:	01332 343039
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Elliott
Date of previous inspection:	22nd June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Giles is a day special school for boys and girls with statements of special educational needs in the age range of four to eleven. At the time of the last inspection it catered for a declining majority of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and growing minorities of pupils with autism and severe learning difficulties. Currently, there are 74 pupils on roll with twice as many boys as girls. Nearly half of pupils have severe learning difficulties and about one quarter each are pupils with autism or moderate learning difficulties. Very recently there was a large influx of pupils with severe learning difficulties following re-organisation of special school provision in the City of Derby. St Giles is now the primary school provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties, autism and other related needs. Consequently, the range of pupils' attainment on entry is well below that expected for their age. The school has also begun to admit children under the age of five and has four children in their reception year on roll. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds, some less privileged than others and all but 12 are from homes where English is the main language spoken. They are by majority white British. Of the 12 minority ethnic pupils, most are of Pakistani heritage.

St Giles is involved in an Educational Action Zone and has partnerships with two mainstream primary schools where a small number of its pupils attend some lessons. A partnership is also developing with the secondary phase special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, involving collaboration on curriculum, assessment and transition planning.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Personal, social and health education
32678	Kathryn Dodd	Lay inspector	
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology Music
10391	Valerie Du Plergny	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs
7042	Keith Gutteridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education
17907	Michael Bowers	Team inspector	English as an additional language

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>13</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2</b>	
<b>ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>33</b>



## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**St Giles School is effective.** It has a number of very good features and provides good value for money. The development of educational provision to meet the needs of an increased number of pupils with severe learning difficulties has been led well. However, the upgrading of accommodation for these pupils has been less effectively managed. Teaching and learning are good and, as a result, pupils achieve well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in English is very good because of expert teaching and the very effective emphasis upon pupils learning to communicate.
- The very good approaches to teaching pupils with autism means they achieve very well in overcoming their barriers to learning.
- The good support given to pupils who speak English as an additional language ensures they achieve as well as all other pupils.
- The school's accommodation is inadequate for some of the pupils' primary care needs and the physical development of children at the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good.
- Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has not received the priority it deserves with the result that pupils do not achieve as well as they do in most other subjects.
- The roles of the senior management team are not stated clearly and not enough monitoring and evaluation of the school's work takes place.

Improvement is good and the response to the previous key issues has been effective, especially in the support for pupils speaking English as an additional language. There has been a good improvement in most aspects of the school's provision and a very good improvement in English. The school's accommodation, judged good for the pupils at the time of the previous inspection, is unsatisfactory in meeting the needs of the current pupils. The development of ICT has not been given sufficient priority and its improvement is unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Overall, achievement is good.** Standards throughout the school are below average because of pupils' learning difficulties. While children at the Foundation Stage are unlikely to attain the goals expected to be reached by the end of reception, their achievement is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory for most children but because the outside areas for play are inadequate, the achievement of all children in physical development is unsatisfactory. All pupils and those in the Foundation Stage with autism achieve very well as a result of very effective approaches to autism. Achievement is good by the end of Year 2 and very good by the end of Year 6. This difference in achievement is accounted for by a lower amount of high quality teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in all aspects of English. Achievement in English is very good in Years 3 to 6. Communication in particular is given strong emphasis in the lessons of most subjects and all pupils understand and combine very effectively speaking, signing and symbols. The 12 pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively and achieve as well as all other pupils. All pupils achieve well in mathematics and science. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory. The limited expertise of staff in using the technology in lessons means pupils are given too few opportunities to extend their skills. Many very good opportunities for pupils' personal, social and health education occur in and out of lessons and pupils achieve very well as a result.

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	Very good	Very good

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

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** The expectation by staff that pupils have positive attitudes is excellent and this results in them being very interested and very well behaved. Their attendance and punctuality are good. They have many opportunities to take on small responsibilities and very willingly carry these out. All pupils gain meaning from belonging to the school, sharing its well-stated values and in experiencing how these apply in the world outside school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, overall.** Teaching and learning are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. A high proportion of teaching is very good but most of that which is satisfactory affects the Foundation Stage most but also, to a lesser extent, Years 1 and 2. Most staff have developed the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of pupils effectively, particularly autistic pupils, and the pupils are learning very well. However, expertise in ICT is not as good and this slows pupils' rate of learning. The emphasis on teaching communication through speaking, signing and using symbols has resulted in pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, understanding better what others say and learning to combine these methods to communicate effectively. Teachers' assistants often make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning in leading small group activities and keeping a close focus on learning objectives. They eliminate any potential ill-effects from having large class groups. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils very well. Pupils' progress is assessed well and this helps effectively in planning teaching. However, accommodation is unsatisfactory in providing for basic care needs and physical development.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.** The headteacher, senior staff and all those staff carrying responsibilities for the school's educational provision have given an effective lead in preparing to meet the more complex needs of the pupil population. The development of some of the major priorities in this respect has been managed well. However, the management of the school's overall provision is unclear and not enough monitoring and evaluation is carried out to give good detail on strengths and weaknesses or help shape future improvements. Governors are committed, keep in close contact and support the school. Their governance is satisfactory; major statutory responsibilities are in place but there is some minor non-compliance.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the way the school supports them and their children. They believe staff are devoted to their children's welfare and they see remarkable progress in how their children communicate, become independent and behave. Pupils are very positive about what they are offered.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To define clearly senior management roles so that, with the support of sufficient monitoring, all areas of the school's work are fully accounted for.
- Give a higher level of priority to provision for ICT.



- Ensure accommodation matches adequately the full range of pupils' educational and personal needs.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the information in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school's prospectus fully meets requirements.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Standards are below and often well below those expected of pupils of the same age because of pupils' special educational needs. Overall, however, achievement is good. It is satisfactory at the Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2 and very good between Years 3 and 6.

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

- There are variations in the achievement of different groups of pupils because the quality of teaching and learning is uneven across the school.
- The school is making progress in developing methods for monitoring pupils' performance and setting performance targets for groups of pupils.
- The development of pupils' communication skills is very effective, a significant part in the good improvement in achievement, and pupils now achieve very well.
- Pupils' achievement in using ICT lags behind that in literacy and numeracy. Its use is not promoted as strongly because teachers' expertise is weak.
- Minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils with autism achieve very well because teaching is consistent and very effective.

#### **Commentary**

1. There is much very good achievement resulting from the high proportion of very good teaching and learning. However, teaching of a high quality is less frequent for most children at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 than for pupils Years 3 to 6, which accounts for the variations in judgements on achievement. Standards are as they are, overall, at the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 because the good practices in the best teaching elsewhere have not yet entirely filtered through, although the school has seen the need for improvements and has taken steps to remedy shortcomings. The progress made by children at the Foundation Stage in their physical development is unsatisfactory because their outdoor areas provide unsuitable spaces for them to play effectively. However, personal, social and health education is central to educational provision and support for pupils. Because every opportunity is exploited to promote self-reliance, independence and responsibility, pupils achieve very well.
2. As there has been a recent and significant alteration in the nature of pupils' special educational needs from predominantly moderate to severe learning difficulties, there is not a substantial enough set of data on which to base an analysis of the school's results and pupils' performance. Pupils' attainments are being assessed annually using P Scale performance indicators. The results of this assessment are used to set annual performance targets for groups of pupils in relation to literacy and numeracy. The success with which targets for 2003 were achieved is variable with lower attaining pupils meeting or surpassing their targets and higher attaining pupils not reaching theirs. These outcomes reflect that the school is still coming to terms with a different population of pupils and is at an early stage of collecting, monitoring and using pupils' performance data. However, data is used to carefully monitor the progress of minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language.
3. Since the previous inspection the improvement in how well pupils achieve has been good. In science, the unsatisfactory progress found at that time has been transformed into good achievement. There is a very good improvement in English. The strong emphasis placed on pupils learning to communicate is supported by the development of a variety of strategies for teaching communication. This has been successful in ensuring many pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6 compared to them progressing satisfactorily at the

time of the last inspection. Pupils are continually encouraged to communicate and very good relationships play a significant part in this consistent engagement in dialogue with pupils. Very many opportunities occur throughout the day for speaking and listening during lessons and at break times. All staff have a clear focus on encouraging and improving communication, through speaking, signing and use of symbols. Communication is also boosted using other specially developed techniques such as 'Talking Partners', 'Message Board' and singing interaction. Achievement in reading and writing is equally good as teachers use a detailed knowledge of pupils' attainments to systematically extend their skills. Staff read and relate stories to pupils very well resulting in them having interest and enjoyment in exploring books.

4. As with language and literacy, pupils' competence in mathematics is promoted well in other subjects. All pupils achieve well in mathematics lessons. Achievement in language, literacy and mathematics has benefited from the priority placed on their development. The successful implementation of a numeracy strategy, for example, has brought a noticeable improvement in the standards pupils achieve. However, no equal priority has been attached to ICT and it plays a less effective part in pupils making progress in all of their lessons. Their achievement in ICT lags behind that of other subjects but is satisfactory. This is because most staff are much less confident in using and applying the technology in their teaching than they are in using literacy and numeracy.
5. The 12 pupils who do not speak English as their first language achieve as well as all other pupils because of the good provision for meeting their particular needs. A specialist teacher works effectively with class teachers monitoring and supporting their learning and, as a result, very good conversations led by the specialist teacher during lessons result in good achievement in speaking and listening skills. This is a good improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection when provision was unsatisfactory and achievement not as good.
6. All pupils with autism, including those at the Foundation Stage, achieve very well because the approaches to working with them, such as intensive and sustained interactions with adults, leading to more effective teaching. Teaching is expert, very well planned and carried out through the very effective teamwork of teachers and their assistants. In particular, communication by staff is sharply focused using combinations of speech, singing, signs and symbols, which leads to pupils giving their best attention to, and concentrating very well on, learning new skills.

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

There has been a good improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, which are now very good. The school is setting very high expectations for pupils' conduct and all staff are working hard to achieve them. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good behaviour is promoted effectively throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy the very good opportunities they have to take on small responsibilities around school.
- Pupils make good progress in developing self-help and independence skills.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is so strong because it is central to so much what the school provides for pupils.

## Commentary

7. The very good strategies to manage the behaviour of the most challenging pupils have been successfully shared across the whole school. As a result, the behaviour of all pupils is very good. Each class has its own well-planned way of rewarding pupils' achievements. Parents confirm that their children think highly of these rewards because they give them a real sense of achievement. This provision contributes significantly towards pupils' very good attitudes to learning across the school.
8. Pupils enjoy school and like taking on small responsibilities. Year 6 pupils, for example, prepare the hall for assembly and physical education and deliver fruit for the Healthy Eating scheme. Pupils across school collect and deliver class registers. Pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement given by all the adults in the school.
9. The school places a lot of emphasis on helping pupils to have personal independence. Parents have noticed the good progress that their children are making, for example, learning to use cutlery correctly, to dress themselves and to use the toilet. This helps pupils to become more confident and raises their self-esteem.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6%	School data	0.4%
National data	8.7%	National data	1.5%

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

10. Pupils' attendance is good. The school is now taking more pupils who are likely to need time out of school for care or medical reasons. The school is doing well in these circumstances to maintain the good attendance since the last inspection. Most pupils arrive at school by bus or taxi. Punctuality can be a problem, but the school continually tackles the transport issues that cause lateness. The school has taken good steps to ensure the support of parents and drivers in this matter and as a result the impact of late arrivals on lessons has been minimised. The school does not yet use the information it has available about attendance and punctuality to pinpoint where further improvements could be made.

## 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	62	1	0
White – any other White background	1	3	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

11. The four fixed term exclusions involved two pupils and the one pupil with the most frequent incidence of exclusion was as a result of an exceptionally high degree of challenging behaviour. The school supports the pupils very well to ensure that their behaviour improves and in the case of the one exceptional pupil the incidents of challenging behaviour are now less frequent.
12. The school has made significant progress in the provision of support for pupils' personal development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strongly promoted and sits at the centre of everything the school does. Staff treat pupils with respect, discuss issues with them and ensure that all are praised for their efforts. In this way pupils develop awareness of themselves and of how to live in a community; for example, in a physical education lesson a pupil with mobility difficulties readily demonstrated how to jump using both legs. She was clearly very pleased with her efforts and all present shared in her success with applause and congratulations.
13. The very good examples set by adults help pupils learn the importance of rules and they take great care when moving around the swimming pool and setting up and putting away equipment. This extends to the support of others. For example, one pupil noticed that another's shoelace was loose and immediately went to fasten it for her.
14. Cultural development and an awareness of the wider world are fostered strongly across the school through a wide-ranging range of practical experiences. Pupils celebrate all Christian festivals and a wide range of others including Eid, Diwali and Chinese New Year, for which they make a dragon costume and perform a dragon dance. They dress in national costumes, learn about life in other countries in literacy, enjoy the food of different countries, and help raise money for charities that work in areas of need across the world. A wide range of visits within the locality and beyond supports this. This includes residential experiences where pupils can develop further their confidence in themselves.

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

The breadth of learning opportunities is good throughout the school. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Pupils' special educational needs are provided for very well in lessons. While pupils are given good support for learning and personal development, the provision for their care, welfare and safety is just satisfactory, overall, because the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. Rooms have not been adapted sufficiently to meet the care needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties and outside play areas are inadequate for the physical development of children at the Foundation Stage.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good, overall, and very good in Year 3 to 6. They are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2. The assessment of pupils is undertaken effectively and assessments are used well to plan each pupil's learning opportunities and to encourage them to achieve.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been a very good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The means for pupils to learn to communicate are taught very effectively.
- The large numbers in many classes are managed very effectively by teachers and their assistants.
- Assessment is good and is being used well to plan what pupils need to learn.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (5%)	16 (37%)	16 (37%)	9 (21%)	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.*

15. The amount of very good and better teaching and learning is more than double that reported in the previous inspection and additionally there are now no unsatisfactory lessons. This is a very good improvement particularly as the school has ensured teaching is adapted to the learning needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties. At the time of the previous inspection these pupils were in a minority; however, recently they have become the majority. The school's success in this respect is to do with the professionalism and commitment of all staff. Their sharp focus on finding out the ways pupils with much more complex difficulties learn has had a positive effect. The knowledge and expertise established in teaching pupils mainly with moderate learning difficulties and autism have, with substantial training and development, been attuned to meeting different needs. This is especially the case in relation to teaching communication, as much of what pupils learn depends on their skills in receiving and transmitting messages against their significant difficulties with acquiring language.
16. The teaching of communication in English is very good in Years 3 to 6 because of the very well co-ordinated approaches used by teachers and their assistants. Their methods are used effectively in most other subjects as well and, all together, there is a concerted drive to make sure these pupils ultimately achieve very well. This is equally the case for those pupils who do not speak English at home. They benefit from generally effective teaching and especially from the additional expert help of the support teachers for English as an additional language. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of communication is good overall, but is not always as well co-ordinated as it is further up the school. However, most teachers and assistants combine sign language, symbols and speech well in their interactions with pupils who learn, with these different methods, to understand increasingly complex communication. These approaches are very well established with autistic pupils. By combining the spoken instructions given by his assistant with a matching sequence of symbols, one pupil clearly understood what to do and very quickly learned to program a robotic toy to move in different directions. Reading and writing are taught very well in English and are promoted well in many other subjects. The contribution of ICT to pupils' learning and particularly communication is too limited, as a result of the lack of expertise possessed by teachers and assistants. There has not been the same emphasis on training here as there has been in other aspects of teaching and which have delivered considerable benefits elsewhere. There is a mixed picture in teaching and learning at the Foundation Stage in relation to all the areas of learning including communication, language and literacy. Those attached to the group for pupils with autism benefit from very good teaching. While most children are taught satisfactorily, their interactions with adults are not as varied or intense as those in the group for autistic pupils. They play away from adults for long periods without enough intervention to direct their learning and encourage communication. Although teaching assistants are good, their work is not co-ordinated enough to raise standards any higher.
17. The numbers in most classes are high for teaching pupils with severe learning difficulties and this creates groups with a wide range of attainments. However, any potential ill-effects caused by large groups are off-set by effective teaching and the excellent work by teachers' assistants. These ensure, despite the size of groups, that every pupil is actively and purposefully involved in learning. The standards of behaviour demanded are very high and all staff apply successful strategies to gain pupils' co-operation. In particular, relationships and the knowledge of each pupil are very good. Lessons are planned well and time is organised effectively to create a good structure of whole-class activities, small group work and a short period to summarise with pupils what they have learnt. In mathematics, this results in pupils learning well. The subject

has benefited from the successful implementation of a numeracy strategy. This has helped to structure learning and is applied well in the lessons of most other subjects in promoting pupils' competence in number and other mathematical skills. The planning and structure of lessons give clear scope to teachers and their assistants to provide a variety of work and this closely matches pupils' different needs. Good assessment in the course of teaching is a prominent feature and in many lessons one adult is assigned to observe and note pupils' progress towards the learning outcomes clearly stated in the planning. The knowledge of pupils' progress that comes from this is added to the planning of the next steps in learning.

18. Since the last inspection there has been a satisfactory improvement in the way pupils' achievements and progress are monitored. The changing needs of the school population have been a spur to positive developments. The use of P scales is beginning to strengthen assessment procedures for the majority of pupils whose progress now needs to be measured in smaller steps. This is giving the school the ability to carefully track the progress of all the pupils. In English, mathematics, science and in the groups catering for pupils with autism, good use is made of assessment information to set targets for groups and individuals and to inform the planning of future activities. In other subjects, the assessment of learning outcomes, at the end of a topic, ensures that teachers think carefully about what the pupils have achieved. However, this information is not used as effectively to plan curriculum activities. Classroom support assistants are used very well in some classes to record ongoing observations of pupils' achievements in lessons. Individual education plans are used well to support pupils' learning. On the whole they focus on the pupils' specific special educational needs well and all staff are aware of what the pupils need to learn next. Assessment procedures are very good in the group for the younger pupils with autism. The staff undertake ongoing observations and meet regularly to reflect on individual children's progress and achievement and to plan accordingly.
19. The school is aware of the need to extend the use of information obtained from annual tests to inform it of the strengths and areas requiring further development. At present there is little recorded evidence of moderated examples of pupils' work in different subjects. There is no specific member of the senior management team responsible for the overview of assessment and consequently its co-ordination is less effective.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good, throughout the school. There is a small amount of co-operation with other schools involving a few pupils and the enrichment of the curriculum with additional activities is satisfactory. Learning resources are good but accommodation is unsatisfactory for the large population of pupils with severe learning difficulties.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with severe learning difficulties and it meets the educational needs of these pupils and those with autism very well.
- While pupils' access to the opportunities for learning is good overall, children at the Foundation Stage are hampered by inadequate outdoor facilities and all pupils have limited use of ICT.
- Pupils' personal development, including personal, social and health education, is provided for well.
- Staff use much of the available accommodation well, but it is unsatisfactory in meeting all the needs of pupils.

## Commentary

20. The curriculum provides a good breadth of learning opportunities and meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school makes satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities and there is a range of visits undertaken in school time that enriches the school day, such as trips to the local supermarket to shop for the ingredients for cooking lessons. Pupils with autism go on an annual residential trip with staff, staying in a youth hostel. This enables them to put into practise the social and self-help skills learnt in school. The learning opportunities provided for pupils with autism are based very successfully on widely accepted approaches to teaching autistic pupils such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as well as the treatment and education of autistic and related communication handicapped children (TEACCH). Each pupil, including those with severe learning difficulties, has a very well planned individual programme taking account of their needs, such as learning through sensory experiences and working independently through a very structured programme of activities.
21. Most pupils have good access to many of the opportunities for learning provided by the school and the physical and personal development needs of most pupils are met. Shortcoming in accommodation affect the access children at the Foundation Stage have to opportunities for physical development. The curriculum innovations introduced have opened up further learning opportunities and have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. In relation to communication, where provision is very good, the Talking Partners programme is very effective in raising pupils' awareness and ability to communicate and to respond to written and spoken language. Equally, the use of Message Boards is very helpful to both adults and pupils in the development of better communication. Both of these elements teach pupils to think more clearly, and to work step by step through what they want to say. However, the number and quality of opportunities for pupils to learn and apply ICT are reduced by the staff's lack of expertise in using the technology.
22. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Pupils are taught a programme of sex education through science and personal, social and health education lessons and these include awareness of drugs. There is consistent and continual attention throughout the school to pupils becoming self-reliant and independent. Good opportunities beyond school, on visits to shops or residential trips, help to broaden the contexts in which pupils learn to cope and look after themselves. There is a small integration programme involving four pupils attending some afternoon lessons in the neighbouring primary school. One other pupil attends another primary school on one afternoon each week. The value of these integrations is appreciated by all the schools involved and pupils' visits are planned and managed well. Joining lessons contributes very positively to the personal development of all the pupils involved.
23. Staff make the best use of the classrooms and most other areas of the school to educate and support pupils. However, the available accommodation is unsatisfactory in meeting pupils' basic care such as toileting, changing and medical provision. The school has no medical room and, with a greater number of pupils with severe learning difficulties, the demand for this and other facilities is now at a much higher level. However, toilets and changing provision are inadequate despite the fact rooms have been re-arranged and there is a rudimentary provision for changing pupils. In addition, one set of toilets, which is located inside a classroom, are not adequately separated from it and do not afford its pupils the privacy and dignity they deserve. The outside areas for children at the Foundation Stage are inadequate to promote their physical development and learning through play, making their progress unsatisfactory. One play area is on steeply sloping ground and would be unsafe for pupils to experience the full extent of play opportunities such as running or using bicycles. There is the possibility that the school building will be extended in the near future to provide additional spaces more suited to catering for pupils with severe learning difficulties.



## **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for the care, welfare health and safety of all pupils is satisfactory. The school gives a good level of support and guidance to pupils. Pupils are fairly involved in the work and development of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils benefit from the trust they have with adults in school, and relationships are excellent.
- A wide range of professionals offers pupils good support, advice and guidance.
- There is more to do to respond fully to the health and safety needs of pupils as a result of the changing school intake.
- Ways in which pupils' views are sought are still developing.

### **Commentary**

24. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Staff give a very high priority to caring for pupils' well-being. They know their pupils very well and this helps them to give appropriate and well-timed support. The school has effective procedures for child protection and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Staff are always accessible and responsive to the pupils' need for special care. As a result, there is a very positive atmosphere that makes pupils feel happy, secure and valued at school.
25. Staff are adapting and responding well to the more complex needs new pupils now bring by forging strong links with other professional support services. Examples include the good links with the educational welfare service, school doctor, and specialist teachers such as teachers of the deaf and visibly impaired. The school has also been working to assess the health and safety needs of these pupils. For example, risk assessments have been undertaken to ensure the safety of all groups of pupils on school trips and residential visits. However, there are still a number of areas that need to be addressed to bring health and safety up to the standard needed for the new pupils. There is more to do to adapt the accommodation to meet pupils' greater level of need. There is currently no medical room, for example, and also, some pupils need to be taken to the other end of building for personal hygiene routines. The steeply sloping nature of some outside areas for pupils makes it unsafe for them to play freely.
26. Pupils are being consulted in small ways. The school has established a group, the ECO (ecology) Group, consisting of the oldest and most capable pupils who, with staff, think about how they could make their school more environmentally friendly and how they would like to improve the school's outdoor environment. They have enjoyed some success, for example in gaining a grant to purchase recycled paper. Consultation with other pupils, however, is limited and therefore views of the school as a whole are not being sought.

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

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are good. There is a satisfactory amount of outreach work taking place with other local schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's very good links with most parents support pupils' learning at home and the school is encouraging parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language to become more involved.
- The use made of the community and partnerships with other schools, while limited, are good.

## Commentary

27. The home and school partnership is very strong and has remained so since the last inspection. Parents are very supportive and appreciate the positive influence that the school has on their children's learning. The Family Learning group is well attended. It provides good opportunities for parents to meet, share their ideas about pupils' learning and to make learning resources, such as books and story sacks. Some parents help out at school; for example, one parent regularly plays chess with a group of pupils. The parent knew that the main purpose of this activity is to further pupils' concentration skills as well as to learn to play chess. One pupil has won a chess competition entered by pupils from several local schools. The school works hard to overcome the communication difficulties created because most parents do not bring their child to school. The two-way home and school communication diaries are very much appreciated by parents because they help them to know how best to help their children at home. The very close relationships between parents and staff contribute significantly to pupils' learning. The school is actively developing its links with parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language as these have not been as good as they have been with other groups of parents. Their attendance at annual reviews, meetings and fund-raising events, for example, has not been as good.
28. There are good links with the community. Parents agree that pupils' social skills improve as a result of going out of school and into the community. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum well, such as a Hindu visitor who led the celebration of Diwali. The school's good links with local businesses also provide additional funds, for example to improve the outside play areas.
29. A close and successful collaboration is emerging with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Teachers from the two schools meet regularly. They have agreed a common policy on teaching and learning. Pupils also benefit from visiting their new school and an after-school club for pupils with autism has been launched. This helps to ensure that pupils quickly settle into their new school surroundings. Links with other secondary schools to which a few pupils transfer are satisfactory. Five pupils in all spend one afternoon session each week at two local mainstream primary schools. The visits are well planned and managed and pupils make good progress. These placements increase pupils' self-confidence and esteem whilst working with children outside their own familiar school setting. The school has undertaken a little outreach work with a number of schools involving training staff in ways of meeting their pupils who have special educational needs and aim to extend this further.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is good. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory and while all major statutory requirements are met, governors have made small omissions in requirements for what should be included in the annual report to parents and in the school prospectus.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of educational provision to meet the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties has been well led.
- Senior staff have used their considerable experience to effectively lead the development of curriculum initiatives.
- Governors are committed to the success of the school but are hampered by not having an in-depth picture of the school's work.
- While some initiatives have been handled effectively, the work of the senior management team and others with management responsibilities is not clearly defined.

## Commentary

30. The school has reached a good understanding of the type of provision best suited to the needs of pupils with severe learning difficulties and its aims have been re-written in the light of this. The sharp increase in the number of pupils with severe learning difficulties following some re-organisation of special schools in the local authority has been effectively supported by developing good teaching approaches and learning opportunities, which are meeting many of these pupils' needs very well. This has been reached through a very good commitment to promoting opportunities for pupils and the school has already a good track-record in supporting pupils with autism. The headteacher and senior staff saw that immediate priorities lay in professional development and organised a good and comprehensive training strategy to prepare all staff, not only on what to expect, but also to develop and implement innovative approaches. A wider role for the school is emerging involving other schools, especially a close collaboration with the secondary phase special school to which most pupils will transfer after Year 6.
31. The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher are key contributors to the local authority's and the Educational Action Zone's training strategies in special educational needs. With their expertise in special educational needs, they have given a significant lead in the instigation and development of teaching and learning and curriculum initiatives across the school. As pupils' difficulties in communicating are a major concern, an emphasis has been placed on implementing methods of promoting language and literacy. Staff have learnt signing and the use of symbols and they are employing these to very good effect. In addition, other approaches for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, such as Talking Partners, used with higher attaining pupils, and Message Board for most pupils, are getting them actively engaged in dialogue. This has all taken place in an atmosphere of high morale, commitment and very good teamwork shared by all staff. The ability of the school to move forward positively and on a united front has been instrumental to its achieving successful educational provision. It has given a strong impetus to all staff for them to rapidly re-work what pupils are taught, how their teaching is best modified and building the range of learning resources needed to make the whole educational provision good.
32. The governors share the school's team spirit and are very committed to success in meeting the needs of pupils. They possess a range of expertise and experience that is useful in fulfilling their duties, for example in personnel, finance and health and safety. Governors' involvement in these areas of the school's work is purposeful, for example, in relation to health and safety, carefully checking that risk assessments are undertaken and that safety measures are updated in relation to the higher level of challenging behaviour pupils now present. The information they receive through reports, seminars by teachers and their own visits keeps them soundly informed about the major issues facing the school such as the shortcomings in accommodation. However, much of the information for governors concerning the work of the school is too limited in its evaluation and exemplification of the success of that work to enable them to be more than satisfactorily engaged in helping the school with its direction or be in a position to support and challenge the leadership more resolutely.
33. The school is made effective by staff pooling their resources and using their often substantial expertise to tackle developments and move forward. This provides good management over a broad front but management, overall, is not always systematic. Day-to-day management is effective. The budget is planned well so that the limited amount of spare cash is directed towards realising the school's improvement priorities. However, the roles of the senior management team are not well balanced and in some respects too loosely defined. This means that their dialogue, decision-making and action on developments are not consistently effective in all areas of their responsibilities. While the headteacher has direct responsibility for the curriculum, it is not sufficiently clear to his senior management team colleagues how a thorough overview of curriculum is achieved. The responsibilities entailed in being head of upper and lower school, which is what the deputy and assistant headteachers do, are not well defined. Although some effective work is carried out by both in their respective areas, this is led

by their individual interpretations of what they should be doing. This has not given rise to major shortcomings, although the oversight of the curriculum and assessment is fairly limited in the rigorous pursuit of what is good or needs improving. There has, for example, been modest progress in the development of monitoring pupils' performance, its analysis and evaluation, and while there has been some appraisal of expected new demands upon accommodation, a thorough re-appraisal has not taken place. Arguably, these are important precursors to the influx of many more pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school has also been slow to organise sufficient training in the use of ICT with pupils.

34. In preparation for its population of pupils with severe learning difficulties, staff training was prioritised over monitoring and evaluation, and the professional development this has brought has delivered benefits for the quality of educational provision and pupils' achievements. However, senior staff and subject co-ordinators spend insufficient time in monitoring their areas of responsibility throughout the school although some close scrutiny of classrooms takes place in the lower school. Subject co-ordinators carry out annual audits of their subjects through discussions with colleagues and by looking at their planning and records. They are often pressed for time to manage this and the success of the exercise is variable. The skills of auditing have not been developed sufficiently to make this work progress into a major element of school self-evaluation.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	780841
Total expenditure	765922
Expenditure per pupil	10551

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67964
Balance carried forward to the next	14919

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

As a consequence of their special educational needs, all of the children at the Foundation Stage are unlikely to reach the early learning goals. However, the achievement of those with autism is very good because of very good teaching. Autistic children receive a detailed programme of activities that are very well supported by a well-informed and co-ordinated team of staff. The information gained by staff constantly checking children's progress is used effectively to ensure that future activities are relevant and provide appropriate challenge. However, most children at the Foundation Stage who are not autistic and are grouped separately achieve satisfactorily. Their learning activities are not as effectively planned and taught, although teaching is satisfactory. In this group children spend long periods of time playing on their own without any directed support from a member of staff. Although the good team of classroom assistants in this group do work individually with the children, this support is not effectively co-ordinated by the teacher. The teacher responsible for co-ordinating the lower school is aware of these issues. The leadership and management of most areas of learning are very good in relation to provision for autistic children and are satisfactory in relation to most children at the Foundation Stage. However, the leadership and management of all children's physical development are unsatisfactory because all of the necessary resources have not been adequately planned or developed. It is not possible to make a judgement on improvement since the last inspection as there were no children at the Foundation Stage on roll at that time.

In both groups there are good procedures in place to support parents and they are encouraged to visit school. The comments received from parents in the home/school books confirm that their children are settled and happy in school. The classroom facilities for most children are cramped; their toilet facilities are inadequate and their outside play area is both inadequate and dangerous.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

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

- Very good relationships exist between adults and children. The children feel confident in their groups.
- Children with autism achieve very well in extending their concentration on an activity and their willingness to change activities.
- Because of the lack of structured staff support for most children, their concentration is not as great.

#### **Commentary**

35. The teaching and learning in the autistic group are very good and in the other group is satisfactory. All children feel secure and are willing to attempt new activities because of the positive encouragement they receive from the staff. In one instance, a teaching assistant gently and successfully persuaded a tentative child to put his hands in the paint. Staff constantly use phrases such as 'good looking' and 'good listening' as the children are working. This is more obvious in the group for the children with autism. The staff provide opportunities for the children to meet as a group, for example by sitting in a circle and singing "Hello" to each other. Because of this they show a developing awareness of others.

36. Autistic children concentrate for an increasing amount of time on their favourite activities, for example playing in the sand and building blocks. When asked to participate in a number recognition activity, the staff skilfully and successfully handle children's resistant behaviour so they quickly settle to the activity. However, most children concentrate on tasks for shorter periods because a consistent level of teaching assistant support has not been planned and used during activities. In a number of sessions the children wander from activity to activity without any specific purpose.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff make very good use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to develop the children's communication skills.

### **Commentary**

37. The teaching and learning are good in the autistic group and satisfactory in the other group containing children at the Foundation Stage. Because of a more structured staff approach towards the teaching of communication, language and literacy, autistic children achieve well in these areas. They receive praise from staff when they communicate through sustaining eye contact. Communication is increased by staff making very effective use of PECS symbols, which encourages autistic children to make clear requests during a snack time activity. In the other group, the development of communication skills, while sound, is not as good. The best example was when a teaching assistant helped one child link the pictures in a book to tape-recorded sounds, such as the sound and picture of a tractor. Children are interested in looking at books.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are beginning to develop the understanding of simple mathematical terms.

### **Commentary**

38. The teaching and learning are good in the autistic group and satisfactory in the other group. The children are developing an understanding of 'big' and 'little' because the staff use every opportunity to reinforce these concepts. For example, as the autistic children played with model figures in a play house, the teacher asked if different sizes of models would fit into the roof area of the house. These children recognise and match up to three objects. All the children are provided with a good range of opportunities during sand and water activities to play with differently sized containers. They are beginning to understand the meaning of taller and smaller as their heights are recorded on the wall of the classroom.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are given a range of activities that encourage them to explore, observe and develop their imaginative play, although they make too little use of the computer.

## Commentary

39. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff plan an effective range of play activities and visits out of school, which extends the children's curiosity of their surroundings. In the classrooms the children are encouraged to develop their tactile experiences of different materials by running their hands through a mixture of sand and rice and by spreading butter on their toast at snack times. They visit a local farm and zoo to widen their knowledge of different animals. Too little use is made of the computer because of a lack of appropriate equipment such as a touch screen to give children more direct access to programs. As a result their wider knowledge of the world is slightly restricted.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The unsuitable outside area for play restricts children's physical development.

## Commentary

40. Teaching and learning in relation to physical development are satisfactory, overall. However, for most children, the play area outside their classroom does not allow for free play and exploration. As it is on a steep slope it is inadequate and dangerous. As a result, children's opportunities to play on appropriate equipment, for example on bicycles, are limited and this has a detrimental effect on their early development of skills. The outdoor facilities are better for autistic children, but the play area is too small and the sloped surface limits the provision of appropriate learning activities. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities provided to enable the children to develop their manipulation skills, for example tearing paper, painting and drawing.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of music to develop the senses and to promote the children's interaction with each other.

## Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The children are provided with ample opportunities to use different methods of painting and printing. In a good singing session the teacher hands round a kettle as they sing "... put the kettle on" and the staff reinforce the name of the child as they hold the kettle. The words of the songs are accompanied by the use of appropriate actions. The children are encouraged to play a range of musical instruments and listen to the different sounds that are produced.



## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very many opportunities are made for pupils to practise speaking and listening.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, and because the teaching is very good in Years 3 to 6 they achieve very well, especially in reading and writing.
- The curriculum planning meets the needs of all the pupils in school.
- Good leadership and management mean that there have been some valuable and innovative curriculum developments.
- There has been very good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

#### Commentary

42. There is a strong and very effective focus on the continued development of speaking, listening and communication throughout the school. All teachers and teachers' assistants sign well and this encourages pupils to sign as well as speak. This ensures that all pupils communicate at least well and everyone understands what has been communicated. Very many opportunities are made for pupils to practise speaking and listening in the great majority of lessons, with teachers' assistants constantly using conversations in break times, as well as during lessons, to reinforce what pupils have learnt in speaking and signing. All teachers speak and sign very clearly, often through singing games, which are very effective in getting pupils to listen carefully, use signing and try their hardest to communicate.
43. Pupils achieve well in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6 as a result of the very effective teaching in English lessons. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn how to hold a book, and turn the pages, looking at the pictures with interest and with growing understanding of the enjoyment to be found in books. Some higher attaining pupils such as those in Years 5 and 6 and autistic pupils in Years 3 to 6 read for pleasure and enjoy showing off their skills to the adults in their classrooms. The school has a very good range of pre-reading material and books to capture the imagination of pupils of all ages and abilities. There is very good work on the beginnings of reading so that pupils are skilled at combining the sounds of letters to make words. They recognise and know which letter begins their name and amongst pupils in Years 5 and 6 they substitute the first letter to change the meaning of the word, for example, 'book' turns into 'look', 'took' or 'cook'. This helps pupils to recognise patterns in words, so that they are more confident when it comes to deciphering new and unfamiliar words.
44. Writing, handwriting and spelling are all given very close attention and pupils gradually develop an understanding of how they all link together. Pupils copy, write or under write before launching into 'real writing' on a line in a book; others practise how to write particular letters correctly. A very few of the older and higher attaining pupils write independently about their activities over the weekend with the help of their own personal word books. The majority describe their weekend activities to an adult who then writes them out as single words or simple sentences which the pupils then copy and illustrate. There is a very limited application of ICT in English lessons. Pupils occasionally use the classroom computer for word and spelling games, or for word processing. The best example was with pupils in Years 4 and 5 being helped to use a writing program into which they had inserted a grid of words and symbols. They selected from these, by pointing and clicking with the mouse, the best words to describe runner beans and with help constructed sentences on the computer screen.

45. Teachers plan lessons in Years 3 to 6 with great clarity using precise information gained through the assessment of what pupils have learnt. Planning is good, overall, in Years 1 and 2. Pupils concentrate on their individual goals and, even though not all pupils will be able to read them, they know precisely what they have to do to improve. In a lesson about words beginning with 'P' some pupils practised writing the letter P correctly, some memorised words beginning with P and another group made up sentences containing words beginning with P. In this way a strong link was made between identification of the pupils' needs and planning to meet them. Because tasks are precisely matched to the pupils' interest and ability, they are interested, behave very well and enjoy learning. They try hard, and as they move through the school they develop the perseverance to sustain their work for the whole lesson. They are greatly helped in this by the teachers' assistants who plan and prepare effectively with teachers. As a result they employ a vast range of techniques to help pupils concentrate and reach their personal best, such as reinforcing pupils' successes in communicating by repeating what the pupil said correctly, or clearly expecting the pupils to draw a P correctly.
46. Good leadership and management of English have resulted in valuable and innovative curriculum developments. Talking Partners, booster classes in speaking and listening carried out by a trained teaching assistant, is one such innovation that has resulted in higher attaining pupils making very rapid progress in their ability to construct sentences, understand more complicated sentences and speak clearly. The use of a message board technique, where pupils post their messages and others ask them questions about their messages, is very effective in promoting focused dialogue among groups of pupils.
47. There has been a very good improvement in teaching, in the development of assessment and the curriculum. There have been great strides in the provision for teaching communication to all pupils since the last inspection. Training undertaken in school has paid off and there is now a very solid base of knowledge in signing and use of symbols. The school plans to train its midday supervisors in signing so that they too can contribute to pupils' achieving. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has ensured that all subjects are constructively promoting language and literacy.

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

48. The school makes good provision for language and literacy across the curriculum. This work runs alongside the effective development of language and literacy through all subjects. Good communication is at the heart of the work with autistic pupils and here combinations of signs, symbols and speaking are used very well to engage pupils in a wide range of learning. The promotion of speaking and listening is especially strong throughout the school, as result of which pupils are set very high expectations by the constant engagement in dialogue with staff and each other. Key vocabulary in each subject is clearly identified and gets stressed effectively through teaching. Reading and writing are often promoted well although the use of computers to support these is at an early stage because staff are often unfamiliar with the equipment and the programs.

### **English as an additional language**

Provision in English as an additional language is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The provision for the teaching of English as an additional language is very well led and effectively organised.

### **Commentary**

49. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language has improved considerably since the last inspection. Children at the Foundation Stage have little experience of speaking English because their families generally use their first language at home. However, they make good progress in speaking English because the school has adopted a rigorous language interaction programme that both introduces vocabulary and challenges these pupils to practise and develop their conversational skills. The children are given good opportunities to speak in English and learn to respond positively to the adults who work with them and their classmates. Children are beginning to communicate using emergent writing. They are developing positive attitudes towards adults and learn sign language and share toys and equipment with their classmates.
50. Achievement for primary age pupils is good; pupils are beginning to realise that words carry meaning, recognise words out of context, develop their visual memory and practise their speaking and listening skills. In one lesson a Year 4 pupil who had a very good relationship with the teacher made particularly good progress in speaking in sentences and sustained his concentration throughout the activities.
51. In Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching for pupils who speak English as a second language is good. Accurate assessments are used effectively to plan appropriate levels of work and consequently pupils are continually challenged. Very good opportunities for these pupils to work individually with the teacher responsible for English as an additional language are regularly provided. Pupils benefit from a rich and stimulating range of activities, including puppetry and opportunities to listen to audio tapes of stories that they follow in their reading books. They have very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through structured conversations with the teacher.
52. The teacher responsible has a clear vision for this aspect of the school. She is knowledgeable and has continually improved the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language since her appointment. Consequently the staff are well trained and confident in working with these children and pupils. Regular rigorous assessments are carried out and their results are carefully evaluated to check pupils' progress. The teacher leader works alongside class teachers, effectively monitoring the provision and continually giving help and support.
53. There are very good links with the local authority's Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant team who give good support to the school. Links with parents are good and continue to develop. Very good use is made of basic local authority budgeting and the school supports the provision for these pupils designated as English as an additional language through its own budget.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented. This has led to a good improvement in the subject and to all pupils achieving well.
- Teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses ensures work is well planned to meet individual needs.
- Teaching assistants make a very considerable contribution to pupils' learning.
- The way mathematical skills are used in other subjects is good.

### **Commentary**

54. The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised during the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced into the school. This has led

to improvements in pupils' achievement which is now good in Years 1 to 6. In all these year groups, pupils achieve well in number and in shape, space and measure. Pupils make good progress in their counting skills to solve problems during practical activities. They develop the concept of more and less and learn to add and subtract numbers. Pupils in Year 6 understand how a balance works and use it to develop an understanding of 'heavy' and 'light'. In some classes, pupils were observed using computers to follow individual learning programmes. Many are able to record their own performance.

55. Overall the quality of teaching is good and pupils learn well. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured to include whole-class, group and, where necessary, individual activities as well as an opportunity at the end of the lesson for work to be reviewed and pupils' successes celebrated. Teachers know their pupils well and use assessment to carefully match work to individual needs. This is especially effective where teaching assistants keep accurate records of pupils' performance throughout each lesson. Lessons are lively, with a wide range of resources and practical activities used to capture and hold pupils' interest so that they concentrate and work hard. Teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to lessons. They maintain a strong pace and have high expectations of pupils. Pupils improve their understanding and use of mathematical language as a result of all adults' emphasis on speaking, including signing, and listening in lessons.
56. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has successfully managed the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy to the school, has led staff training and arranged for an external consultant to offer advice on supporting pupils with severe learning difficulties in mathematics. She has managed resources well and created topic boxes of equipment to support the teaching of different aspects of mathematics. All of this has had a significant effect on classroom practice and pupils' learning. While the co-ordinator reviews teacher planning and assessment, as yet, the monitoring of teaching and learning in mathematics is undeveloped.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. The development and use of numeracy skills in other subjects are good and support the development of mathematical skills and concepts and the use of mathematical language. Pupils are given many opportunities to improve their counting skills. For example, during music lessons pupils learn songs that require counting. In art they use their knowledge of sequencing shapes to develop attractive patterns. Concepts of 'more' and 'less', 'bigger' and 'smaller' are used across a number of subjects. In science, as part of a unit on planting and growing, pupils compare and contrast the characteristics of different seeds.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning.
- The good use of practical investigations stimulates the pupils' interest in their learning.
- There are good procedures to regularly check and monitor pupils' achievement.

#### **Commentary**

58. A major reason for the good achievement of pupils is the detailed and well-planned content of lessons. In a good Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher used a big book and additional signing to introduce the pupils to a practical activity to plant seeds. With good staff support they talked about the conditions that seeds need to grow and understood the sequence of activities required to plant the seeds. They also showed good co-ordinated skills in carefully filling the

plant pots with soil. In a lesson for a class of Years 3 and 4 pupils, good use was made of practical activities, for example pushing fingers into play dough and propelling model cars, which assisted the pupils in understanding the difference between a pull and a push. They accurately identified the pictorial differences between activities requiring a push and a pull. By Year 5, pupils understand that plants produce a variety of different seeds and they use magnifying glasses to study the individual characteristics of the seeds. Pupils comment enthusiastically on the different shapes and colours. The knowledge that the Year 5 pupils showed in this lesson when compared to the Year 2 lesson clearly illustrates the good progress made and their achievement in understanding plants.

59. Practical activities are effectively used with all the groups. The topics are well planned and cover the breadth of the National Curriculum science programme well, particularly in giving pupils the opportunities to investigate. For example, by experimenting, pupils in Year 6 explored the sources of sound and in Year 1 they understood that an egg changes when it is boiled. This range of planned activities is a good improvement since the last inspection.
60. The leadership and management of science are good, as result of which there has been a good improvement in the range of learning activities since the last inspection. At the end of topics pupils' level of understanding and progress is monitored. The well-informed co-ordinator has devised a check sheet to inform teachers in different classes what has been taught in previous topics. This ensures that the planning of future learning activities builds on past experiences. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor science teaching in order to develop the subject systematically and raise standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- While teaching and learning in ICT are satisfactory, they not as well developed and effective as in most other subjects.
- ICT has not had sufficiently strong leadership and management to bring about enough improvement since the previous inspection.
- While the amount and quality of learning in ICT is uneven, it is adequate in ensuring pupils achieve satisfactorily.

### **Commentary**

61. A satisfactory level of opportunity exists for learning directly about ICT and through its use to support learning in several other subjects. In some literacy lessons, for example, pupils move ahead much more rapidly using more conventional methods of learning than when they work on their spelling or writing on a computer. Teachers prefer tried and tested approaches to teaching in which they are often expert, whereas teaching through using ICT is largely tentative and much less confident. It is occasionally effective when it is linked to the well-established and very good approach to teaching pupils with autism. One pupil's first experience of programming a robotic Roamer resulted in very good learning because he was so familiar with understanding and using symbols. From knowing to read a sequence of symbols from left to right and having each explained very clearly by the teaching assistant, the pupil entered his commands into the Roamer's program to make it move forward in a straight line. He then went on, nearly independently, to elaborate the program into performing a forward and a reverse movement.
62. The part played by ICT in promoting learning has not had as much priority as literacy and numeracy. This is a result of the unsatisfactory leadership and co-ordination of how pupils are to achieve in relation to ICT. The up-dating and increase in resources, together with planning of a programme of what should be taught, have been the best led and managed features. While

progress has been hampered by some items of equipment having been stolen, the expected benefits are more significantly reduced by insufficient training of staff to use resources effectively. Best value has not yet been achieved in relation to the investment in ICT resources. This is tied to a lack of monitoring of the use of ICT in classrooms, which leaves the school ill-informed as to the state of affairs. Consequently, ICT does not figure significantly in the school improvement plan and, in particular, in relation to a current priority to increase pupils' communication. Overall, the position is very similar to that at the time of the previous inspection and the improvement since then is unsatisfactory.

63. While the development of ICT is not moving concertedly across the school, it is promoted more actively and purposefully in some classrooms than in others. As a result, achievement throughout the school is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, although the amount of attention in lessons is variable, pupils achieve as expected in knowing and responding to different sources of information and types of communication. They operate a tape recorder, use a variety of switches to activate sounds or voice recordings, and communicate using objects, signs and symbols. Higher attaining pupils manipulate a computer mouse with precision, take photographs with a digital camera and guide remote control toys. In Years 3 to 6, pupils in some classes have dedicated time to work through a mathematics program which automatically adjusts the difficulty of the work from continual assessment of their progress. As staff develop familiarity with a new computer-based writing program, some pupils are using this to write sentences. Generally, pupils use a computer mouse to open and close programs and to save or retrieve work. Most select from a variety of features in a paint program to make images and higher attaining pupils mark out areas that they fill with colour. While some higher attaining pupils produce graphs and charts on a computer, the amount of word processing, linking images to text and searching the Internet is small.

### **ICT across the curriculum**

64. ICT use is satisfactory, overall, in lessons. The amount of activity involving ICT is varied and depends largely on whether staff have the expertise and confidence to include it in their teaching. Some staff are more motivated than others at bringing computers into regular use. Pupils have reasonable access to a variety of basic ICT equipment to support learning such as specialised switches. Video tapes are used in teaching but pupils do not make videos although they are increasingly using digital photography in their work. In English, a few classes use a writing program and, in mathematics, some classes use a program to promote counting skills. However, there is no sufficient plan for the cohesive development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum or for how ICT resources should be used in lessons generally.

### **HUMANITIES**

One lesson was seen in **geography** and none in **history**. Two lessons were seen in religious education and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work as well as other evidence on record. Judgements are not therefore made about provision in these subjects.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Teaching and learning in the geography lesson were very good. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. Pupils learned about mapping and gained a clear idea of how to make a map of their own classroom. They were fascinated by the idea of a bird's eye view and highly delighted to realise how small a person would look from this perspective. This practical approach helped them a great deal. The co-ordination of history and geography is currently in abeyance, though a satisfactory scheme of what is taught is in place.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

There is insufficient evidence to judge provision in religious education or, overall, how well pupils achieve. Altogether, the evidence gathered confirms that statutory requirements are met and that all

pupils receive at least a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn from religions and about religions. This is a reasonable improvement since the previous inspection, which is the result of good leadership and management in developing the subject in ways relevant to the wide range of attainments of pupils throughout the school, although there was insufficient evidence to see its effect on the quality of teaching and learning. While the programme of what pupils are taught and the resources to support this have improved satisfactorily, the expected benefits have not been systematically evaluated with the result that the co-ordinator is not sufficiently clear that religious education is well planned everywhere in the school. This is especially relevant since the adopted approach to teaching the subject is often through topics such as 'habitats' and 'life cycles' in science and 'caring, sharing and helping' in personal, social and health education.

In the two lessons seen there was sufficient religious content in one and very good content in the other. In the former, pupils were ready with questions, planned in an earlier lesson, to ask the school's cook about her job. The tactic of involving a key person not directly involved with pupils in the classroom worked well. This contributed to them developing their interest in what others do and learning about what they feel and think. However, many of the questions were too mundane and did not probe thoughts and feeling very deeply. As a result, pupils' interest and attention waned but, overall, their discussion and making a written record of the cook's responses promoted literacy well. Earlier, pupils had taken digital photographs in the kitchen and used these effectively to stimulate their thoughts and writing. In the latter lesson, the higher attaining group of Years 5 and 6 pupils learnt a great deal about Sikhism and religious symbols through video extracts, exploring Sikh artefacts and discussion of their religious meanings. Pupils were very interested and constructively curious about Sikh doctrine.

Evidence on record shows some very good provision for all pupils to experience, learn from and participate in a great variety of religious celebrations encompassing the Christian, Moslem and Hindu religions. In particular, the celebrations of Eid and Diwali are hugely enriched with displays of artefacts and costumes. Pupils visit mosques, temples and churches and leaders from the different traditions visit to speak to groups. For Diwali, for example, under the guidance of a Hindu visitor, pupils dressed up in the roles of Rama, Sita and Laxshman and enacted the Hindu legend in an exciting, colourful and engaging way.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

In this area of the curriculum seven lessons in total were seen. One lesson was seen in art and design and two lessons each in music, design and technology and physical education. The amount of evidence for each of the subjects is insufficient to make judgements on the quality of their provision.

### **ART AND DESIGN**

A scrutiny of teacher planning and the work displayed around the schools shows that pupils' achievement is good. Since the last inspection, a good scheme of work and associated assessment procedure has been introduced. This has led to the good planning and organisation of activities in art and design and ensures that all pupils are fully involved in all activities. In the one lesson seen, the support and challenge provided by the teaching assistant led to good levels of pupil enjoyment. Pupils were allowed to use a magnifying glass to look at daffodils in detail and practise their drawing and painting before producing a finished piece of work. This led to good progress and achievement in learning.

Work is enhanced in art and design by visits to local art galleries and visits to the school by artists and by the way it is integrated into other areas of the curriculum. Much art has arisen out of the pupils' studies of religious and cultural festivals. For example, pupils have had the opportunity to produce both small and large-scale dragons and then take part in a dragon dance as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. In literacy, pupils have studied African costumes and in numeracy used work on sequencing to produce some interesting patterns.

## **MUSIC**

Teachers' planning shows that there are appropriate activities provided to enable pupils to develop their musical skills. Pupils are given good opportunities to experience the sounds and moods created by different instruments. Singing is used very effectively to encourage pupils to interact with others in their group. A number of lessons involve the pupils being encouraged to greet their peers with the 'hello' song. Both the music sessions observed were very good. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator leads the sessions, with very good support provided by other members of the teaching and classroom support staff. In the group for the older autistic pupils, the staff work extremely hard and with enthusiasm to use singing, linked with the stretching of material and the playing of musical instruments to successfully stimulate a response from individual members of the group. In the whole-school singing assembly, the pupils displayed very good levels of musical achievement as they sang songs with a good understanding and expression of a slow and fast rhythm. One pupil sang a high quality solo confidently in front of the assembled pupils and staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

By looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning of lessons it is clear that there is a range of appropriate activities. By the time pupils reach Year 2, they have learned how a keyboard is turned on and off and that it needs batteries to operate. They have made models using different materials and construction kits and helped to make soup. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils followed up a shopping trip to a supermarket by making sandwiches with a filling of their choice. They understand the need to wash their hands before starting, spread butter and grate cheese by hand, all of which contributed well to them refining manual skills and using tools. The pupils successfully completed the independent preparation of a sandwich because of the good support provided by the teaching assistant. In Year 6, pupils have made clay models of bean plants grown in science and designed a garden area.

The co-ordinator, who has recently taken up the post, is updating the subject policy and developing more thorough procedures for checking pupils' achievements by creating a file of moderated examples of pupils' work.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

In the two lessons that were seen, pupils made very good progress.

There has been good progress in relation to almost all the issues raised during the last inspection. The subject now benefits from the use of a well set out scheme of what pupils are taught, linked to an appropriate assessment system. In the lessons seen, activities were very well structured to ensure that all pupils were equally involved and achieved their best. In a very good swimming lesson for Years 4, 5, and 6 which was planned to achieve targets set in an award scheme, all pupils showed very good progress in their confidence in water and their ability to move through it. The teaching assistants provided very good support, working with groups and individual children to both challenge and encourage them to do well.

Physical education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. They make very good progress in understanding the effects exercise has on their bodies and why it is good for them. They analyse their own and the performance of others and suggest ways in which it can be improved. In an excellent gymnastics lesson, Years 5 and 6 pupils were encouraged to share their own performances with others and respond to the comments made. They were very happy to do this and modified their performance in line with the contributions made by their peers.

The school hall and other resources are good. However, the school field is barely satisfactory and is not easily accessible by pupils with mobility difficulties. Very good use is made of resources in the local and wider community including the use of residential visits to develop outdoor and adventurous activities.



## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

One lesson of personal, social and health education was seen, which is insufficient to make judgements on provision. However, there is sufficient evidence from lessons generally and from activities outside of lessons to show pupils achieve very well.

Pupils' personal, social and health education is put at the centre of provision and is aimed squarely at pupils learning independence and developing a positive regard for themselves and others. It is integrated into teaching and the daily routines, affecting pupils arriving and going home, their playtime breaks, lunchtimes and visits out. For example, in story time for a group of pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3, they listened to a tale of how bragging nearly led to conflict and how being able to say sorry resolved this. Pupils understood the moral and could apply this to themselves. Pupils with autism have regular planned visits to a local supermarket, part of which concerns them learning about road traffic and safe behaviour. They also learn good conduct in public places and independence in using the supermarket and its café.

There is very good and consistent emphasis on pupils managing as much for themselves as possible. As a result, at an early stage pupils manage their belongings and organise their books and equipment for lessons. All staff are very good at facilitating pupils in taking charge as much as they can through giving them choices, both at a simple level of deciding which biscuits and drinks at break times, to more demanding decisions on solving problems during lessons. In a personal, social and health education lesson involving Years 5 and 6 pupils, they had to discuss and decide what each would do in a scenario where it was discovered a rule had been broken. They had the choice of owning up, denying it or blaming someone else. Pupils were challenged well in having to rationalise their favoured course of action. Pupils are also encouraged very well to do things for each other and to be helpful wherever they can. More often than not in lessons, pupils will have the job of setting out or clearing away equipment and they are very independent and work together very well in doing this.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
In a special school such as this, <b>standards achieved</b> are judged against individual targets and not national standards	
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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

