

INSPECTION REPORT

STANTON VALE SCHOOL

Long Eaton, Nottingham

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 113041

Headteacher: Ms Jan Wells

Lead inspector: Alan Tattersall

Dates of inspection: 4th - 6th May 2004

Inspection number: 259000

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	85
School address:	Thoresby Road Long Eaton Nottingham
Postcode:	NG10 3NP
Telephone number:	01159729769
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joan Fisher
Date of previous inspection:	17/03/1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stanton Vale School has 85 boys and girls aged between two and 19 who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). As would be expected, attainment on entry is very low as a consequence of pupils' special educational needs. Just over half the pupils are boys. Several pupils throughout the school have challenging behaviour and a few have physical and sensory needs or autistic spectrum disorders. There are four children in the foundation stage. One pupil is from an ethnic minority group and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. A fifth of pupils require a free school meal, which is average for similar schools. Pupils come mainly from Derbyshire, with a few from Derby City and Nottinghamshire.

The headteacher and an assistant headteacher left immediately prior to the original Stanton Vale School relocating in September 2002. One assistant headteacher became acting headteacher and moved with staff and pupils from the Ilkeston site in Derbyshire into the closing Westbrook Special School at Long Eaton in Nottinghamshire. The new much larger school formed from the two schools, their remaining pupils and staff together with additional pupils and staff operated on the new site during the refurbishment of the building. The headteacher's post became substantive in April 2003 and the buildings were largely complete in September, the swimming pool being completed in January 2004. Efforts are still underway to secure sufficient management, teaching, classroom support staff and residential staff. A deputy headteacher was appointed two weeks prior to the inspection. The residential facilities cannot operate because of a shortage of staff. The school became a regional Mobility Opportunities via Education (MOVE) centre in January 2004 and still retains an anti-bullying kitemark and basic skills quality mark obtained in 2001 by the original Stanton Vale School.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20466	A Tattersall	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, geography, modern foreign language (French), physical education and English as an additional language.
19693	S Hall	Lay inspector	
14563	G Pirt	Team inspector	Art and design and music.
2512	B Emery	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology and history.
14691	J Hall	Team inspector	Science, design and technology and religious education.
31914	C Gribble	Team inspector	English, personal, social and health education and citizenship and special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stanton Vale School provides an **acceptable** standard of education for most of its pupils. Achievement and the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and the vision to take the school forward.
- Pupils are keen to come to school, behave well and form good relationships.
- Achievement is good in Mobility Opportunities via Education (MOVE) and swimming.
- Students at post-16 achieve well and benefit from good links with colleges.
- Pupils with more challenging behaviour are not managed consistently well and this has a negative effect on their achievement, which is unsatisfactory overall.
- Teachers do not plan consistently to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology.
- The senior management team is not up to strength and subject leaders lack opportunities to support colleagues to contribute to school improvement.
- Staff shortages adversely affect pupils' learning.
- Parents have a positive view of the school and appreciate the good support they receive through the school from a range of health professionals.

Although the school retains its name, it has changed significantly in size, the pupils it takes and the staff employed to combine with another refurbished school in a different town. It is not possible to make any appropriate judgements on progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 6	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 9	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 11	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 13	Good	Good

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

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** for children in the foundation stage and pupils up to Year 11 and **good** for students at post-16. Achievement is at least satisfactory in all subjects except for information and communication technology (ICT), which is unsatisfactory. Although the achievement of pupils with additional special educational needs is largely the same as that of others, pupils with challenging behaviour make unsatisfactory progress. Occasionally in lessons, higher attaining pupils do not receive sufficient support to make satisfactory progress. Pupils achieve well in physical development in the MOVE programme and make good progress in the swimming pool. Staff guide most pupils to behave well and they form good relationships with others and staff. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are keen to come to school and show a good interest in learning. Assemblies make a positive contribution to pupils' overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is racial harmony and the school is free from bullying. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** in most subjects and good for students in the post-16 classes. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. A strength in English and mathematics lessons is the planning to implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Weaknesses in the accuracy of the assessment of pupils' learning leads to higher attaining pupils occasionally receiving insufficient challenge to make the same progress as others. The teaching plans and strategies for pupils with challenging behaviour are not effective in ensuring they make sufficient progress. The curriculum is satisfactory. However, planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is not consistently ensuring that pupils make progress during the generous time allocated for these aspects. Pupils' learning is enriched satisfactorily through visits, visitors to school and opportunities to stay after school to learn. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and the residence and swimming baths are very good. The recruitment of teachers is a challenge and has reduced opportunities for the headteacher and subject leaders to make improvements. Insufficient permanent classroom support and residential staff have a negative effect on pupils' opportunities to learn. Staff show a high degree of care and concern for pupils. Pupils are introduced to the school well and students at post-16 receive effective guidance to prepare for leaving. There is good support from visiting health and education specialists. Relationships with parents and carers are good. There are good arrangements for students at post-16 to attend college but these are less effective for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The links with the community and other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **satisfactory**. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear vision to develop the school and raise standards. Management is **satisfactory**, although much of the responsibility falls to the headteacher in the absence of an established senior management team. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is beginning to provide strong support. Subject leaders lack sufficient opportunities to influence developments for instance, to improve how teachers interpret plans for subjects into lessons and to check that pupils use ICT sufficiently. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school, particularly in their efforts to recruit sufficient high quality teaching and care staff. The local education authority has provided strong support to the leadership and management of the school during the period of building work and severe staff shortages and this has helped to raise standards to an acceptable level. Finance is managed satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers have a high regard for the school and for the way that they receive help and guidance for their children. Pupils like school and the staff and look forward to being in school. They are interested in lessons and like to help and look after each other.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that pupils with more challenging behaviour receive suitable support to participate more effectively in the life of the school and make better progress.
- Continue to endeavour to recruit sufficient staff, establish an effective senior management team and provide better opportunities for subject leaders to support their colleagues. *
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in ICT. *
- Improve planning to enable higher attaining pupils to achieve as consistently as others by matching tasks more accurately to their attainment. *

** The school is well aware of the improvements required and they form part of the school improvement plan for the coming year.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of most boys and girls up to the end of Year 11 is **satisfactory** and **good** for students at post-16. The standards judged against 'P' levels (nationally recognised measurements of small steps in learning) broadly show that standards are satisfactory and rising.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achievements at post-16 ensure that they are well prepared to move on.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour and occasionally pupils of higher ability do not make sufficient progress in lessons.
- Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- Achievement in swimming and MOVE makes a good contribution to pupils' physical development.
- A lack of sufficient planning of what pupils will learn limits pupils' progress in personal, social and health education (PHSE) and citizenship.

Commentary

1. The school's initial analysis of results since establishment on the new site shows that there were low standards in several subjects and for specific groups of pupils. Current assessments show that there has been an improvement and that standards are now largely satisfactory. Children in the foundation stage make satisfactory gains overall in the areas of learning. The higher level of achievement of students at post-16 owes much to the way that the curriculum has been planned to meet their needs. Their attendance at college makes a positive contribution to their social development and to their good achievement in PSHE and citizenship.
2. The majority of pupils who have additional special educational needs achieve and make the same progress as other pupils in the school because of effective support. This is the case for pupils who have additional physical, visual, hearing needs and those with autistic spectrum disorders. An exception are the pupils who have challenging behaviour. For instance, in lessons in geography and physical education for pupils from Year 9 to 11, a few pupils opted out of the lesson and failed to engage with tasks for them to contribute and learn. Overall, the plans to improve their behaviour are not effective in ensuring that they increase their participation sufficiently and consequently they miss out on opportunities to make progress in several lessons.
3. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in most subjects. The results of their assessments using P levels provides a basis for teachers to plan work to meet their needs. However, there are inconsistencies in the way that the information is used and this leads on occasions to higher attaining pupils making less progress than others in the class because they are not stretched sufficiently. For instance, higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 in a class with a wide range of ability completed the same tasks as others in a science lesson to experience changes in colour depending upon acidity. This prevents the higher attaining pupils from taking more responsibility for their learning and building upon their prior achievements.
4. There are several instances where pupils who require support with communication use switches and recording devices well to help them to participate in lessons, for instance to say 'hello' at registration. Occasionally pupils throughout the school make good progress in lessons when there is effective planning for them. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Year 9. Two pupils matched photographs, using computers to write their names. However, pupils overall throughout the school lack sufficient opportunities to use ICT in order to make progress. The

headteacher and governors are well aware that standards are low in information and communication technology and that pupils are making insufficient progress. There are suitable plans to make improvements to the subject in the drive to raise standards and for pupils to use equipment to make better progress in lessons throughout the day.

5. Pupils' achievements towards the targets that are set for them in English are satisfactory and provides pupils with the means to participate in lessons throughout the day. Although progress over time is satisfactory overall, there is a recognition that pupils require more opportunities to develop writing skills. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in mathematics and receive valuable opportunities to gain practical experience during lessons such as counting in mathematics. Although satisfactory overall, there are strengths in pupils' achievement in physical education. Pupils make good progress towards the specific targets for movement in the MOVE programme. They know their targets and strive towards them. Pupils have regular opportunities to swim in the very good facilities on site. They receive effective support to develop more confidence in the water through a very high level of staff encouragement and tasks that ensure that they make good and steady progress towards the targets set for them.
6. Pupils' achievement in PSHE and citizenship is satisfactory. Lessons ensure that they follow a good range of topics. For instance, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in understanding 'caring' by helping to look after toy animals. There are considerable periods during the day that are allocated to develop pupils' social and personal skills. They achieve well for instance, in developing social skills by sharing drinks at break time and make good progress towards their programmes for developing independence or co-operation during lunch. However, there is a lack of planning for all the time allocated on the timetable for PSHE in order to sustain consistent progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school life are **good**. Their behaviour and personal development are **good** overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils like coming to school
- Pupils' develop confidence and self-esteem well through being encouraged to form good relationships.
- Staff are not consistently successful in managing pupils who display challenging behaviour.
- The school encourages the social development of students at post-16 well and prepares them effectively for life after school.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Commentary

7. Most pupils are enthusiastic about school life and express disappointment when they cannot attend. They talk about their school with pleasure. Staff are positive in developing pupils' attitudes and this begins with the warm welcome given to pupils when they arrive at school in the morning. Attitudes to learning are generally positive in lessons. These good attitudes are displayed particularly well in older pupils but are in evidence throughout the school. Consequently, lessons are characterised by pupils wanting to learn and applying themselves well to tasks. Attitudes, behaviour and values are good by the time students leave school.
8. Pupils throughout the school are encouraged to relate and co-operate well with each other and adults. Children in the foundation stage are supported well and this contributes to increasing their confidence and security at school. Older pupils show that they are capable of taking initiative and responsibility when they help each other in school. Students develop their independence well

through vocational opportunities and work experience. Pupils have opportunities to help with a range of tasks in the school and to express their views through the school council. They know that they can take any concerns, such as bullying, to staff since they receive prompt and effective support. The positive nature of the anti-bullying programme that has been devised is used as an exemplar in other parts of the county.

9. Pupils with additional learning difficulties, other than those with challenging behaviour, have positive attitudes to learning, especially when working in class, individually or in a small group with the support of a teacher or educational care officer (teaching assistant). There are clear procedures for the management of behaviour and the staff has appropriate expectations. The positive strategies enable staff to encourage the majority of pupils to develop appropriate behaviour. This is helped by the training that most staff have undertaken in Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP). In social settings, such as lunchtime or in assemblies, pupils show common sense and a willingness to help each other. Generally, the staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals. Most pupils respond well in the vast majority of lessons because teachers implement the school's positive behaviour policy consistently. However, there are several pupils displaying challenging behaviour, often for long periods during the day. These pupils are often disruptive and noisy in lessons or fail to take part and teachers do not have effective strategies to meet their needs.
10. The school helps pupils develop their spiritual, moral and social awareness well. The development of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is good overall. The very good assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. There were often times that members of the inspection team observed pupils helping others without them being asked.
11. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Staff provide good role models and support is given to pupils to develop their self-esteem. The school council helps to develop pupils' understanding of democratic processes and is part of the school's target of increasing pupil responsibility. Social development is good. Children in the foundation stage have good opportunities to develop social skills in school and students at post-16 by learning in a local college. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding and appreciation of their own and other cultures. They have less understanding of life in a multi-cultural society since they require more experiences. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and that of other people in this new location and religious education increases their awareness of other faiths and the cultures associated with them.

Attendance

12. Attendance at more than 91 per cent is better than similar schools. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and they are usually only absent when they are ill or have medical appointments. Registration procedures are carried out correctly. Staff follow up any unexplained absences and there are very few unauthorised absences. Well-organised systems for transporting pupils to school ensure that they arrive promptly.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.7	School data :	0.9
National data:	11.2	National data:	0.7

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

Exclusions

13. There have been no exclusions for several years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The satisfactory teaching and learning and procedures for assessment ensure that pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils follow an adequate curriculum that is enriched by links with the community and other schools. Pupils receive a satisfactory standard of care. Parents and carers have a high regard for what the school does for their children.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall but **good** for students at post-16.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching for students at post-16 prepares them well for leaving school.
- There are weaknesses in planning for pupils who have challenging behaviour.
- Although satisfactory overall, weaknesses in assessment mean that occasionally teachers do not match tasks to the needs of higher attaining pupils in several subjects.
- Teaching and learning is good in MOVE, swimming and often in English and mathematics.
- The lack of staff skills and equipment contributes to teaching and learning being unsatisfactory in ICT.

Commentary

14. The headteacher and governors are aware that standards of teaching and learning require improvement and this has led to support being provided for staff to improve. Opportunities for this have been limited because of staff shortages, particularly in senior managers. However, the headteacher has provided much support with the assistance of the local education authority. The school's records show that teaching is improving and this improvement is confirmed by observations during the inspection that overall teaching and learning is satisfactory. The establishment of an effective curriculum for students at post-16 has made an important contribution to teachers planning interesting and useful lessons for students. Consequently, students make good progress in most areas of their learning.

15. Teachers ensure that they plan lessons so that pupils who are on the autistic spectrum or who have additional sensory or physical needs make the same progress as others. However, there is a whole school weakness in teachers planning to ensure that pupils who have challenging behaviour make sufficient progress.

16. There has been satisfactory development overall of a more effective assessment system to make sure that pupils' progress is recorded. This process is at an early stage and this is evident in higher attaining pupils having assessments that understate their ability. For instance there are several instances of a mismatch between the pupils' assessed levels of attainment using 'p' levels and what pupils know understand and can do. This occasionally leads to insufficient challenge for several pupils in lessons and consequently they do not make as much progress as they could. For instance, pupils who are assessed as being able to 'experience' music demonstrate in lessons that they are able to make multiple choices and name instruments and therefore should have been assessed at a higher level. However, there are strengths in assessment, which partly compensate for this. Established teachers know their pupils well and often plan work and set targets on this basis rather than the assessments. Consequently, overall, teachers are planning work to match individual needs at a satisfactory level. Staff confidence in the new procedures is growing. The headteacher recognises the need for more effective assessment and recording on a regular basis and this forms an appropriate part of the school improvement plan.

17. There is effective planning to take advantage of staff skills and the good resources for learning to ensure that pupils achieve well in the MOVE programme and in swimming. Most teachers have incorporated the national literacy and numeracy strategies into lessons and this provides a greater focus to matching the work to pupils' prior attainment. For instance, pupils in Year 2 made good progress participating in small group work to understand words and sentences after a lively introduction looking at them in the big book about a bear and a picnic lunch. However, as with other subjects, there is not a consistent match between the work set and pupils' individual needs and this adversely affects the consistency of teaching and pupils' overall achievement.
18. There are strengths to the teaching of ICT in a few lessons. For instance, pupils in Year 2 received interesting tasks to use touch screens to make changes of colour and shape on the computer screen. Although pupils' assessments were inaccurate, the teacher used good informal knowledge of pupils to challenge individuals such as encouraging them to follow from left to right and seizing the moment to encourage a higher attaining pupil to make the shapes of letters on the screen with his finger. However, there is too little teaching of ICT skills taking place around the school for pupils to make satisfactory progress. Although there are often good opportunities planned for pupils to use large switches to play recorded speech to contribute to lessons, there are few other examples where teachers plan for pupils to use computers to help them with their work. The school has recognised the need to improve resources and staff skills in order to begin to address the weakness in teaching and learning in ICT.
19. The recruitment of sufficient teaching and experienced educational support officers has been a significant barrier to making improvements particularly to enable subject leaders to be able to guide and support colleagues. Although educational care officers often make a good contribution to pupils' learning in school, this is not consistent. This is evident in several lessons where the teacher needs to lead much of the lesson and spend time guiding new and inexperienced staff during group work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (5 %)	15 (37 %)	21 (51 %)	3 (7 %)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils is **satisfactory**. They are **good** for students at post-16. There is a satisfactory range of activities to enrich pupils' learning. The accommodation is good, resources satisfactory but staffing is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Plans for what pupils should learn are detailed but do not provide sufficient guidance for staff to use them to best effect.
- Staffing vacancies are adversely affecting pupils' achievement during the day and in the residence.
- The course for students at post-16 prepares them well for leaving school.
- Planning for pupils who have challenging behaviour is unsatisfactory.
- There is not enough rigour to planning to promote pupils' personal, social and health and citizenship education.
- The quality of the accommodation is good.

Commentary

20. Subjects are planned satisfactorily on a long term basis to cover the general needs of pupils. This ensures that pupils will follow a suitable range of activities in each subject during their time in school. However, there is a weakness in guidance for the interpretation of the plans. This leads occasionally for instance, to teachers planning work that covers the correct subject but at a level that is not appropriate to the class. The school has recognised that several new staff require more support and guidance to interpret the guidance for subjects into short term plans. This includes developing individual lessons plans that are stimulating, that challenge the highest attaining pupils, and that fully meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs. The school faces a challenge of providing this advice to staff in the face of requiring more staff, improving the support from subject leaders and establishing a senior management team.
21. Pupils and students with a wide range of additional special educational needs receive satisfactory access to the curriculum overall. The main body of pupils and students who have severe learning difficulties and PMLD usually receive a curriculum suitably modified to their needs, although there are acknowledged weaknesses in consistently matching tasks to the needs of higher attaining pupils. Provision for children in the foundation stage is satisfactory. They benefit from a range of resources that give them satisfactory access to the early learning goals. Individual education plans for those pupils with multi-sensory impairment, physical needs and autism have specific targets and work is planned for each area of the curriculum. However, for several pupils with more challenging behaviour, there is unsatisfactory access to most subjects since work is not matched well to their individual, specific needs and pupils' responses are unsatisfactory. There are missed opportunities to address their needs outside lessons, as plans are not readily available for staff to share.
22. The use of additional means to help pupils communicate is satisfactory overall but there are occasional weaknesses in teachers' use of signs and symbols. Although there are good examples of the use of communication devices, there is a need for staff to receive support to devise ways in which computers and other technological aids can be used in all subjects to support learning and aid communication.
23. A much higher than average amount of time is allocated to the teaching of PSHE and citizenship education. The whole school plan for lessons in this subject, as for all subjects, is satisfactory. In addition to the planning for discrete lessons, there are teachers' daily plans for PSHE and citizenship education, which includes time during arrival and departure, during breaks, in the dining hall, and at lunchtime. Plans vary in quality and overall the sessions are not planned consistently well enough. A consequence of the emphasis upon PSHE is that it restricts the time available to teach other subjects. For instance, the short time allocation for science limits the progress that can be made in this subject.
24. The range of opportunities planned to make lessons more exciting and to extend learning out of lessons is satisfactory. The school has moved to a new site. As a result, teachers have lost many of the links they had made with the community. Development of the after school programme in the residential accommodation is also limited since staff recruitment difficulties have delayed its opening.
25. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, and for students at post-16 they are good and provide an adult setting for day time study. The swimming pool is very good and most of the accommodation is of good quality. There is high quality residential accommodation. However, the school has identified a number of areas for further development. The library, sensory room, food technology room, art room and playground areas, for example, are not yet fully effective as teaching areas.
26. Students are prepared well for leaving school. The course for students at post-16 is good and based on `EQUALS Moving On`. Achievements are accredited effectively through a local college. Links with colleges, and with the Connexions service, are good. Although there is only a small

amount of work experience, arrangements are matched to students' learning needs. The course for pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not, though, provide enough choice, vocational education or preparation for moving on to the next stage. For instance, there are missed opportunities to enable pupils to choose subjects, learn about the world of work, or prepare them for the next stage in their education, training or care.

Care, guidance and support

The measures for the care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are **satisfactory**. Overall pupils and students receive **satisfactory** support and guidance. The pupils' involvement in the work of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults demonstrate a high level of care and consideration for pupils.
- Pupils and their families receive good support from a range of health professions.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour do not receive enough effective support.
- A few teachers do not track the personal development of pupils in sufficient detail.
- There is good provision for students at post-16 to make decisions about their future.
- The school's induction procedures for new pupils and their families are good.

Commentary

27. The vast majority of adults working in the school know the pupils very well and there is an atmosphere of trust and respect which permeates many aspects of school life. Staff sense very small changes in moods of pupils, including those with very limited communication skills. They do all they can to help them when they are distressed either physically or emotionally. Staff attend to the personal care of the pupils with sensitivity and report any concerns they may have about pupils' welfare to the school nurses.
28. Child protection procedures are well known by most adults working in school and they know to report any concerns to the headteacher. The school has recently recognised the need to increase the support provided to the headteacher in the co-ordination of child protection. Several staff have been nominated to undertake responsibility and they await training. There are appropriate arrangements in place for pupils in public care. The school has drawn up a policy and procedure for safe use of the Internet and is implementing this. Procedures to ensure the pupils' health and safety are satisfactory. Risk assessments are made for visits and activities for the premises. Appropriate arrangements are in place for testing electrical equipment and emergency evacuations.
29. The school nurses work closely with a range of other medical specialists to provide good support for pupils, many of whom have complex medical needs. Parents value this. By arranging clinics for the school doctor, dentists and chiropodists, paediatrician and audiologist at the school, pupils feel secure and less time is lost in travelling to appointments. Pupils receive speech therapy support in class and a fulltime physiotherapist works closely with staff and parents to provide effective support, enabling pupils to achieve well in improving their mobility and independence. Arrangements for first aid treatment and administering medication are very good. Good records are kept and there is good communication between school and home when pupils are unwell.
30. Although pupils receive good informal support from staff during their time at play, lunch and on visits, not all teachers track the progress of the pupils' personal development in sufficient detail. Targeted and planned support during these periods outside the classroom is not consistent and there are missed opportunities to bring about improvements in the pupils' personal and social development. The school does not fully address the needs of pupils with challenging behaviour

and there is a lack of an effective structured programme of support with clear targets for improving both their academic and personal skills.

31. Parents value the way in which the school makes new pupils feel welcome. The staff and a range of health professionals quickly get to know the pupils and their needs and this helps them to settle into school routines. Students at post-16 receive good advice about their future through close links with a local college. Their weekly visits enable them to experience college courses, undertake work placements and they are given good support in making choices about life after school. However, this range and quality of opportunity is not available to pupils in Years 10 and 11.
32. Staff value the views of students at post-16 and encourage them to celebrate their taste in music, posters and reading material in their common room. The school council provides pupils and students with satisfactory opportunities to express their opinions, although most of the ideas come from the students at post-16.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good** and those with the community and other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school make parents feel welcome and day-to-day communication is good.
- Parents receive good information about how their children are getting on.
- Health professionals work closely with parents to support pupils' medical needs.
- Students at post-16 benefit from the good links with colleges.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream school activities.
- Staff occasionally share good ideas about the curriculum with other schools.

Commentary

33. Nearly all parents hold the school in high regard. Even though many live some considerable distance from the school, communication between home and school is good. This close relationship begins when parents first visit the school and the head teacher and other staff take time to talk with parents, get to understand the needs of the whole family and reassure them about any concerns the family may have. Effective day-to-day communication takes place through the home-school links book, which is used well by parents. One parent commented '*It's a lifeline*'. Teachers, health professionals and parents also celebrate successes, raise any concerns and communicate practical arrangements. The head teacher spends time talking with parents and offering valuable support when they have particular worries. Staff make beneficial home visits when necessary and they prove to be beneficial.
34. Parents feel that the school keep them well informed about how their children are getting on and the inspection team shares their views. There is good involvement in the termly reviews of the children's IEPs as well as their annual reviews. These meetings offer parents good opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The pupils' and students' annual reports are good and give parents a detailed picture of how well their child is doing as well as informing parents about what their children need to do next.
35. Parents particularly value the support of the health professionals and the way in which they work alongside parents. The school nurses follow up parental concerns about medical needs and the physiotherapist works closely with parents to devise exercise programmes and organise attendance for instance, at wheelchair clinics. They have developed very good relationships with parents who feel able to discuss their worries with them.

36. The school's relocation has meant that beneficial links with the community and other local schools have been lost. There has been a good start to developing new partnerships, underlining the headteacher's and governors' commitment to improve community involvement. Pupils visit the local amenities for lunchtime concerts, shopping and leisure activities and these trips help to develop their personal and social skills. The school has invited local community groups to use the swimming pool and collected harvest gifts for local senior citizens.
37. The good links with a local college enables students at post-16 to develop their social and academic skills as well as learning about life after school. They experience a range of courses and some pupils are able to undertake useful work placements either in college or with local employers. Students gain valuable social skills by working alongside different people in new environments. The headteacher and governors have ambitious and suitable plans to develop a partnership with other local schools and has begun by linking with a local secondary school. Mainstream pupils have worked with the pupils from Stanton Vale in design technology and traffic survey projects.
38. The opportunities for staff to meet with their mainstream colleagues to discuss curriculum issues are beginning to increase. There has been good collaboration for the school to make a good contribution to the development of a drug awareness teaching 'pack' to support lessons for schools in the area. The school makes a good contribution through advice and support as a regional MOVE centre.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's vision and good leadership provides stability, a sense of direction and a commitment to raising standards.
- Governors provide committed support.
- Improvement in standards is a high priority.
- The absence of a deputy headteacher and other staff has slowed developments.
- There are suitable arrangements to manage the school's finance.

Commentary

39. The headteacher's view and influence of how the school should develop and improve have been significant factors in establishing the school in the face of many difficulties. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and acts as a good role model by her highly visible presence. She is involved in a wide range of activities around the school. It is significantly positive that most of the issues identified for improvement during the inspection already form part of the school's plans for development.
40. As the new governing body has been established, they have received good support to begin to add to their commitment to the school by increasing their contribution to leadership and management. They have been made well aware of the school's weaknesses and know that there needs to be improvements in order to raise achievement. The governors undertake an appropriate role in decision making, ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled and make a particularly strong contribution to helping to recruit staff. There is a commitment to a governor visiting programme but this lacks rigour to ensure that it is focused on implementing school improvement.
41. The headteacher places a very high priority on improving the quality of education and this is evident in detailed evaluation of performance geared to ensuring that staff plan to make improvements. There has been particularly strong action to obtain a baseline of pupils'

achievement and for staff to use this to plan improvements. The local education authority has been very supportive over this period and has confirmed the need for continued improvements in standards. There are acknowledged weaknesses in the accuracy of assessments and the consequent planning of work for higher attaining pupils. However, this is a focus of the school improvement plan and staff are receiving appropriate guidance to improve assessments and planning for pupils to make progress.

42. The lack of key staff, including a senior teacher for older pupils and a deputy headteacher until recently means that the headteacher undertakes too much the work herself. This has slowed developments. The upheaval caused by the amalgamation and move to a new site has added to the school's difficulties. The recruitment of staff has been a particular challenge and led to the school running with insufficient permanent staff. One consequence is that few subject leaders have the opportunity to monitor standards in their subjects, undertake classroom observations and scrutinise pupils' work. This has resulted for example, in several pupils underachieving, insufficient use of ICT and inaccurate assessments of pupil's attainment.
43. The school is committed to inclusion. It is having satisfactory success in view of the appropriate inclusion of most pupils who have additional special educational needs but needs to make improvements to planning for higher attaining pupils to achieve as consistently well as other pupils. More attention is needed to ensure the inclusion of pupils who have challenging behaviour to enable them play a full part in the school's life. Although there are few opportunities for pupils to meet peers from mainstream schools, there are good plans to forge closer links with other establishments.
44. Financial management is sound. The school has a very large sum to carry forward to the next financial year. However, this is mainly as a result of the inability to recruit the required staff. The majority of the remaining surplus funds are identified for use in improving resources for learning, particularly for ICT over the next two years. All financial decisions are clearly linked to the plan for school improvement plan. The arrangement to manage the finance with a local education authority finance officer are very efficient. Arrangements are appropriate to ensure that the school seeks best value in its use of resources.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1735640	Balance from previous year	128952
Total expenditure	1339378	Balance carried forward to the next	396263
Expenditure per pupil	15757		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the foundation stage to learn is **satisfactory** overall in their areas of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses across the areas of learning

- Children respond very well to the opportunities provided for them to learn.
- Staff co-operate well to support children.
- There are few opportunities to use ICT.
- Planning is good to develop children's physical development.
- Classroom accommodation is good but play areas lack equipment.

Commentary

45. There are too few children attending currently to make separate judgements about achievement in each area of learning. However, evidence shows overall that they all achieve satisfactorily because they receive support that usually meets their individual needs.
46. Children enjoy lessons and respond to staff encouragement to communicate whenever possible through eye contact or making active choices. The promotion of **communication, language and literacy** is an important part of most lessons. Children are interested in singing rhymes from the book *'Once I caught a Fish Alive'*, or laugh when they know that the toy fish is going to 'jump' in their direction. Teachers plan satisfactorily for children to progress towards the early learning goals in each aspect of the subject. They have good access to writing materials to develop pencil control such as making marks on paper. There is occasional use of symbols but very little use of signing. In the area of **mathematical development**, regular lessons introduce and reinforce concepts of number. For instance, children follow counting songs and staff hold their fingers to indicate the numbers. When looking at shapes, they hunt for circles in a mound of shredded paper or select between circles and squares.
47. Children take part well in the familiar routines in class for instance, in moving from a side room for circle time into the main working area. The promotion of children's **personal, social and emotional development** is planned satisfactorily. Feeding programmes at lunchtimes develop their skills and social behaviour and they co-operate well at break. In **creative development** they respond to songs and understand that they can make a noise with a drum or set of bells. Planning helps children to achieve in different areas of learning in the same lesson. For instance, when pupils examine shapes to make choices they also explore materials and texture to develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**.
48. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned with the intention to meet each child's needs and enable them to learn. The staff know children well and in most cases match tasks carefully to individual needs, helping them to build upon what they have learnt before. The staff work effectively as a team in the nursery. This ensures that there is consistency in the way that lessons are organised so that the staff knows exactly what they have to do. There are good records, including photographs, of pupils' achievements, although there are occasional inaccuracies in the levels of achievement attributed to pupils. Leadership and management of the foundation stage are satisfactory and the action plan for improvements identifies suitable developments including the whole school aim to improve teaching and learning in ICT.
49. Children lack sufficient access to computers and this reduces the opportunities to use switches to make choices or to select shape, sound or colour. The introduction of Mobility Opportunities via Education (MOVE) contributes significantly towards the good provision for children's **physical**

development. Children overcome the great barriers created by their difficulties to improve their movement around the school. They respond well to the therapists who join lessons or provide individual support to promote physical development. Although there is a play area designated for children, there is a lack of sufficient suitable equipment to enable children to extend their learning and physical development throughout the day.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 to 4 and post-16.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

No lessons were observed since the subject is taught as a 'block' in another term. Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions held.

50. Pupils up to Year 9 receive a suitable programme of work to follow in French. It is based appropriately on the required topics and a strength is that there is a general match to pupils' attainment. For instance, different work is provided for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Tasks are suitably interesting and pupils are pleased for instance, to learn numbers and common expressions in French. Higher attaining pupils develop an interest beyond the lesson. For instance, to say hello to each other during the day in French or count using French numbers in mathematics.

51. There are satisfactory resources for the subject and appropriate planning to increase resources, particularly to provide more illustrations, tapes, videos and computer programmes. The programme for PMLD pupils provides suitable opportunities for pupils to use their senses to explore and where possible to use taste for instance, to match the task to the higher attaining pupils' experience of a 'French café.'

English

Lessons were seen in all year groups.

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students at post-16 achieve well as a result of teachers good planning.
- Teachers do not plan consistently well for higher attaining pupils.
- Good use is made of the national literacy strategy to improve achievement in speaking and listening and reading.
- Writing skills are not practised enough.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to improve achievement in English.
- The progress of pupils with challenging behaviour is unsatisfactory.
- There are good examples of pupils developing literacy skills in lessons other than in English.

Commentary

52. Students at post-16 make good progress. Students are encouraged to improve their speaking and listening to communicate well in lessons and around the school. They demonstrate good confidence and sign and speak well when expressing their views in lessons. Students attending college are competent in communicating with other students and discuss what they have learned in a mature and sensible manner. They read well from work-related books, with support. Literature provided contains good information and guidance that helps them to relate to life beyond school. They can complete forms with help and write captions to support their work in

other subjects, such as citizenship. Teachers are providing satisfactory opportunities for most students to discuss their work and measure their own success.

53. There are weaknesses in assessment that adversely affects pupils' achievement in all parts of English. For instance, in a lesson for pupils in Years 9,10 and 11 the teacher did not take prior learning sufficiently into account and missed the opportunity to challenge higher attaining pupils to recognise 'key words' or use thinking skills. This would have extended their learning beyond the lesson planned for the remainder of the class. However, for most pupils, achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress in lessons when teachers plan to match work to their individual needs and when tasks are challenging and there are high expectations by staff. Progress is best in speaking and listening and reading. They understand how they can improve and teachers use the record of pupils' achievements in lessons to plan further work for pupils to improve skills.
54. Pupils enjoy books. They make satisfactory progress in reading as they listen and follow interesting stories linked to the national literacy strategy guidelines, such as 'This is the Bear and the Picnic Lunch' and 'Pass the Jam'. Teachers often bring lessons to life by reading with dramatic effect and role-play to encourage pupils to respond to words in the big book. Pupils show delight and interest when staff make jam and cheese sandwiches to enrich the stories through taste, touch and smell. They make satisfactory choices and communicate their preferences through a variety of gestures as they 'read' the teacher's signs. The small library is well stocked, but space is cramped. This limits the number of pupils who can comfortably spend time in this bright and cheerful area, particularly for those who need large equipment to help them move.
55. There are fewer opportunities planned for pupils to develop their recording and writing than their other literacy skills. Lessons are often focused more on other ways of communicating. There is evidence of work completed on making marks with paint or copying over and under captions. A few pupils have written simple sentences and show satisfactory understanding of letter formation and left to right sequencing. Occasionally, pupils use computers to support learning such as the 'doodle' programme to make patterns and marks on the computer. However, there is insufficient use made of ICT in all classes to contribute significantly, for instance, to developing pupils' writing skills.
56. Several pupils who have challenging behaviour do not have adequate plans to enable staff to include them sufficiently in lessons. Therefore their individual needs are not met since they fail to participate and occasionally this leads to the disruption of lessons. Overall, these pupils make unsatisfactory progress in English.
57. The leadership and management of English is satisfactory overall. However, although there are satisfactory arrangements to provide teachers with an overview of what should be taught, there is not enough opportunity for the subject leader to check what is happening around the school and to make improvements. For instance, there is a need to provide guidance and support to colleagues to promote school priorities to increase the use of ICT, and ensure that assessment is used consistently to set work and tasks for higher attaining pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. There are satisfactory links overall with other areas of the curriculum to promote literacy skills. There are a few good opportunities in mathematics, PSHE and citizenship, art and design and science lessons that enable pupils to increase their vocabulary and communicate their likes and dislikes to a satisfactory level. Most lessons include satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening and reading skills. There is less evidence though of pupils of higher ability recording their work on a regular basis.

MATHEMATICS

Lessons were observed in all year groups.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students at post-16 achieve well.
- Lessons in mathematics make effective use of the national numeracy strategy approach.
- Formal assessments of pupil's work occasionally underestimate their ability.
- Occasionally unsatisfactory management of pupil's behaviour affects their learning.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to reinforce learning in most mathematics lessons.
- The subject leader has insufficient influence in making improvements.
- There are good examples where pupils develop numeracy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

59. Teaching and learning is good for students at post-16. Students study the 'EQUALS Moving On' programme, which ensures that they receive plenty of opportunities to improve their practical application of mathematics for instance, to handle money. In a very good lesson seen, students revised their knowledge of colours and then put this into effect. The high level of planning and good teaching meant that the students' learning and achievement was good.
60. Teachers make good use of the national numeracy strategy in the way they plan and teach mathematics. The teacher's introduction to pupils in Year 2 'it's time for our maths, let's count how many children in class today' gains pupil's interest and encourages them to respond when asked 'what have we been doing in maths?' Pupils participate well because they anticipate how the lesson will proceed and are ready to answer questions.
61. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of terminology. For instance, work is currently focused on the topic 'shape' and pupils can indicate that they know a few of the attributes of shapes. For example, in a lesson with Year 2, 3 and 4, higher attaining pupils indicated that they knew that a football would roll but a cube would not. In a lesson for pupils in Years 9,10 and 11, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties were delighted to be asked to identify familiar objects and shapes in a 'feely box' and accurately identified the tennis ball as a sphere.
62. Teachers know pupils well and this enables them to plan satisfactorily overall to develop pupils' skills in mathematics. For example, in a lesson on shapes for pupils in Year 1 with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the teacher used a symbol board to present shapes and required pupils to retrieve plastic circles from a basket. Good organisation in this lesson meant that pupils, including those with visual and hearing impairments, were supported well by educational care officers and a speech and language therapist to learn about shape and achieve well. However, the use of formal assessments in mathematics is not consistently successful in ensuring that teachers match tasks to pupils' attainment. Occasionally teachers underestimate of the needs of higher attaining pupils and fail to provide them with work that challenges them sufficiently.
63. The use of inadequate behaviour management strategies and unsuitable plans for pupils with challenging behaviour mean that several pupils miss part or all of an activity. In a Year 10 lesson, two pupils did not engage with the lesson and made no contribution. Although this approach meant the other pupils learning was not interrupted, the two pupils made unsatisfactory progress.
64. Subject leadership and management is satisfactory. Good documentation is in place and the scheme of work provides appropriately for pupils of all ages and abilities. However, the leader has little opportunity to provide support to colleagues to implement the long term plans to meet

the needs of pupils. Another effect is the lack of checking and improvements to the current unsatisfactory use of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Although satisfactory overall, mathematics is promoted well in a few subjects across the school. For example, teachers ensure that pupils routinely count. This is a feature of several counting songs that encourage addition and subtraction. In a music lesson, the teacher introduced the triangle and asked pupils if they had seen this shape before. Art lessons provide further opportunities to learn about shapes. In English, pupils receive satisfactory opportunities to become familiar with sequencing through story telling and in PSHE they learn to match drinks and snacks to the pupils present.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well at post-16.
- Weaknesses in assessment and a shortage of teaching time have a negative effect on achievement in science.
- There are occasional examples of supporting pupils learning in science through signing, symbols and the use of ICT.
- The subject leader lacks sufficient opportunities to support colleagues to make improvements.

Commentary

66. Students achieve well in links with a local college. In the 'EQUALS Moving On' course they receive certificates in home management, environmental studies and horticulture. The work is well planned to meet individual needs. This is because their achievements are accurately assessed each week to enable future lesson plans to build well on prior learning. Students are fascinated by the very good resources for instance, when observing developing caterpillars.

67. Although teachers implement the school's assessment procedures in the required way, they occasionally underestimate pupils' achievements in science. For instance, the planning, quality and range of resources for an investigation in Years 5 and 6 was good and highly motivating. This provided many opportunities for lower attaining pupils to use their senses. However, higher attaining pupils were not given enough other tasks to help them progress beyond the sensory experiences. Overall, science activities for pupils up to Year 11 do not provide a consistent challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

68. In annual reports and in their annotation of photographic evidence, teachers are not consistently recognising fully pupils' science achievement when it is linked to work in other subjects such as geography, design and technology and music. Achievement in science is limited by a shortage of science teaching time. There are no specialist facilities and this restricts the range of materials that can be used to support pupils' learning.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 and for students at post-16 it is good. In a class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils receive good quality support to practise their communication skills. One boy was encouraged to sign and say 'hard' and 'yes' when he was investigating hard and soft materials and indicating his preferences. Signing is used well with these younger pupils to help them access their work and communicate what they have learned in science. In the school as a whole however, staff rarely sign, use computers, or other aids in science lessons to support learning and communication.

70. Leadership and management in science is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is committed to improving science achievement and has made good links with the advisory service. However, there is a lack of sufficient opportunities to support colleagues to monitor and guide them and to ensure improvements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Two lessons were observed, work scrutinised, discussions held and observations of its use in a few lessons in other subjects contributed to the judgements made.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is occasionally good in discrete lessons.
- Pupils have few opportunities to use ICT during the day.
- Staff require more training to use equipment effectively.
- There is a lack of recording of pupils' progress.

Commentary

71. Throughout the school pupils' achievement and progress in their ability to use ICT is unsatisfactory. There is an acknowledged need for staff to receive more training in the subject to ensure that pupils receive sufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. Pupils' achievement is occasionally good in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 used a touch screen and demonstrated a high level of understanding and competence using the 'doodle' programme. They were able to use both finger and mouse to track objects, trace letter shapes and colour pictures. The good teaching challenged pupils, since tasks were planned to gradually increase in difficulty and pupils began to work independently to make more progress. One pupil exclaimed, 'I want to add lots of colour not just two, it is a picture!' Another good feature of this lesson was that the way the teacher assessed and recorded the pupils' skills as the lesson took place so that they could continue exploring in the next lesson.

72. In several lessons, pupils use switches to perform tasks independently. They occasionally record using digital cameras in English and use programmes to construct shapes in mathematics. Throughout the school however, pupils lack sufficient opportunities to develop skills. There is insufficient emphasis on the use of ICT to enhance pupils' communication and learning. As a result, the teaching of the subject is unsatisfactory and consequently so is pupils' achievement. There is a lack of records of pupils' achievements.

73. The school is well aware of the weaknesses and that subject leadership is unsatisfactory. However, the newly appointed deputy headteacher is highly skilled and has already exerted a positive influence for instance, to ensure the greater reliability of equipment. There are suitable plans to move the subject forward rapidly. This includes staff training, working alongside colleagues, enhanced and improved resources and improvements to assessment and record keeping.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. The use of ICT to support pupils work in all subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory mainly as a result of staff lacking the confidence and skills in its use. A few positive examples were seen, but lessons observed during the course of the inspection and scrutiny of pupil's work indicate that there is a lack of emphasis on using information communication technology as a support for pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Two lessons were observed in religious education and other evidence was collected through discussion, looking at pupils' work, planning documents, assessments and annual reports. One lesson was observed in both geography and history and overall judgements are not made about provision, teaching and learning or pupils' achievement.

Geography and history.

75. One lesson for pupils in Years 9 to 11 was observed in geography. Pupils studied the contrasting locations of the home area, the coast and the countryside in Britain. Teaching and learning was unsatisfactory in the lesson principally because there was not a sufficient match between the work that pupils were expected to follow and the wide range of attainment in class. An important factor was the weakness in the interpretation of the good subject plan for pupils to learn about contrasting locations in a way that allowed all pupils to participate fully. Behaviour management plans were inadequate to ensure that pupils with challenging behaviour improved their engagement in the lesson.
76. In a history lesson for Years 2 and 3, pupils demonstrated that they are becoming aware of the passage of time through their study of 'Experience of the Past.' Good teaching introduced aspects of what school was like during Victorian times. Appropriate music was played, a hand bell rung, chalk and slates produced and staff and pupils dressed in period clothing. The pupils were engaged by this approach; they related particularly strongly to the good examples of children walking long distances to school and having 60 pupils in one class. Good teaching enabled pupils to begin to understand that life was different in past times.
77. There is a clear curriculum plan for both subjects to provide a good range of topics in geography and history during pupils' time in school. However, as the geography lesson illustrated, there is a need for the subject leader to provide more guidance to teachers in interpreting the plans to meet pupils' needs.

Religious education.

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent assemblies link very well to religious education lessons.
- The religious education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Occasionally, tasks are not matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers are not making enough use of computers and signing to communicate with pupils.
- Students at post-16 can gain a certificate in world religions.
- The subject leader is enthusiastic and committed but has few opportunities to make improvements.

Commentary

78. Assemblies are very well matched to pupils' ages and stages of development. The resources used in assemblies are very stimulating, with many opportunities for all pupils to be actively involved in role-play, dramatisations, playing musical instruments, singing and prayer. Primary pupils for example, celebrate the wonders of nature in summer, with spirited dancing round a maypole. They enjoy being showered with paper flower petals. Pupils play their percussion instruments with enthusiasm and sing and vocalise cheerfully with piano and accordion accompaniment. Secondary pupils act the story of the Good Samaritan, listen to the moral message of the story and are quiet and respectful during prayers and candle time.

79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lesson themes closely follow the well-planned curriculum for religious education, which is adapted carefully from the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching is enthusiastic and relationships are good, as is the teamwork between teachers and educational care officers. There are weaknesses in planning lessons since occasionally teachers do not match tasks to the needs of higher attaining pupils and their activities are not challenging enough. Teachers miss opportunities to use computers, other technological aids and signing to communicate with pupils and promote more progress.
80. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils learn to be still during the time for reflection, when quiet music, candles, and a lowering of the lights create a peaceful atmosphere. In Years 2 to 6, they learn how to care for pets and about the work of animal charities. Older pupils learn the stories of Jesus, and the messages they contain, during assemblies. Pupils experience the cultural traditions of other faiths. They participate in festivals and celebrations, look at authentic costumes and artefacts, taste traditional foods, and listen to the music of other faiths. However, there are weaknesses in most lessons that lead them to be satisfactory overall. For instance, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to record. However, students at post-16 achieve well. They learn to express themselves, share their knowledge and interact with others in the study of 'emotion' and can gain a certificate through the 'Moving On' programme.
81. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to support colleagues for instance to encourage better use of computers or check that the recording of assessments, are accurate. There is an excellent assembly programme. It links very well to the religious education curriculum and makes a good improvement to promoting pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were observed in art, two in design and technology and four in physical education. Additional information was obtained by scrutinising pupils' work and holding discussions. Judgements about achievement and teaching and learning and provision are not made for art and design, music or design and technology.

Art and design

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Art contributes well to many of the topics covered in other subjects
- There is a dedicated art room but the size and layout restricts its use for many pupils.

Commentary

82. Much of the art is linked to other work that pupils are following in other lessons. For example, when they were using shaped sponges to print onto paper plates to make a face, this related well to the work on shapes they were encountering in mathematics. Displays throughout the school show good examples of printing using a range of materials such as string or pupils' own hands. Students at post-16 are learning about the nature of line in which they explored a range of learning styles, from drawing lines to moving along lines themselves. They moved on to researching lines in the environment before returning to their drawing to use the knowledge gained. Students benefit from lessons in creative arts where for instance, they make masks related to a drama production.
83. There is a specialist room for art but it is not suitable for many of the pupils in the school. The size and the equipment restrict opportunities for pupils to select materials for themselves. It also prevents pupils from developing independence for instance, to have access to sinks to tidy up and change colours without the need for staff help. There is a satisfactory curriculum for art and

it is very detailed in relation to targets that pupils should achieve. However, it does not provide teachers with guidance about the range of activities they might use to achieve these targets for to match the tasks to pupils' needs.

Design and technology.

84. Visually impaired pupils up to the end of Year 6, supported well by educational care officers, gain much pleasure from the feel of flour, sugar and cold butter when making biscuits. Pupils in Year 7 make choices about the materials they will use to construct a collage from textiles. Higher attaining pupils can glue the materials independently. Occasionally, pupils who require additional support are not challenged enough, nor given a wide enough range of sensory experiences, when working with the textiles. By the end of Year 9, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties experience the actions of `under and over` when supported to weave a mat with strips of materials. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not challenged enough when trying to produce a woven mat, and are disappointed when their weaving falls apart. The food technology room for secondary pupils requires upgrading for it to be used effectively.

MUSIC

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is used well to enhance pupils' communication skills.
- Music contributes well to pupils' social development.
- Records of pupils' achievement do not aid teachers effectively to plan for the next stage of learning.

Commentary

85. The curriculum for music identifies the targets that pupils should achieve. However, it is limited in the guidance it provides to teachers as to how they might teach lessons in order to achieve these targets. Many of the activities are related appropriately to developing pupils' communication skills. Activities encourage interaction and auditory and visual awareness as well as personal development and relating to others. Lessons provide good opportunities for participation such as clapping, or shaking and tapping percussion instruments. In one lesson for pupils in Year 2, work was linked to their learning about shapes in mathematics. For instance, the teacher drew their attention to the shape of the triangle they were playing.

86. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been appointed very recently. The initial task, as part of her targets, is to undertake an audit of the subject to determine the improvements required. Assessment is in place for the subject but records are not always accurate and this limits their use in planning lessons to match pupils' needs. A specialist music teacher is employed part time. Although there is no specialist music room, the sensory room is used occasionally to enable light and sound to be utilised in lessons. Resources are satisfactory.

Physical education

Lessons were seen in all year groups.

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong support from therapists ensures that pupils achieve well in the MOVE programme.
- The very good pool contributes to pupils making good progress in swimming.
- The curriculum for physical education is being extended and developed well.
- Plans for pupils with challenging behaviour do not engage them consistently in activities.

- There are insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to drive improvements in physical education.

Commentary

87. The school is recognised as a leading centre for the training of skills in MOVE. Consequently, the programme plays an important part in pupils' physical development, complementing physical education lessons well. A significant strength in lessons is the high level of support from therapists that is integrated into lessons complemented by other occasions when pupils receive individual support. The MOVE programme relies upon a high level of staff and it is a challenge for the school to provide them. Although there are usually sufficient staff, on occasions they may be temporary staff or very recently appointed volunteers. Although this has an effect on interaction with pupils, the very good plans and guidance are enabling staff to become confident in providing support.
88. Swimming lessons are well established in the very good recently completed pool. The effective planning of lessons, high level of staff participation and encouragement and pupils' confidence in staff are significantly positive factors in promoting pupils' good progress. In a lesson for pupils in Years 2 to 6, a higher attaining pupil changed quickly and staff were prepared for an early start to the lesson. This enables a good session of 'free activity' that was geared to the pupil developing strokes and becoming familiar with swimming under water. Staff know pupils very well and ensure that they keep pupils focusing on their tasks for the whole period.
89. Although recent, there are satisfactory activities planned for lessons in physical education. Consequently, pupils are beginning to understand that there will be changes in activities and that they need to move to them. Pupils require much encouragement to sustain their efforts for instance, for pupils up to Year 11 to walk along a beam. Recently appointed and temporary support staff are not familiar with routines and this means that they require support from the teacher during lessons and it slows activities.
90. There are not sufficiently clear plans of how to improve the involvement of pupils who have challenging behaviour more effectively in lessons to ensure that they make sufficient progress. This means for instance, that these pupils may not engage for most of a lesson and consequently make unsatisfactory progress.
91. Leadership and management of physical education is satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good support to the management of the subject through whole school guidance for staff involved in MOVE. The subject leaders have ensured that pupils follow a suitable range of activities in lessons. However, there is little opportunity to provide support to the other teachers who lead lessons to ensure guidance for improvements to the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Observations were made in discrete lessons for all year groups and at other times of the day that are designated to develop pupils' skills.

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students at post-16 achieve well as a result of good teaching and support.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour require more support for learning.
- Learning outside of discrete lessons is not consistently planned or progress assessed.
- School staff have contributed to developing resources for teaching the subject in the local area.

Commentary

92. Pupils' personal and social development is regarded as very important by school staff. For students at post-16, good teaching and support is provided, resulting in good achievement for students. Lessons for pupils up to Year 6 provide a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to learn for instance, to understand the responsibility of looking after pets. Older pupils focus on friendships and a few demonstrate that they understand basic rights and responsibilities for men and women.
93. There are specific targets in individual education plans to address personal and social development. These have been carefully thought out and contribute to improvements in pupils' relationships and confidence. Pupils with challenging behaviour do not have adequate plans and consequently they do not engage consistently in lessons. Consequently, their progress is unsatisfactory.
94. Pupils benefit from many timetabled activities for personal and social development that take place outside the classroom during breaks, lunchtime and take turns to experience an extended school day. There is not enough consistent planning for these times to be totally effective. Where staff do plan, there is infrequent monitoring and assessment. This reduces the effectiveness of the activities taking place.
95. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to develop good resources to teach the wide range of topics covered. In particular, there is recognition by the local education authority of the good work done by her in contributing to a high quality teaching materials on drug misuse for other schools to use. This resource is used well to promote pupils' learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
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), the judgement does not apply to the school (8).

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