

INSPECTION REPORT

TETTENHALL WOOD SCHOOL

Wolverhampton, West Midlands

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104414

Headteacher: Mostyn Mahoney

Lead inspector: Steven Parker

Dates of inspection: 03/11/03 - 05/11/03

Inspection number: 259004

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:	5-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	54
School address:	School Road Tettenhall Wood Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV6 8EJ
Telephone number:	01902 556519
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms F.J. Geoffroy
Date of previous inspection:	10/07/01 – 11/07/01

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Tettenhall Wood School provides education for up to 55 pupils with severe learning difficulties, 20 per cent of whom have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. The majority of these are recent referrals to the school. As a result of their learning difficulties, pupils arrive at the school with attainments significantly below the average for their age. Fifty eight per cent of the pupils are of white British heritage. Of those from other backgrounds, 24 per cent are of Asian or Asian British-Indian extraction, nine per cent are of black or black British extraction and nine per cent are mixed race. There is one refugee/asylum seeker pupil. The school's population reflects the character of the wider catchment area, which is the whole of the City of Wolverhampton. There are well established links with a significant number of mainstream schools and colleges, providing pupils with the opportunity of inclusive experiences - and professional development partnerships for staff through outreach activity. The school has Investors in People status, School Achievement Award, Swimming Teachers' Association Centre of Excellence Award and an Award for Good Practice in Primary Education (highly commended).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13033	Steven Parker	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology
31754	Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
31914	Colette Gribble	Team inspector	English Modern foreign language Music
30071	John Pearson	Team Inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education Religious education
3055	Clive Tombs	Team inspector	History Geography Physical education Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Tettenhall Wood is a very good school with a number of outstanding features. Pupils achieve very well in their lessons and make excellent progress in their social development, as a result of very good teaching and extremely effective relationships with all staff. The highly committed headteacher, working in a very successful partnership with his senior managers, leads and inspires a dedicated team of staff. The school thinks very carefully about the things that matter in the lives of its pupils, and plans very carefully, so that it can provide the best opportunities for them to succeed. This is achieved in inadequate accommodation that has been imaginatively adapted and substantially improved. The school provides **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Reflective and imaginative teachers, in partnership with very able support staff, help pupils to learn very successfully, develop impressive communication skills and become confident, mature young adults.
- The excellent headteacher has led his colleagues very successfully by example through difficult times, ensuring that everyone feels valued and strives to achieve his very high aspirations in all that they do.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and social skills are the direct result of very positive and carefully structured support. They clearly enjoy being in school.
- All pupils benefit from wide ranging and highly relevant learning opportunities, which include many out in the wider community.
- There is a highly effective commitment to including all pupils in activities, the promotion of equal opportunities and meeting the needs of each individual pupil.
- Very effective links with parents and carers enable working partnerships between home and school to become increasingly close and purposeful.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school, by all staff, to facilitate teaching and learning, is exemplary.
- Almost all pupils achieve unusually high standards in swimming.
- Formal procedures to find out how well pupils are progressing and to help in the planning of their future work require some improvements.

Overall, the school has achieved **very good improvements** in the relatively short time since it came out of special measures in July 2001, and made **outstanding progress** since the headteacher was appointed eighteen months before that. In the short term, it has been successful in improving pupils' social and communication skills, providing more opportunities for them to spend time in mainstream schools and links with parents. In the longer term, particularly impressive improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is very good. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress as they go through the school, because all staff are committed to including all pupils in all activities, and, consequently there are no variations in standards or progress. Progress is consistently very good in English, where the dedicated communications team help pupils to achieve very well in speaking and listening. Standards are equally high in mathematics, ICT and practical subjects, most particularly in art and physical education. Standards in writing and science do not yet quite match these high levels. Achievement post-16 is particularly good and pupils gain very creditable passes in a range of highly relevant vocational courses. **Pupils' moral and social development are excellent and their spiritual and cultural development are very good.** This results in there being a harmonious and productive atmosphere in which pupils feel valued, making them extremely well prepared for life after school. **Attitudes and behaviour are excellent.** Pupils are impressively enthusiastic and interested in their lessons and respond very well to the school's positive culture. **Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides **very high quality** education. This enables all pupils to learn successfully and achieve very well.

Teaching is very good and often excellent. Careful attention to planning ensures that all pupils can participate successfully at their own level. The very good curriculum benefits from similar, appropriate adaptation to meet the special needs of all pupils, including those with autism. The curriculum is also enriched by a stimulating range of additional activities, many of which take place in mainstream settings. Care, welfare and guidance are very effective. Pupils work and play in a safe environment, where relationships are of the highest quality. They trust all staff to care for them properly. There are very successful partnerships with parents and the wider community and outstanding links with other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is lead and managed **very well.**

Leadership	Excellent. Senior staff are dedicated to ensuring the development and maintenance of the best quality educational opportunities and the highest possible standards of achievement in all areas.
Management	Very good. All managers work in successful partnership to enable the school to fulfil its vision and objectives.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the improvements over the past four years and praise the headteacher, the very good teaching and the standards of behaviour. They know that their children make progress. They are concerned about the lack of speech and language therapy provision from the health authority and occasional difficulties with home school transport, but know that the school does all it can to remedy these ongoing problems.

Pupils are **exceptionally** happy in school. They particularly like their teachers and taking part in swimming activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant issues for the school to deal with. It does, however, recognise the need to improve formal assessment arrangements, especially in a few foundation subjects and overall in lower and middle school. There are wholly appropriate plans in place to achieve this aim.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses.

Pupils' progress and achievements are **very good overall** and **excellent** in their personal and social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievements are very good in English, mathematics and ICT throughout the school.
- Challenging but realistic targets are set for English, mathematics, social development and behaviour.
- Standards in practical subjects, most especially art and design and physical education, are particularly impressive.
- Older pupils gain very creditable passes in a wide range of examination certificates.
- All pupils' achievements prepare them very well for their lives beyond school.
- Standards in writing and science have not yet reached the very high levels of other subjects.

Commentary

1. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection, which has resulted in pupils now making very good progress and achieving very well in most subjects. The most impressive gains have been in relation to their social and communication skills and the integrated and applied use of ICT across all subjects. There are no variations in the achievements of pupils with more complex needs and no differences in the progress of boys and girls or those with particular language needs. On the contrary, the school's commitment to plan for and include everyone, no matter what their particular needs, ensures this evenness of standards for all groups.
2. Pupils rise to the very high expectations of staff and consequently move on to the next stage of their learning, within and beyond school, very well prepared. Their excellent personal and social development and behaviour are the products of exceptionally high quality support and encouragement from the whole staff team. This means that most become confident, mature young adults.
3. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' practical and physical skills, and this has resulted in particularly noteworthy standards of work in art and design and outstanding achievements in swimming, where most achieve performances in line with national expectations. The impact of these achievements on pupils' sense of self worth is extremely positive.
4. The structure of the upper school programme provides highly relevant opportunities for pupils to learn basic and vocational skills, leading to their confident application in many settings. Their achievements are validated across a wide spectrum of externally moderated certificates such as the 'ALL Project' and 'The National Skills Profile'.
5. The school is fully aware that standards are not so consistently high across all subjects and aspects, and, consequently, entirely appropriate plans for improvements are in place to raise results from their current good levels. This situation is most pressing for writing and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **excellent** attitudes to learning. They enjoy being in school immensely and their behaviour, in and out of school, is **excellent**. Development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is **very good** overall. Attendance is **good** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop high levels of confidence and self esteem in response to highly effective praise and encouragement.
- Pupils show extremely high levels of tolerance and understanding towards each other.
- Pupils have positive and caring relationships with each other.
- In and around school and on visits into the wider community, pupils know and understand very well how to conduct themselves.
- Pupils know that they are valued. They feel safe and want to achieve to the very best of their capabilities.
- Pupils' understanding of the principles of right and wrong is extremely high.

Commentary

6. Pupils show their delight and excellent manners whenever they meet or greet visitors. They move around school quietly and with absolute consideration for others. When it is necessary, pupils take their responsibilities extremely seriously. Their pride in their work and their surroundings is obvious, as they discuss likes and dislikes straightforwardly. This reflects very high values, which are fundamental to the school philosophy.
7. In lessons, pupils respond very well to their individual targets for behaviour. As a result, there is harmony in and around the school. Pupils show a great desire to achieve in all aspects of school life. There is a climate in school of caring and sharing, with the emphasis on positive and meaningful relationships. This conduct stems from the exceptionally high but realistic expectations of staff. Although there are no school council meetings as yet, pupils are already encouraged to express their opinions at appropriate times and they show their ability to use these opportunities sensibly and effectively.
8. All staff and parents are involved in joint review of pupils' individual behaviour targets and deciding how best to deal with any difficulties. This shared approach has had a significant impact on reducing the number of incidents of inappropriate behaviour, and, consequently, there have been no exclusions in the past year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	31	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

9. There is an atmosphere of peace and calm throughout the day and times are provided for reflection and contemplation in most lessons. Pupils show respect for each other's beliefs and feelings and glow with pride when praised. They interact very well in social settings. All pupils are given excellent guidance in distinguishing between right and wrong. As a result, they show very strong moral principles.
10. There are many cultural experiences provided in the school and on visits to a large number of places, providing pupils with very good opportunities to appreciate their own culture. Many pupils have also taken part in activities in other schools and centres, when they have benefited from coming into contact with rich traditions in art, music and drama.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.6

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

11. Attendance is **good** but punctuality, on balance, is only **satisfactory**. Attendance rates, recently at 93 per cent, are higher than those found in similar schools. Very good procedures are efficiently followed if pupils do not arrive in school for any reason. The majority of mornings all pupils arrive on time. However, ongoing difficulties with transport mean that sometimes they arrive unacceptably late. Although this is monitored and the school contacts the authority very promptly there are too many occasions when lessons cannot start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **very good overall**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good overall**. As a result, pupils in all parts of the school learn **very successfully**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers work in very successful partnerships with their classroom support staff colleagues.
- Teachers' very high, but realistic expectations encourage pupils to do their best.
- All staff ensure, through both very detailed planning and extremely well focused support, that every pupil is enabled to participate fully and effectively in all learning opportunities.
- All the National Strategies have been thoughtfully adapted to make lessons relevant and engaging.
- All staff use ICT to the very best effect as a teaching and learning tool.
- Good leadership and management have empowered all staff to be as effective as they can be.
- Formal procedures for assessing pupils' progress and achievements and to inform planning for their future work require a few improvements.

Commentary

12. Teaching during the inspection was very good or excellent in nearly two thirds of all lessons seen, and records of pupils very good progress and achievements confirm that these high standards are consistently maintained over time. This presents a picture of continuing improvements, which come as a result of everyone's commitment to reflect on their practice and adapt imaginatively to changing circumstances. Senior staff have supported their colleagues through careful monitoring of their work, encouraging feedback and extremely well constructed

professional development opportunities. This has had a particularly positive effect on staff confidence and ability to teach pupils with autism.

13. Teachers are assisted in their work by experienced and impressively able classroom support staff, many of whom have assigned responsibilities. Working in close harmony, every class team pools its skills and knowledge of each pupil's particular needs, ensuring that every one is included in every aspect of school life. Lessons are very well planned and constructed to ensure that they have pace and variety and benefit from the imaginative and skilful use of technology to bring learning alive. This enables all pupils to communicate their ideas and share successfully in the experience. Pupils are encouraged to think carefully about what they have achieved and how they might have done it even better. Successes, however small, are always planned for, identified and celebrated, reflecting the school's commitment to positive practice at every opportunity. Good quality records of achievement, which incorporate very well chosen photographs and carefully written statements of what pupils have achieved, are much appreciated by parents.
14. Whilst informal knowledge of pupils is of a high order and enables successful planning of lessons, the school is aware that, especially in a few of the foundation subjects, and particularly in lower and middle school, there is a need for more effective assessment and recording procedures and practice. The planned improvements in this aspect will enable teachers to have a more precise picture of pupils' achievements and to plan even more effectively for group and individual needs. Senior staff will then be enabled to present a more coherent picture of pupils' progress over time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (17%)	18 (44%)	15 (37%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a **very good** range of opportunities that are **very relevant** to the learning needs of the pupils. It is enriched by **very good** provision of additional activities and is supported by **very good** resources and **good** accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- The curriculum takes very good account of the particular learning needs of all of the pupils.
- Very detailed planning provides a very good framework for teaching and ensures a smooth progression to pupils' learning.
- Standards in all subjects benefit from outstanding use of information and communication technology.
- The preparation of pupils for their post-school lives is excellent.
- Lessons are made meaningful by very good use of educational outings, special events and visitors to the school.
- Very good learning resources support all pupils' learning. The resources for ICT are excellent.
- The limitations of the school's buildings and grounds have been significantly balanced by creative and highly effective adaptations.

Commentary

15. Starting from a very low base, there has been rapid development of the school's curriculum during the time since, and prior to, the last inspection. There is now a very good curriculum that provides all pupils with their full statutory entitlements.
16. A strong feature of this curriculum is that the National Curriculum guidelines have been thoughtfully modified to enable pupils with varying degrees of special educational need to take part and achieve in all of the subjects. This modification is most evident in the realistic and relevant learning outcomes stated in the long term plans for each subject. There is variation in the extent to which these plans are embedded in classroom practice. In English, mathematics, art and design and personal and social development, very good provision is in place. In ICT there is an excellent curriculum. There is good provision in science and all other subjects. The relative differences in subject development found during the inspection concur broadly with the school's self-evaluation, and plans for continued development of relevant subjects are well underway.
17. The curriculum further meets the individual learning needs of its pupils by making very good provision for those with the most complex learning needs and for those capable of higher attainments. A very strong emphasis on promoting communication skills is evidenced by the additional activities available, such as the sound beam, by the consistent use of signing and symbols in the classroom and by use of specific programmes for those pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Very good opportunities exist for all older pupils to have their achievements recognised by taking courses leading to nationally recognised awards.
18. Teachers construct very detailed plans to show how individual pupils will achieve the learning outcomes set for each subject. The format for planning half-termly topics, then deciding the detailed structure of each lesson, is common throughout the school and is rigorously checked by the headteacher. Lesson plans very effectively match the special learning needs of each pupil to the expected outcomes of the topics.
19. Teachers are aware of the importance of reinforcing learning in one subject when teaching another. In this respect, the use of ICT as an aid to learning in all subjects, is exceptional and is embedded firmly in all aspects of classroom activity. However, as the school correctly identifies in its current development plan, the reinforcement of English and mathematics learning in other subjects occurs only informally and needs to be incorporated more consistently into lesson planning.
20. The programme for pupils aged 14-19 in upper school is very highly effective. There is an excellent emphasis on vocational education, underpinned by other courses that promote a greater understanding of the world and citizenship, while at the same time furthering basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum takes full advantage of the flexibilities that exist within the National Curriculum. The ethos created by the provision is age-appropriate, seeking maximum independence from the pupils. There is a comprehensive work experience programme and very good use is made of the local community to give pupils first-hand experiences.
21. The limitations that transport arrangements place on out-of-school-hours activities are compensated for very well by the provision of educational visits linked to specific topics, and inviting visitors such as artists, performers and representatives of different faiths into the school. There is excellent use of the local community to support the curriculum. Pupils take part in a very good range of special events, both in and out of school, relating to sports and the arts, including an annual residential experience. Regular whole-school events that focus on a particular theme are a very good feature of school life.
22. Although the school site and premises are small and cramped and lack green outdoor spaces, exceptional work has been carried out by the site manager to create an excellent learning environment. Highly imaginative use is made of every available space, including interesting

adaptations to corridors, to enable all aspects of the curriculum to take place. The quality of decoration, presentation and attention to detail sets a very high standard that acts as a positive model for pupils, encouraging them to do their best.

23. The curriculum is supported by a very good range of resources, many of which are produced at the school, many by very creative support staff, and tailored specifically to meet the learning needs of the pupils. The excellent equipment and resources for ICT, centred on the use of interactive white boards in every classroom, are pivotal to the school's work. ICT is used exceptionally well not only to motivate pupils to learn through a high standard of delivery, but also in the preparation of resources, such as worksheets and photographs to be used in lessons.
24. The excellent practices in ICT and provision in upper school owe much to the inspiration and vision of the deputy headteacher.

Example of outstanding practice. The fully integrated use of ICT by staff and pupils is fluent and natural and the skill level is exceptionally high. Permanently installed interactive whiteboards form the focal point in every classroom, aiding and reinforcing natural communications. High quality presentations are developed by support staff and stored in shared files that all staff can access as required.

The Christmas story grips the pupils' attention as it unfolds on the whiteboard. Key words are added and matched to pictures in response to the teacher's questions. Pupils move words into sentences and take it in turns to write underneath them. Next door, some pupils make their own audio-visual presentation about spiders, while others prepare a talking book. In a literacy session, the big book is on the screen, words are clear and pupils pick out phonic elements by touching the display. For a numeracy project, pupils enter data collected from their surveys onto computers in the school's ICT suite, then, back in their classroom for the lesson review, each group's work is downloaded from the school's network to share with the class. Immediately they return from their visit to a local church, other pupils re-examine their experience through projection of their own digital photographs. Classroom resources are tailor-made in school and match the images projected onto the whiteboard. At afternoon senior assembly the teacher gains maximum impact for a final warning about firework safety by projecting an instantly created multi-media message with words, sounds and pictures.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Support and guidance for pupils and students are **very good**. Pupils' involvement in the school's work is developing well and is currently **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are fully briefed about pupils' wide range of special needs and about procedures for child protection and medical care, including first aid.
- Underpinning the very good quality of care given throughout the day are the very good relationships which staff have with pupils and their families.
- Links with many agencies are well established and generally very effective.
- Accommodation, although restricted, is of an exceptional quality in terms of its cleanliness and organisation.
- Pupils' views about school are regularly sought. Staff listen closely to them and take on board their wishes and feelings.

Commentary

25. Arrangements for child protection are secure and understood. The headteacher oversees the needs of pupils who are in public care very effectively. Two trained speech and language therapy assistants, employed by the school, support communication programmes for many pupils. Through no fault of the school, there has been no provision from the health service for speech and language therapy since February this year. Parents are right to state that this is of concern to them.

26. Staff know pupils very well and extremely detailed records indicate that personal and social development is given very regular emphasis. Adults, especially the team of classroom support staff, provide sensitive and highly effective pastoral care. Targets are set and tracked and shared with pupils and their parents. Pupils attend their review meetings and are fully involved as much as they are able to be.
27. The site manager ensures that the entire school is kept spotless. The headteacher knows that, ideally, there should be a separate medical room and that it is not an adequate arrangement for the sensory room to be used when privacy and quiet is needed. Access for those in wheelchairs is generally good, but not easy in a few rooms, for example in the youngest class. Pupils' achievements are, however, not hindered by this situation, because staff are very careful to ensure full access to all learning opportunities.
28. The school has not rushed into forming a school council. Outside guidance has been sought this term to enable an effective council to be established. About ten pupils of different ages are being prepared, so that when they formally begin to meet later this term, they understand its purpose and function. In discussion with pupils, however, it is clear that they will have a lot to offer and were already very keen to express their extremely positive opinions about school life with inspectors. Pupils' views are always asked for and valued at review meetings.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and with the community are **very good** and have improved significantly in the last two years. Links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents recognise the many improvements that have taken place since the new headteacher took over. They are confident that their views matter, and are acted upon.
- Very frequent and purposeful communication takes place with parents, which helps their children achieve as well as they do.
- An impressive range of workshops is organised for parents by staff.
- Many links are now established within the community where the school receives strong support, much interest and considerable respect.
- Excellent links with many schools and colleges have been relatively quickly and firmly established which benefit many pupils.

Commentary

29. Information is very freely shared with parents. Many use home school diaries daily, and when this is not appropriate, daily phone contact is made with families. Office staff are very welcoming to any parent or visitor who calls, and parents say they feel very comfortable about approaching any member of staff. In particular, they praise the very helpful and encouraging responses consistently provided by the headteacher. Concerns are always followed through promptly and carefully. Written reports are very good and parents appreciate the inclusion of colour photographs. Home visits are arranged, many carried out by the school nurse, who also works closely and productively with many parents.
30. Many workshops are organised every term, which a small number of parents enjoy and find very useful. These cover, for example, autism, signing, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and curriculum areas. Parents say that they find them invaluable. A small number of parents work very effectively alongside teachers, giving much valued voluntary support to groups of pupils. A successful friends group began three years ago and parents, together with supportive staff, successfully organise discos and other events, which are very well supported. Parental trust and confidence has been built up. The large number of parental responses to the

pre-inspection questionnaire, an exceptional 75 per cent of parents, is proof of the huge support now given to the school.

31. The school is increasingly highly thought of within the locality. Pupils make many visits into the community, which extend their understanding in many ways. They get involved in local events. More importantly, the headteacher has been very successful in encouraging community groups and visitors into the school, and this too is having a good impact on learning opportunities for pupils.
32. Inclusion programmes have been set up and these are carefully supported and monitored by staff in all schools to ensure success. Fifteen pupils now attend mainstream schools for timetabled sessions every week. High quality advice and training is provided for staff from other mainstream and special schools, and further development of these outreach services is planned for in the near future.
33. The school's ability to fulfil its ambition to expand these developing inclusion and outreach services is dependent on an increase in staffing resources. This would not be possible within the current funding arrangements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **outstanding** and dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. Leadership in the school overall is **very good**. Governance of the school is **good** and governors are very supportive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, and all staff share, and work towards, a common purpose.
- The headteacher and his senior managers lead the curriculum in an innovative way. Teaching is rigorously monitored, resulting in highly effective teaching and learning.
- Leadership has created a culture of open and rigorous self-evaluation. School development planning involves all staff.
- Members of the senior management team provide effective leadership of their teams and provide good role models for other staff and pupils.
- Management is very effective and enables the school to fulfil its strategic planning.
- The school places high priority on selecting and appointing staff, developing their skills and deploying them to best effect. All staff, teaching and non-teaching are valued and empowered.
- The headteacher, governors and senior management team have a genuine commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality of opportunity and concern for the needs of individuals.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ensure that it fulfils its statutory duties.

Commentary

34. The headteacher has a most powerful impact on the work of the school and consequently on pupils' achievements. He provides clear educational direction with an unremitting concern for raising standards. He leads by the example of dedication and hard work and inspires staff and pupils to give of their best. He sees obstacles to the school's ambitions as challenges to be overcome. A team player himself, he has surrounded himself with team leaders and team players of talent and energy. He delegates responsibilities well and provides appropriate support, confidence and encouragement to empower staff. The effectiveness of his leadership is confirmed in the very good overall improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. A particularly significant contributory factor in these impressive improvements was the deputy headteacher's ability to recognise, nurture and celebrate all his colleagues' potential and ability.

35. Governors operate effectively through a number of committees. For example, the curriculum committee meet termly to look at areas of the school's work. Link governors meet with subject co-ordinators and informally monitor teaching of their subject. The finance and general purposes committee meet more regularly to monitor financial matters and any site developments. They ensure that the principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources. Governors have developed their own training plan in relation to their needs. Governors fully support the headteacher and give him considerable encouragement to fulfil his vision for the school.
36. The school development plan is a comprehensive document, drawn up and modified, following continuous school self review, incorporating LEA guidance, in which all staff are involved. This has enabled the school to identify strengths and priorities for development, and results in clear strategic thinking and planning for improvement. In this way, for example, development of an assessment package that will more usefully analyse internal data on gender, disability or ethnicity, has been identified as a priority. By giving ownership and responsibility to those most interested in its success, the headteacher ensures that the school development plan becomes a 'living' document and encourages a culture of reflection and evaluation. In such a climate, teachers and support staff welcome the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their work.
37. The school places great importance on the appointment, induction and development of new staff. Recently appointed teachers and non-teaching staff speak highly of procedures to help them to quickly become established and effective. The performance management of staff, including support staff, is thorough and effective and contributes to improvements in teaching and learning. In addition, the headteacher meets all staff twice a year to plan and review their continuing professional development. Professional development opportunities are closely linked to the needs of the school, particularly those of meeting the challenge of a changing school population, and to priorities in the school development plan. Well planned and relevant school based INSET also makes a significant contribution to the very effective teaching and seamless teamwork of support staff.
38. Day to day management is highly effective and all the administrative staff make a very significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Finances are managed efficiently and the deployment of resources, for example, interactive whiteboards in every classroom, helps the school achieve educational priorities. The school has made the very best use of the expertise and good will of the site manager to create a high quality, learning environment, inside and outside the classrooms. Although pupil unit costs are high, such is the quality of provision in every aspect of the school's work, that it provides very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	809,617
Total expenditure	775,055
Expenditure per pupil	14,000

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	88,531
Balance carried forward to the next year	68,000

39. There are appropriate plans in place to spend a significant proportion of the balance carried forward from last year. These include the sensory development of the swimming pool, air conditioning, and improvements to the area outside the early years' classroom.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Lessons in English were seen in all classes. One lesson was seen in modern languages.

Provision in English is **very good**. In speaking and listening and reading, achievement is very good. Pupils are achieving good levels in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. This enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Communication skills across the school are developing very well. This is due to the very good support of a dedicated, well-trained and enthusiastic communications team.
- Speaking and listening skills are very good in all classes.
- Reading skills have improved significantly, and are now very good across the school.
- Assessment is done well on a daily basis. More consistent approaches are being developed to measure progress over longer periods of time.
- Interactive stories and drama are being developed very well.
- Writing progress is good and there is a long-term plan to improve pupils' achievements to match those in communication and reading.
- Management of the subject is very effective.

Commentary

40. Pupils are consistently achieving very well in communication skills in lessons, across a range of subjects and in other social settings. In discussions with pupils, it is very evident that they all feel confident to express their views in speech, when signing and using a very good range of additional communication systems. They are given ample time by teachers and support staff to listen and concentrate before answering or responding. They have access to a range of opportunities to help them improve their listening and concentration, such as sensory stories and sound beam work, as well as lively and stimulating lessons in literacy. They take part in discussion groups to help with their social language. When some pupils visit other schools or go out on activities, they show very good self-confidence in communicating in a variety of settings.
41. All pupils are given very good opportunities to experience the written word in a range of books, which are often projected onto the interactive whiteboards in all classes. This enables them all to see the stories 'come alive' as they follow the words and actions. Younger pupils, for example, are visibly enthralled by the antics in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Every pupil shows excitement as Jack seeks his fortune and most pupils read aloud from the screen as they follow this story and others. There is very good emphasis on learning sounds and blends and applying these in context for all pupils, when looking at books and newspapers. There are many opportunities provided for reading, and every available space is well used for interactive stories. All pupils listen hard and know how to use books. They are supported well as they concentrate. Whenever a pupil appears to lose interest, another way of engaging their interest is employed, such as using signs, symbols and technology. When pupils follow stories, they are encouraged to use good expression as they read. There is often great hilarity as they share the reading and appreciate the humour in many of their books. Evidence indicates very significant progress has been made in their reading skills.

42. Younger pupils are now writing and expressing themselves well through the written word, using additional technology and guided writing opportunities. Handwriting is improving, but many pupils have other complex needs, which hamper presentation and letter formation. Older pupils are producing much neater work and take pride in their written achievements, which are helpfully signed, dated and recorded. There is very good attention paid to punctuation and spelling. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops, and many know how to recognise speech marks in passages from well-known poems and stories.
43. Pupils are appropriately challenged and expectations are very high. Lessons are planned and organised very well, taking full account of imaginative adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy. There are lively introductions and very good use is made of support and resources. Assessment is good on a daily basis, but there is not enough detailed assessment for future planning. This is currently being further developed. Pupils say and show that they enjoy their lessons and demonstrate their great enthusiasm for literacy across the range of subjects offered in the school.
44. The team approach to improving communication skills across the range of subjects is very stimulating and supportive. High quality training is offered to staff and regular meetings are held to ensure that there is very effective planning and organisation for English throughout the school. New systems being introduced for assessment will help to make recoding even more accurate. Resources are very good, with the very high quality ICT systems being used significantly to enhance the curriculum. Library facilities are very well used, although space is limited for pupils with more complex needs. All classes benefit from this dedicated teamwork, which is being managed very efficiently.
45. All of this represents a very good improvement since the last inspection

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. There is very good informal emphasis on the importance of developing pupils' literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum. Many opportunities are provided for reading, speaking and listening and concentration. There are, though, fewer planned opportunities for pupils to write in detail, but evidence shows that work is recorded well and achievements in writing in all subjects are acknowledged appropriately. Effective communication is considered very important and many opportunities are provided for pupils to record their work in ICT sessions and mathematics. Key vocabulary is stressed in all subjects. Interaction and discussions are encouraged in assemblies, music and art. Other subjects provide very good opportunities for discussions such as personal, social and health education and citizenship. All pupils have access to a wide range of additional communication aids when taking part in activities in school and when visiting other schools and places of interest. Listening to instructions carefully is also emphasised during swimming lessons, when pupils excel at following directions.

Modern Foreign Languages – French

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall and pupils are enthusiastic and successful learners.
- Pupils make good use of the Internet, music and other activities to further develop their skills in French.

Commentary

47. Planning and records show that achievement in French is good overall. During the one lesson observed, most pupils achieved well. Pupils with speech are confident when reading aloud numbers in French. There is good use made of voice activators to record each pupil's age as

they speak and they are clearly enthusiastic about responding to questions. Music was used to enhance the lesson and most pupils joined in enthusiastically as they sang along. It is evident that pupils enjoy learning French and many pupils can remember limited vocabulary from previous lessons. In the recent past, pupils have participated in running a French café, contributed to French and European days and followed French football teams. As a result, French is also making a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

Lessons were seen in mathematics in each year group.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are very good and have improved since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is very good and is relevant to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Teaching is of very high quality.
- The use of information and communications technology is excellent.
- Formal assessment procedures are in need of further development.
- The reinforcement of mathematical skills in other subjects needs planning in greater detail.

Commentary

48. Pupils achieve very well across a wide range of activities. They learn successfully about days of the week, shapes and numbers and, as they get older, start to apply their learning well to solve problems. Some pupils are able to use calculators and make simple measurements. Older pupils make good progress and achieve well following their accredited course. This provides them with the basic skills of using numbers and handling money, and teachers plan very well for them to put their skills into practice.
49. This very good level of achievement is the direct result of high quality teaching. Lessons are planned from a very good curriculum framework, which has been very successfully adapted from the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy to take full account of the special educational needs of all pupils. Very good use is made of number rhymes and songs.
50. A particularly good feature of teaching is the clear way in which ideas are presented. This enables pupils to understand what is being expected of them and engages them fully in the lesson activities. This clarity is achieved by excellent use of ICT and by the use of signing and symbols, alongside clear and simple vocabulary, to assist those who have language and communication difficulties. Interactive white boards are used consistently and imaginatively to illustrate lessons, demonstrate difficult concepts and share completed work. A range of switches and other electronic aids are employed to help pupils respond to their lessons. In all lessons, the excellent focused help and teamwork provided by support staff makes a major contribution to pupils' achievements.
51. On a day-to-day basis, teachers know their pupils very well and are thus able to set them work with an appropriate degree of challenge. However, formal assessment procedures that contribute to pupils' reports and long term records, although satisfactory, are not as useful as they could be in identifying their progress and achievements. Partly, this is because new procedures are not yet used effectively, and do not adequately demonstrate progress over time.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Although teachers do take those opportunities that occur informally to reinforce mathematics learning in other subjects, in registration periods and lunchtime activities, very little planned

application of mathematical skills in other subjects was seen during the inspection. The school recognises this situation and steps for improvement are outlined in the school development plan.

SCIENCE

Lessons were seen in science across the school.

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well.
- All lessons have a practical focus, which engages pupils' interests and teaches key concepts effectively.
- The language and vocabulary of the subject are well taught.
- The subject is very well resourced.

Commentary

53. Pupils learn successfully about plants, materials, solids and liquids and human characteristics, discovering how their own bodies work and how important it is to respect and value other living things.
54. The best teaching brings the subject alive for pupils, through very well chosen and structured 'hands on' experience of the world around them. This was exemplified in a lesson about habitats and organisms, in which younger pupils were able to view and think about their own and other creatures' home environments, through extremely well chosen and presented pictures and models, and then to see and touch live birds and animals, brought in by a willing volunteer. Such complex and effective learning opportunities require considerable preparation and organisation, achieved through excellent team work. Teachers work hard, successfully to engage the interest and involvement of every pupil, no matter what their difficulty. ICT is consistently very well used in this process.
55. Follow up activities, including written work, are always well structured to enable pupils to record their results in a way that consolidates their learning. Care is taken to ensure that the language of the subject is consistently well presented and that pupils use words correctly to describe what they have seen and learned.
56. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection and learning resources have been improved. The recently appointed co-ordinator is working successfully with his colleagues to further improve curriculum planning and teaching skills across the school, to bring standards up to the very high levels in most other subjects. The collaborative approach to this process is typical of the way the school shares in seeking continuous improvement. The main focus of this work will be to enhance staff expertise, to analyse and consolidate the science content of the current upper school curriculum and to ensure that teaching approaches consistently help all pupils to access and understand challenging concepts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Whilst only two specialist ICT lessons were seen, nearly all other subject lessons incorporated a wide range of uses of technology and inspectors were able to look at evidence in planning records, teaching materials and samples of work.

The provision for information and communication technology is **excellent** and is beginning to have a major impact on pupils' achievements in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum opportunities are excellent.
- Pupils' achievements are very good and improving.
- Teaching is of very high quality.
- Leadership and management of the subject's development are both outstanding.
- The resources available are excellent.
- The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is excellent.

Commentary

57. The use of ICT in its various forms, by pupils and staff to support teaching and learning, is an outstanding feature of the school. The focal point of this excellent provision is the computer controlled interactive whiteboard in each classroom. The equipment available is wide ranging, including switches and other communication aids, as well as sound and vision recording and playback devices.
58. Pupils engage in a broad range of activities that have been selected and modified from the National Curriculum to be relevant to their learning needs. Topics covered are very well designed so that pupils can build up their skills progressively at their own pace. There is a strong emphasis on computers, but other aspects of information and communication technology are very well covered. Pupils whose special educational needs restrict conventional access to computers use alternative input devices, such as touch screens and adapted keyboards.
59. Pupils' achievements benefit greatly from the excellent ICT skills of the staff. Pupils develop their skills very well in those lessons designated specifically to ICT, and also through their constant use of ICT throughout the school day in other subjects. Teaching is consistently very good, and this leads to very good achievement. As ICT has been a rapidly developing subject over recent years it is likely that the achievements of pupils will continue to improve as they progress through the school.
60. Teaching is characterised by very good planning that ensures a good match between the task set and the capabilities of individuals. This creates an appropriate level of challenge and enables pupils to learn at their own pace. The use of ICT by teachers to interest and engage pupils in their learning is an excellent feature of many lessons, across all subjects. The particular skill and teamwork provided by support staff makes an excellent contribution to overall achievements.
61. The use of the interactive white boards for presentations is a wonderful stimulus that focuses pupils' attention, improves their level of concentration and reduces incidents of challenging behaviour. All staff display a level of confidence and competence to make the most of this resource, for example by preparing a data base to meet individual lesson requirements, or when a support assistant operates the computer, thereby freeing the teacher to fully engage the whole class. The digital camera is used effectively to record experiences and celebrate achievement. Annotated photographs of pupils contribute very effectively to pupils' records of achievement.
62. The development of ICT from small beginnings to its current excellent level is an outstanding feat of leadership and management. Of particular note is the extent to which the equipment has been accepted and its uses grasped by the school's staff. Excellent leadership has motivated staff to develop the appropriate skills through intensive training, and then have the confidence to apply them in very creative ways to enable pupils to learn.
63. The resources available are excellent, covering all aspects of the technology. Computers are available in all classrooms and in a dedicated suite that is particularly useful for skills teaching. An excellent choice of software, especially presentation and sentence-building programmes, is extremely relevant to what the pupils and students need to help them learn.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Information and communication technology is put to excellent use in virtually all subjects, to motivate, engage and teach pupils. It is an integral part of most lessons, used by all staff with fluency and ease.

HUMANITIES

Two lessons were seen in geography and one in history. One lesson was seen in religious education.

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good or very good. Teachers present activities that are relevant and challenging.
- ICT is used very effectively to support learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. They work hard and try to please.
- The school makes good use of the school environment and the local community through visits and visitors.

Commentary

65. Teaching in geography is always effective. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives that are shared with the class. Activities are relevant to their knowledge and understanding and build carefully on prior learning. Very good signing, the use of pictures and symbols and timely interventions by support staff ensure that everyone is included. In a Year 4 lesson, large photographs of pupils' homes and the school immediately engaged their attention. Good questioning encouraged pupils to think and respond, and confirmed that most pupils understood what activities they do at school and what they do at home. Two hoops representing home and school were then placed on the floor and pupils in turn, were encouraged to place objects in the appropriate hoop. Time was taken and appropriate support given to enable everyone to succeed. Teaching is consistently encouraging and enabling. Reference is made to relevant displays in the classroom and this extends pupils' understanding. Communication and literacy skills are reinforced throughout and pupils become familiar with key geography vocabulary such as 'island' and 'mainland'. Time at the end of lessons is used well to confirm learning and celebrate achievement. The management of the challenging behaviour of a few pupils in lower school is astute, patient, consistent and effective.

66. Teachers make good use of the school; the local neighbourhood and places further a field to help pupils make sense of the world. Younger pupils learn to find their way around school, the local park and shops. They know, for example 'What you can do in the park.' and 'What you can buy in a shop.' They learn from visits and visitors, people in the community who help them, for example, the policeman, the postman and the shopkeeper. They become familiar with a range of resources – maps, atlases, video and Internet. Older pupils visit Dippon Woods and the river Severn at Shrewsbury. They identify some of the key physical features of those places and can state preferences. They show a developing awareness of the environment and how it relates to their own lives.

History

67. The subject is well led and work planned is challenging and relevant. In the one lesson seen, on 'Hot War, Cold War', teaching, pupils' achievement and progress were good. Teaching was characterised by good signing, good questioning to illicit key words such as 'angry', 'shout' and 'quarrel' and a spontaneous role play between the teacher and support assistant to help pupils

understand that even friends fall out. Pupils found the idea of quarrelling difficult and all adults worked hard to get them to contribute, even when working in small groups and on a personalised grid sheet about 'Who gets cross at home?' Learning and understanding was further reinforced by an especially prepared presentation on emotions, which gave pupils the opportunity to come forward and circle on the whiteboard, people displaying anger in their face or posture. There was a particularly good focus throughout on speaking, signing and listening skills.

68. Evidence from a display and a specially prepared booklet show that pupils benefited greatly from meeting and talking with old aged pensioners in the community who were war babies in World War Two. These visitors are a rich resource of experience and information, bringing with them artefacts like ration books and photographs and a host of happy and sad memories. This helps pupils understand the passage of time and to empathise with the hardships families experienced during those difficult days.

Religious Education

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum opportunities are good.
- Pupils' achievements are good.

Commentary

69. The curriculum consists of a good programme of topics, selected from national guidelines and the locally approved syllabus, and adapted well to match the learning needs of the pupils. There is a good balance between topics about the traditions and festivals of different faiths and those that promote values associated with living together in communities, bringing alive the importance of respect for others' beliefs. This curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits, for example to places of worship, and visitors to the school representing different faith groups. The festivals of different faiths are celebrated in school, often through assembly topics.

70. An analysis of pupils' work, records and teachers' planning indicates that achievement in religious education is good, as a result of consistently good teaching. Pupils are helped to understand difficult concepts through sensitive and enabling guidance. The one lesson seen during the inspection, which was about the Christmas Story was brought alive by the excellent use of ICT to carefully develop the theme.

71. There is a good range of resources, including books, artefacts and visual material covering all major faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in art and design, two in design and technology, two in music and five in physical education.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high standards of work are the result of imaginative and encouraging teaching.
- The well structured curriculum provides wide-ranging experiences for pupils to engage in and learn from.

- Many impressive pieces of work have been the result of pupils working collaboratively with artists in residence, visiting teachers and sixth form pupils from a local mainstream school, often as part of special half-termly themed days.

Commentary

72. There is an immediate sense of impressively vibrant and energetic artwork the moment a visitor enters the school, because pupils' work is celebrated throughout in very high quality displays. Many of the pieces benefit from sensitive framing, made by the site manager. There are pictures drawn and painted in a wide variety of styles and techniques, including oils and computer generated images. Impressive, large tapestries, quilts and batiks, often inspired by the work of famous artists and other cultures, hang in large spaces. Small and large sculptures, made of wire, wood and plastic, made by individuals and groups, are beautifully presented in cabinets and the 'art gallery', together with masks and textiles.
73. The co-ordinator has been inspired by attendance on courses to encourage successfully all her colleagues to share her enthusiasm for the subject. In this way, she has helped to develop a non-specialist ethos that makes everyone believe that they and their pupils can 'do' art, enjoy it and produce work of which they can all be justifiably proud. Pupils clearly enjoy art and design lessons, in which they explore the potential of subjects, materials and techniques enthusiastically, developing their ideas thoughtfully and applying skills that they have learned previously. They have been successfully encouraged to consider their own work critically and to appraise each other's work fairly and objectively.
74. Joint planning of art and design and design and technology activities ensures that the potential of both subjects is fully realised, whilst recognising the value of their interrelationship to ensure consolidation of learning.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is new-multipurpose accommodation (which is also sometimes used for art and design).
- Teaching is consistently good and pupils of all abilities are motivated successfully to achieve well.
- Older pupils follow a very successful catering course.

Commentary

75. Resources and the curriculum have both been improved since the last inspection and a sensible re-evaluation is currently being carried out to make sure that the subject provides even more relevant learning opportunities. Together with the new two room accommodation, which combines a workshop and a food technology facility in an imaginative design, this has helped to raise both the profile of the subject and pupils' achievements, which are now good.
76. Younger pupils learn to use construction toys imaginatively and apply a wide variety of materials in engaging design and make activities. As they get older, pupils are helped to build on this early learning through effective teaching, to explore the thinking behind why articles are designed for a purpose and to meet a particular need. They produce designs and then use a range of tools and techniques to make them. They are taught well to evaluate their own and other's work on its fitness for purpose.
77. During the inspection, there was a concentration on food technology. Pupils applied themselves enthusiastically in these successful lessons, encouraged by the well focused teaching and support. When learning about vegetables and bread, there were very valuable links made with

healthy eating, science and geography, typifying the school's very effective approach to making learning relevant and meaningful.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong focus on pupil achievement.
- Imaginative and enthusiastic leadership has led to good improvements in music teaching and learning.
- Music contributes well to pupils' cultural development.
- Assessment in music requires more formal procedures to record individual pupils' progress over time.
- All pupils enjoy composing and performing.
- Using music technology such as the sound beam has led to good improvements in communication skills.

Commentary

78. All pupils enjoy music lessons. In lessons observed and in planning, staff work hard to ensure that everyone takes a full part and achieves some success in composing and performing. There has been a strong focus on raising standards and progress under the present leadership. This has been done through sheer hard work and collaboration between staff, who value music and have gained confidence themselves through imaginative teaching. Music resources are now good. Recording of achievement requires more formal assessment by staff to ensure that planning reflects pupils' particular needs and helps them to make progress.
79. In one lesson, Year 2 and 3 pupils showed good understanding of how to listen to sounds and reproduce them. They listened avidly to taped sounds and most responded positively when asked to identify them. Pupils with more complex needs showed by their facial expressions and delight that they preferred some sounds to others. All pupils enjoyed attention as they took turns in listening and responding. During interruptions from others returning to the group, they persevered in their efforts to succeed. PECS cards were used to ensure that every pupil was included in the activities. There are always good resources available, including electronic communication aids, to help pupils achieve their individual learning targets.
80. Older pupils in Year 7 now have a basic understanding of what a pentatonic scale is and enjoyed a lively lesson when music from a well-known band, UB40, was played to reinforce their learning. Most pupils joined in with this lesson, using boom whackers and a range of tuned and percussion instruments to follow their 'conductor' and colour coded scores well. There was good co-operation between pupils as they listened attentively and took cues from staff and each other. There was impressive achievement in musical composition and pupils were rewarded for their efforts.
81. Pupils have benefited well from a recent visit by a colourful and vibrant group, the Mighty Zulu Nation Theatre, who inspired staff and pupils to enjoy free musical expression and lively dancing. A recent visit to Wolverhampton Civic Hall to perform with chime bars in the annual Multifaith Festival is a good example of pupils' and students' musical successes and effective cultural links within the local community.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good** overall. Provision for swimming is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are presented in imaginative ways that make good links to other areas of learning.
- Skilled instructors have very high expectations. Teachers and support staff give very good 'in-pool' support to less able pupils.
- The school commits a significant amount of curriculum time to swimming. Very good facilities and resources contribute to pupils' success.
- Pupils have high self-esteem. They work hard and with sustained concentration.

82. Only two different activities were observed during the course of the inspection. Older pupils, following a world of work unit, were challenged to design an orienteering course around the school. Presentation of photographs taken of various parts of the classroom engaged their attention and clarified the task. Pupils were required initially, to work out where the teacher stood to take the pictures, and then to go on and plan a route to the front door, noting distinctive reference points. This was a very good example of an integrated approach to learning, involving elements of ICT, communication, geography, physical education and personal and social education. Students with mobility difficulties moved in a directional and controlled way. They worked co-operatively in pairs. Timely interventions by support staff ensured everyone was included and completed the task.

83. Pupils' achievements and progress in swimming are exceptional, and in line with national expectations. For example, nine per cent of pupils learn to swim by the end of the first year, and by 16, all pupils swim between 400 and 1500 metres. Their achievements are accredited by the Swimming Teachers' Association (STA). This is as a result of teaching by instructors that is always of a very high quality and which has an unremitting concern for improvement. Lessons are well organised and clearly established routines ensure that maximum time is allowed in the pool. Instructions are clear and unambiguous so that pupils know what is expected of them. Skilful demonstrations and positive feedback to pupils, for example, 'slide your fingers into the water' means that their technique improves within the lesson. Very good support is given to less able pupils by teachers and support staff who go into the water. They provide close assistance, inspire confidence, help pupils to relax, to experience buoyancy and begin to move independently. All health and safety matters are rigorously met and appropriate attention is given to aspects of personal and social education in terms of dressing and undressing.

84. Facilities and resources are very good and include a well-equipped learner pool with an electric hoist and shower and a range of buoyancy aids and boards. In addition, good use is made of a larger pool at a local secondary school to develop older pupils' competence and stamina. Pupils are very proud of their achievements in swimming. They are truly motivated; listen carefully to instructions and work incredibly hard to improve their techniques and water fitness. Their behaviour while travelling and changing is exemplary.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship across the school.

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places high value on promoting the personal and social development of pupils.
- Curriculum opportunities are very good.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well as the result of very good teaching and support.

Commentary

85. The school sees pupils' personal and social development as a crucially important part of its work. Personal and social development targets, expressed in pupils' individual education plans,

are pursued at all times. The attention to detail in doing this contributes to the very positive ethos of the school, and the excellent relationships.

86. In the lessons designated to this subject, pupils follow a very good range of topics that have been selected and adapted from nationally available programmes of learning to be relevant to their particular learning needs. Topics include sex education and drugs education. Older pupils aged 14-19 years, follow separate, very good topics associated with citizenship. There is also an excellent curriculum that prepares them for the personal challenges of life after leaving school.
87. Pupils benefit from very well planned lessons in which tasks are set at a level of challenge that is appropriate to their individual needs. Lessons are made interesting and engaging through excellent use of ICT. Pupils are given the confidence to take part in discussions, which are an important element of the topics.

POST-16 PROVISION

Ten lessons were seen in post-16, covering a wide range of activities.

Provision for pupils post-16 is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well prepared for their life beyond school, including leisure.
- The curriculum balances vocational and life skills education very effectively.
- The ethos is age-appropriate.
- Excellent work experience placements are provided.
- All pupils' work and achievements are accredited.

Commentary

88. Post-16 pupils are taught in upper school, which is housed in an attractive, especially adapted corner of the school. As a consequence, these young people are encouraged to feel that they have moved on to a more mature setting, where high expectations of adult behaviour and independence are clearly expressed by all the staff. The curriculum and timetables are highly innovative, taking full account of national guidance and ensuring that all pupils experience a highly relevant programme, sometimes together with other pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are also taught in this setting, but mostly separately.
89. Staff are appropriately ambitious for their pupils, and working in excellent partnership, teachers and support staff ensure that each individual is provided with the necessary level of support, guidance and encouragement to ensure their success in whatever they do. Pupils experience a highly structured combination of vocational courses, covering the six areas of catering, retail, office practice, leisure and tourism, media and performing arts, and a core basic skills curriculum. This is supplemented by study of the wider curriculum, independent living skills and physical education, including regular outdoor pursuits' activity. Pupils learn how to look after themselves in a wide range of situations. This includes an appropriate focus on relationships, sex and drugs education, as well as aspects of eating healthily and keeping fit. It also incorporates elements which provide them with the ability to use their leisure time productively. There is a supplementary life skills course for those pupils with greater need. This extremely relevant mix provides a stimulating, engaging and motivating menu of experiences, which enable pupils to make very impressive progress and achieve very creditable results in National Skills Profile modules. This programme has opened up avenues for the most able pupils to go on and study NVQs at college.
90. All pupils spend a considerable amount of time out in the community. High quality work experience placements are provided in settings often not available to mainstream pupils and visits are made to places of interest that bring classroom studies alive. All the earlier work in

school prepares pupils extremely well for this wide variety of experiences and they are secure in their relationships with new people and prove to be very effective communicators. Many display an impressive maturity and there are numerous examples of higher attaining pupils working collaboratively and supportively with their less able peers. By the same token, they are all confident and equal partners in their relationships with the many mainstream pupils with whom they come into contact during structured and informal joint activities. Parents are highly satisfied with this excellent ending to their children's school education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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