

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BOSTON JOHN FIELDING SCHOOL

Boston, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120751

Headteacher: Mrs S. Morrison

Lead inspector: Steven Parker

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th June 2004

Inspection number: 259005

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	42
School address:	Ashlawn Drive Boston Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE21 9PX
Telephone number:	01205 363395
Fax number:	01205 357696
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stuart Lincoln
Date of previous inspection:	07/12/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Boston John Fielding School provides education for girls and boys from two to nineteen. Currently, there are 42 children, pupils and students on roll, with numbers distributed unevenly across the age groupings. There are, for example, no pupils from years two, three or nine, and there are ten post 16 students. These small numbers result in three of the five classes containing pupils from more than one key stage. The great majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties and around ten per cent have profound and complex difficulties. Eleven of the pupils also have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), a proportion which is predicted to continue growing. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and when they come into the school their attainment is significantly below average. Pupils travel from across a wide catchment area of eastern Lincolnshire. All pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage, reflecting the general socio-economic background of the region.

The school is funded to provide a Portage Service to the wider community and, although three staff are trained, only one qualified teaching assistant is currently working in the service for two days a week. The school was awarded Investors in People status in 2001. A recent re-assessment allowed the school to retain this status, whilst requiring a re-submission after a period of action planning. There are very few structured links with local schools to enable pupils to spend time alongside their main stream peers.

The school has experienced an unsettling time over the past two years. It has had three headteachers within a year and other temporary senior management staff. The very recent appointment of a new headteacher, and other senior management appointments for the new academic year, promise productive stability for the whole school community. The findings of the previous inspection in 1998 judged that: 'the small size of the school, the wide range of pupils and their complex needs, together with limited resources, present major difficulties in achieving high quality education'. With the exception of the provision of a new classroom for post 16 students this year, most of those difficulties still prevail.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13033	Steven Parker	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, French, music.
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector	
32686	Niki Elliot	Team inspector	Science, personal, social and health education and citizenship
21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	English, history, geography, religious education
10668	David Walker	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Boston John Fielding is a **satisfactory** school that is improving after a very unsettled period in its history. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and, as a result, pupils' achievements and progress are mostly satisfactory, and sometimes good. The very recently appointed headteacher has had an immediate, positive impact on staff morale and the school's effectiveness, through her determined leadership. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very positive approach to learning and concentrate very well in lessons because of high quality relationships with and impressive individualized support from staff.
- There is good, effective teamwork between teachers and their teaching assistants.
- Post 16 students benefit from good quality teaching.
- Governors have not been effective in supporting the school, holding it to account or helping to shape its future.
- The management role of subject co-ordinators and planning for pupils' long term learning are underdeveloped.
- Arrangements for demonstrating how well pupils are progressing are inadequate.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits pupils' learning opportunities.

The school has made barely adequate progress since its last inspection in many of the areas that were identified at the time as needing improvement. Most significant in this respect are planning of the curriculum and the role of subject co-ordinators, the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning and providing a clear educational direction for the school through rigorous strategic planning. There have, however, been overall improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, especially in the Foundation Stage, which was previously judged to be unsatisfactory. This has been as a result of focused training for all staff and planned improvements in learning resources and accommodation. Importantly, throughout this apparently difficult time, standards have been maintained in the caring and supportive ethos of the school, which are most highly valued by parents and pupils alike.

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	Good
Year 6	Satisfactory	Good
Year 9	Satisfactory	Good
Year 11	Satisfactory	Good
Year 13	Good	Good

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make sound, steady progress in most subjects across the school. Students in post 16 build on this progress and achieve well in all aspects of their studies. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their personal, social and communication skills and pupils then go on to make similar good progress throughout their time in school. Achievement is good in science and satisfactory in reading and writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make

good progress in physical education and religious education. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **very good** and their cultural development is good. Their attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour and attendance are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**, enabling pupils to make overall satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Teaching and learning are both **satisfactory**, with some notable strengths in post 16 and for pupils with more complex needs. This is because there are very productive relationships between all staff and pupils and staff know pupils' needs well. There are, however some weaknesses in assessing how well pupils are learning over time and reporting this to parents. Whilst not sufficiently well planned to ensure balance and continuity in pupils' learning, the curriculum nonetheless provides them with broad and relevant experiences (although there is no structured sex and relationships education). Despite the difficulties inherent in such a small school with a very wide catchment area, pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities for sport. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The new headteacher has successfully built on the earlier work of the acting headteacher before her. She has quickly established her own good leadership of the school, working productively with her senior management colleagues to effect necessary development and change. Although the school runs efficiently on a day to day basis, its management is currently unsatisfactory, because there is little monitoring of whole school policies and practice and staff performance to inform strategic planning. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of effective curriculum planning through the subject co-ordinators. Governance of the school is also unsatisfactory. Whilst individual governors are committed to their work and supportive of the school, for example in relation to good oversight of financial management, they are not sufficiently well informed about their overall roles and responsibilities. Consequently, they have not been able to function as a cohesive group to provide rigorous challenge or structured support.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents are confident in and supportive of the school, being particularly appreciative of the care and guidance their children receive. Concerns expressed by a small minority of parents about the progress their children are making and problems relating to communication with staff were considered by inspectors to be a likely outcome of the recent uncertainties about the school's management. Pupils are clearly very happy in school, enjoy the experiences that are made available to them and clearly appreciate the support that they are given by all staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

1. Review and improve the organization and work of the governing body.
2. Develop and improve the role and work of subject co-ordinators to ensure that they lead effective development of planning for more effective teaching and learning in the subjects for which they are responsible.
3. Further develop assessment arrangements to better inform teachers' planning and demonstrate the progress that pupils make over time.
4. Explore ways in which the accommodation can be extended and improved.
5. Ensure that all statutory requirements are met, particularly for sex and relationships education and staff performance management.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. There are no differences in achievement for boys and girls or in relation to different special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good team work by staff helps pupils to make good progress in developing their communication skills right across the school.
- Pupils make good progress against their individual personal and social targets.
- Post 16 students' achievements are good across all subjects.
- Good support for children in the Foundation stage ensures that they achieve well in personal, social and communication development.
- Pupils' achievements are not accredited at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Systems for demonstrating pupils' progress over time are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

1. Although there is a good climate for learning across the school, there is not a sufficiently well structured approach to planning for and recording pupils' achievements and progress over time. It is, consequently, difficult to determine securely how well pupils are doing. It was, however, possible, by careful scrutiny of the work samples and records that were available during the inspection, to make a judgement that pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, and that they make sound progress over time. Records for post 16 students show that they are achieving well, and must, therefore, have been making sufficient progress to build on, prior to going into this class.
2. The youngest pupils, whether in Year 1 or Reception, often arrive with virtually no understanding of the rudiments of literacy or numeracy and very limited personal, social and communication skills. These pupils get off to a solid start, because the staff in the Foundation class provide them with well focused support. This results in their making good progress in their social and communication development, providing them with a secure basis for their subsequent good achievements in these aspects across the school. This group of pupils make satisfactory progress in all other aspects of the foundation curriculum, with the exception of physical development, where they make good progress.
3. All pupils do well against their individual social skills targets and achieve them within expected time scales because all staff know what they are and incorporate them into lessons and lunch time activities where appropriate. There is, however, no structured approach to involving pupils in evaluating their own progress. The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' self confidence and they are encouraged to be as independent as they can be. This sensitive support across the curriculum, together with good lessons in personal, social and health education, ensure that pupils make overall good progress in their personal development.
4. Pupils make satisfactory gains in learning as they move up through the school, and achievement is mostly secure by the end of each key stage across the curriculum. As a result of enthusiastic and effective teaching, all pupils make good progress in physical education and religious education. Whilst the basic principles of both the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been incorporated to some extent into teachers' practice, there has not been a co-ordinated approach to adapting them to take full account of the needs of the school. This has resulted in inadequate planning to ensure that the development of literacy and numeracy skills are incorporated fully across other subjects of the curriculum. In spite of this, pupils' achievements in reading, writing

and mathematics are satisfactory. The situation is a little better for ICT, because teachers ensure, through using the technology in their work, that pupils make adequate progress in learning and applying skills. Achievements in science and religious education are also satisfactory.

5. Pupils do not have the opportunity to have their achievements accredited at age 16. In contrast, students post 16 benefit from lively and well structured learning experiences, particularly those for their ASDAN award scheme activities, which engage them fully and celebrate their good progress. Current planning for a 14 to 19 curriculum structure should integrate these benefits for all pupils in this age group.
6. Pupils with profound and complex difficulties, and those with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) make equally satisfactory progress, because their particular needs are recognised and met.
7. This overall picture is similar to the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupil's attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. Their personal development, including their spiritual social and moral development is **very good**. Cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of pupil's personal and social awareness is very good.
- Staff provide very good role models for pupils.
- Staff have high expectations of pupil's learning and behaviour.
- Pupil's show enthusiasm for learning and take pleasure in what they have learned.
- Planning to develop pupil's spiritual awareness is very good.
- Pupil's progress towards their personal development targets is not systematically recorded.

Commentary

8. The school has clear values, which focus pupils on learning about themselves and about their work. Pupils enjoy the range of activities offered by the school and respond with enthusiasm, resulting in their taking full advantage of the opportunities to learn.
9. Staff are very effective in building pupil's self awareness through very good provision for personal and spiritual development. Pupils with profound and complex difficulties have many opportunities to make choices and respond to their environment. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to share their ideas and make very good progress, growing in confidence and maturity. Older pupils feel that their opinions are valued and acted upon. Pupils' self-esteem is developed through carefully planned opportunities to take responsibility for whole school and class activities. This results in high levels of co-operation and awareness of others' needs.
10. Through thoughtful planning, the staff have created a culture which promotes very good spiritual awareness. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to express their pleasure in new experiences inside and outside school. Teachers nurture a genuine spiritual focus in assemblies, which is continued in classroom reflections and prayers and in the creative use of the school grounds. This is extended through good links with local churches and visits to places of worship for a variety of religions. The school makes good use of the limited local opportunities for wider cultural development.
11. Staff set a very good example to pupils and effectively communicate their high expectations. They know pupils very well and challenge unacceptable behaviour sensitively and constructively, helping pupils to develop a good awareness of themselves and other people. Good systems of

reward have been developed in some classrooms, but practice is not consistent across the school. There is not a clear link between pupils' targets and the rewards systems, and progress towards targets is not systematically recorded and monitored. Effective plans are in place to support pupils who display difficult behaviour and staff work well together to implement these. There have been no exclusions or serious incidents in the past year.

12. Overall attendance at the school is good when compared to similar establishments and there is little evidence of pupil lateness. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very low. The majority of parents support the school on all issues related to attendance and punctuality. The school's actions to promote and encourage regular attendance are good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory overall**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, but the school's approach to assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although teachers know and understand the individual needs of their pupils, and this helps pupils to learn effectively, the medium and long term planning of their learning experiences is generally unsatisfactory because it is not informed by accurate or usable assessment information.
- Teachers and their assistants work well in partnership, developing and maintaining very good relationships, which encourage pupils to try hard in all that they experience.
- Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all subjects and good for personal and social education.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good for students post 16 and for pupils with profound and complex difficulties.

Commentary

13. Whilst the teaching seen during the inspection was often good, this was clearly not the case over time, due to the lack of structured planning to ensure that pupils' learning is continuous and builds properly on their earlier learning. Staff do have a good informal knowledge of and insight into the particular difficulties that their pupils experience in learning and adapt their support accordingly. This helps pupils to make satisfactory progress on a day to day basis, but does not enable staff to 'go the extra mile' in planning longer term for pupils' learning. A significant factor impacting on this situation is the unsatisfactory arrangements for assessing pupils' progress. There is an established structure for gathering information about pupils' achievements, which has been in operation for three years. However, much of the data is of little use, because there has been neither a system to assure consistency in teachers' judgements, nor an expectation that this information should be used to inform teachers' planning. Consequently, much of what happens in the school lacks rigour and, although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, pupils do not make the progress that they could in their work.

14. There are, though, exceptions to this general pattern. Teaching and learning are consistently good for students post 16, because of the structure provided by the ASDAN schemes, the enthusiasm and drive of the teacher and his assistant and the pace and variety of experiences and methods that they employ. By the same token, the approaches to supporting pupils with profound and complex difficulties are also effective, although the school recognises that educating this group together, rather than with pupils of their own age is not ideal. There is an appropriate plan to integrate them in their proper age groupings for the new academic year. It should also be recognised that teaching and learning for children following the Foundation curriculum has improved since the last inspection, and is now satisfactory. This is because there has been a more structured approach to planning learning opportunities for this group and the non teaching staff who run the class have received appropriate support and guidance. This situation should improve further in the next academic year, when a new specialist teacher is assigned to this class who can develop further the specific methods required to teach these pupils successfully.
15. The strength of all the teachers and their assistants across the school is the quality of their relationships with individual pupils and their commitment to meeting the needs of the 'whole child'. They work well in their teams to provide a supportive and enabling atmosphere that gives pupils the confidence to tackle challenges and to try hard to meet the high expectations that adults have for their good behaviour and applied effort. This has helped pupils to make good progress in their ability to communicate effectively, helped often by good use of signing and symbols. The school does, though, recognise that there is still work to do in developing a more consistent and effective approach to using these aids. The warmth and care of the staff has also ensured that pupils are enthusiastic about school and make good progress across the whole range of their personal and social development. It is this aspect of the school's work that parents and pupils alike most value.
16. There has been an overall improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, as the result of wide ranging staff training, most particularly in developing expertise in meeting individual pupil needs. There remains, however, a specific need for subject training and the development of the skills necessary for teachers to co-ordinate subjects effectively.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	10 (28%)	13 (36%)	12 (33%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Opportunities for enrichment are **satisfactory overall**. Staffing and learning resources are **sound**, but the accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Taught curriculum time is low.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to participate in physical activities.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good, but sex and relationships education is weak.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has some shortcomings.

Commentary

17. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are satisfactory overall. At each stage of education the curriculum contains all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, although there are some strengths, there are also some significant weaknesses.
18. Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to the needs of the pupils. The time devoted to the National Curriculum and religious education is less than the recommended guidelines for all stages of education. Additionally, the unsettled nature of the school has so adversely affected subject co-ordination that the structured planning necessary to ensure a progressive development of learning throughout the school is not yet in place in all subjects. As a result, achievement is not as good as it might be. However, the very good informal knowledge that teachers and teachers' assistants have of their pupils and their needs compensates to some degree. There are gaps in what is available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. In particular, undertaking work experience, learning about careers and opportunities for accreditation are not included in their timetables. Nevertheless, there are good opportunities given to students at post 16 to undertake work experience and learn about careers, and a range of accreditation is offered. The school prepares students well for leaving school by Year 13. Thus, while the curricular provision for pupils aged 16 to 19 is good, that for those aged 14 to 19 is unsatisfactory overall.
19. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection, but the accommodation still has several major shortcomings which impact on pupils' achievement. The curricula for science and design and technology for pupils of secondary age are significantly restricted by the absence of the necessary specialist facilities, whilst those for music and art would also be improved with more suitable areas for learning. Students at post 16 have recently been re-located in a new classroom, which has been well-appointed for their curricular needs, but there is no suitable accommodation for relaxation and recreation separate from the main school during breaks. Additionally, the room at present in use by pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties is drab. Accommodation for children under 5 requires adaptation to make it more suitable for meeting their needs.
20. One particularly creative feature of the curriculum is the opportunity given to pupils to participate in physical activities, which is very good. The school enters pupils in many county special schools events, for example, the Disability Sports Federation events, football, cross country running and quick cricket. In addition, there are games against other schools. In the arts, pupils attend the Lincoln dance festival and benefit from their involvement with visiting musicians, dancers and artists. The recent memorable visit by an American astronaut provided much stimulation for a range of follow up activities. As with many special schools, transport arrangements make activities after school virtually impossible, but there are a few lunchtime clubs. One that thrives is the weekly keep fit session, where popular music such is played and pupils join in with words and actions, learning to move in time with the music.
21. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good, enabling pupils to develop very good attitudes to learning, good behaviour in class and around the school and to gain a good level of independence and self respect. Opportunities for learning are wide spread. There are separate lessons for this subject as well as planned occasions for learning in other subjects, such as physical education, when all pupils change into appropriate clothing and often shower at the end of a strenuous session. Learning also takes place at break and lunchtimes, during visits to other schools and the community, at lunchtime clubs and on residential visits. Although there is a policy for sex and relationships education, it is not yet included in the planned delivery of the subject, as is legally required. The basic facts are, however, taught within the science curriculum and individual enquiries are supported well by the school nurse. Drugs education is also not well developed.

22. Whilst there have been some improvements in curriculum provision since the last inspection, insufficient progress has been made in relation to the most important aspects of planning and co-ordination.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **good** level of care, guidance and support. Arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are in place and effective.
- The school provides good quality pastoral support and guidance.
- Monitoring systems for pupil attendance and behaviour are good.
- Health and safety arrangements are not fully secure.
- The school makes sure that *all* pupils can participate in every activity.

Commentary

23. Arrangements for child protection are secure, and the reporting person is known to all staff in the school. Relevant staff training in child protection matters has also taken place. Teaching and support staff, well supported by a range of external agencies, provide a high degree of pastoral and welfare support to individual pupils. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored both formally and informally by the school and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of strategies which are documented on individual pupil's records and review statements. However, the use of this information in the classroom and for day to day planning is inconsistent.
24. In the classroom and around the school, teachers and support staff clearly know their pupils very well and they are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by them and to take appropriate remedial action. The school maintains very good records of all accidents and the medical administration log is very thorough and well managed. A number of minor health and safety issues came to light during the inspection and the school is taking proactive measures to review and amend procedures as necessary.
25. All lessons, including those for personal, social and health education and citizenship are used well to provide pupils with the opportunity to think about themselves, and to express ideas and suggestions as to how they perceive a range of issues. The school council is a very new provision and has not yet had time to establish a clear role within the school. The school is inclusive in its day to day work, exemplified in a Key Stage 2 music lesson in which the one child in a wheelchair was sensitively enabled to join in with all the singing, drumming and dancing activities with the rest of the able bodied group.
26. The high level of child protection, welfare and pastoral support for pupils at the school, together with good procedures for promoting pupils personal development and well being, have a positive impact on their learning and self confidence and they are a continuing strength of the school that was recognised at the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' views of the school are **good** and the school's links with parents are **satisfactory** overall. The school's links with the local community and partner institutions are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents appreciate the work of the school.

- The teaching and support staff are felt to be very supportive.
- Recent changes in staff have made it difficult for the school to maintain regular and consistent communication with parents.
- There are some inadequacies in annual progress reports.
- Not enough use is made of other schools and local colleges to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

27. Relationships between school and individual parents is characterised by the good informal support that is provided by all staff through regular contact with families, through home school books, telephone calls or home visits, when required. The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire prior to the inspection were positive about the school and its new management. There was, however, a minority who were concerned about the progress made by their children and about the approachability of the school. A few parents were also concerned that the school did not go out of its way to seek their views. The inspection team concluded that there had indeed been problems of communication, mainly caused by the recent changes in the school's senior staff. There was a general view expressed that things will improve now there is a new, permanent headteacher in post.
28. Information provided by the school to parents, particularly in relation to regular reports and newsletters is of a satisfactory standard, but there is an inconsistency in the quality and quantity of information contained in the annual academic reports to parents. Additionally, these reports do not include any clear targets for each pupil's development. There are regular parents meetings each year, plus the annual review meeting, and these are usually well attended by parents, who are given every opportunity to discuss the progress being made by their child at the school.
29. The school makes satisfactory use of the local environment to enhance pupils' curricular access and to develop social and personal skills. For example, regular visits are made to the local supermarket to purchase food for cooking purposes and the school also makes good use of the local swimming pool for all pupils. The whole school are shortly to visit a nearby athletics stadium to join in an annual event for Special Schools. However, the use of the local and wider community for pupils' personal development is under-utilised at the present time, except in the case of the post 16 students, where it is good. Links with other schools and colleges are very limited at the present time and in Key Stage 4 they are unsatisfactory. The school is part of the Boston Network Learning Community and three boys from Boston John Fielding visit a nearby primary school for design and technology lessons once each week. However, partnership with and use of, other schools for pupils' curricular access and personal development purposes is a current weakness, of which the school is already aware and seeking to improve. The Portage Service provided by the school to the wider community is valued by the families who benefit from it. There are plans in place to extend its work in the next academic year
30. The overall quality of this aspect of the school's provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership by the headteacher is **good**. The work of the governors is **unsatisfactory**. Management is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the new headteacher is having an immediate and positive impact.
- The governing body does not provide sufficient challenge or support to the school, nor does it fulfil all its statutory responsibilities.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

- Management processes are not effective, particularly in relation to staff performance management, monitoring whole school policies and practice and planning strategically.

Commentary

31. The newly appointed headteacher has quickly established a set of priorities for the improvement of the school, and is acting on them. As a consequence, in a short space of time, she is raising staff morale and creating a positive climate for learning in the school. She is effectively reorganising the senior management team, so that she will be well supported to carry through her clear vision for the school's future. As a team, they provide good role models for staff and pupils, particularly in their good classroom practice.
32. Recent disruptions to leadership, coupled with the continuing questionable viability of a small school with such a wide age range and spread of needs, as identified in the previous report, has contributed significantly to overall unsatisfactory management. As yet, there is not an effective strategic, long-term plan for the school, particularly for the development of the curriculum and its management. Subject co-ordinators do not have a clear idea as to how they should perform their managerial role in monitoring their subjects across the curriculum. For example, there is currently no communications co-ordinator, a key role in a school of this type, to oversee communication, language and literacy and ensures that there is a strategy for the inclusion of communication in all aspects of the school's curriculum. This situation has arisen because there has been unsatisfactory monitoring of the staff's performance, particularly the statutory obligation the school has to its teachers in terms of monitoring their performance annually.
33. Although the governing body is a committed group of individuals, it has suffered from poor focus in its leadership over a long period. Consequently, governors, many of whom have been recently appointed, show an overall lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities, particularly with regard to the monitoring of the curriculum. Governors do not provide the required 'critical friendship' that combines appropriate challenge with necessary support and encouragement to the school. They rely too heavily on information passed to them in the termly reports of the headteacher, and there is insufficient rigour in their questioning of the information put before them. The minutes of their meetings demonstrate that governors do not consistently prioritise issues effectively and that these are not always discussed in depth. Whilst some governors do visit the school, their visits are not systematically planned or recorded, and support is reactive rather than strategic and regular. The governing body remains in breach of its statutory duty with regard to the provision of a sex and relationship policy, which was a criticism of the last inspection. There are also aspects of health and safety that are not monitored effectively.
34. The school is in the early stages of self-review and evaluation. Information has not been effectively gathered over time to provide a clear view of its potential, and those aspects of its performance that create barriers to improvement. As a result of the uncertainty described above, there has been a culture of 'marking time' and a lack of questioning of practice and outcomes. This has impacted significantly on school improvement and has meant that little progress has been made on a number of important issues since the last inspection.
35. Financial management is satisfactory. The finance committee of the governing body has a correct understanding of how it should be managed, and systems for monitoring spending are effective. The principles of best value are carried out.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	550,750	Balance from previous year (2002-03)	49,820
Total expenditure	513,381	Balance carried forward to the next	35,800
Expenditure per pupil	12,900		

36. The underspend of the last two years is slightly above the recommended level of five per cent of the total budget, but a scrutiny of records shows that this money is for planned expenditure, much of which is related to the improvement of the school premises.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, 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.

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Reception children achieve well in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication and physical development as the result of good teaching.
- The Reception children benefit from the support of experienced teaching assistants, but there is not a full time teacher running the class on a daily basis.
- Not enough use is made of assessment to track the children's progress or to plan the next stage of their learning.
- Partnership with parents is good.
- There are some weaknesses in the accommodation and learning resources, which constrain some aspects of their learning.

Commentary

37. At the time of the inspection, there were five children of Reception age being taught the Foundation curriculum with two other Year 1 pupils. When they start at school, children's attainment is well below the average for their age and their development is significantly delayed. Consequently, they tend not to have gained the usual early learning skills and are starting from a very low level in relation to their ability to relate to others, function independently and communicate effectively. Quite appropriately, staff concentrate their efforts on these areas and, consequently, children make good progress, achieving well and establishing a good basis for later learning. Children also make good progress in their physical development because the good learning resources are used well by staff. Children's achievements in the other areas of learning are satisfactory.
38. The reception children benefit from sensitive one to one support from the staff, who are all teaching assistants. Teaching is satisfactory overall and has some good features. The quality of relationships is particularly good. A weakness, however, is the under-use of existing assessment information to help staff to track children's progress and achievement and to enable them to match work closely to the children's needs when planning the next stage of their learning. The staff are working well under difficult circumstances, because there is not a teacher with the appropriate knowledge and skills regularly guiding and supervising their work. This mirrors the situation at the time of the last inspection, when provision was judged unsatisfactory. The lead teaching assistant has done well to learn from the findings at the time and take advantage of the training opportunities she has had. As a result, she has improved much of her and her colleagues' practice, so that provision is now satisfactory overall. There do remain, however, some weaknesses in the quality of provision, most notably in the lack of planned, structured play opportunities, the missed opportunities to teach and consolidate important aspects of the curriculum through specialised approaches (most notably for pupils with ASD) and sometimes inefficient use of the available staffing. The situation should improve further in the next academic year when a newly appointed teacher will be managing the class.
39. The accommodation and learning resources have some good features, most notably the outside play and activity area, the classroom space itself and access to soft play and sensory facilities. The overall setting is, however, not really designed for this age group in terms of there being no assigned areas for each aspect of learning and imaginary play, and encouraging children's

constructive movement around and engagement with their environment. Neither is there a sufficiently motivating range of learning resources to cover their full range of learning needs. Links with parents are strong and staff work well in partnership with families to ensure that children settle in quickly and gain the most benefit from co-operative and consistent working between home and school.

40. Children are encouraged to become as independent as possible in their self help skills and to learn to work and play together wherever possible. They show good levels of confidence when they tackle new learning, even those who are resistant to change because of their ASD, and are helped to make choices and decisions about their work and play. Good, well established class and whole school routines help them to understand the expectations of adults and to learn to take turns. As a result of well focused support and encouragement by staff, children achieve well in their **personal, social and emotional development**.
41. The development of **communication, language and literacy** is a priority for these children and for the most part they do well in their learning. There is a good combination of activities, such as the welcome session at the beginning of the day and snack time, when every opportunity is used constructively through the use of symbols and signing to encourage children to communicate with adults and each other. There is, however, some inconsistency in staff signing skills, and the very wide range of ability in the group sometimes causes difficulties when the highest attainers can dominate proceedings. Other opportunities are used well on a one to one basis to build effectively on this work. Children's appreciation of books is encouraged through good story telling, but the limited range of available books around the class impacts on the benefits of this activity across the day. Not enough time is spent on structured pre-reading and writing activities to develop these skills appropriately.
42. Through engaging in counting games and rhymes and learning to order and sort objects in their play activities, children make satisfactory progress in the area of **mathematical development**. The well rehearsed routines of the calendar at the start of the day and the developing use of visual timetables help pupils to make sense of the passing of time. Children learn about shapes and colours through a range of opportunities, including motivating activities on the computer.
43. Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop **knowledge and understanding of the world** around them. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but is limited in its range and challenge. The children have too few opportunities for wide ranging free choice activities which would enable them to learn by doing, whilst exploring the potential of, for example construction toys and sand and water. Children's ICT skills are satisfactory, but they do not have free access to a sufficiently engaging range of programmes throughout the day. The children are enthusiastic learners who show good levels of interest in the activities they are offered.
44. The **physical development** of children is good. They use the equipment in the outside play area well, learning to climb, ride bikes and steer toy cars. Opportunities for physical play are supplemented in well structured sessions in the hall and soft play room, when children are encouraged to explore the potential of their bodies to move around spaces and when using the wide range of good quality equipment. Playing with a parachute helps them to learn to co-operate with others and predict events. Staff are very supportive and encouraging in these sessions, helping children to overcome their anxieties and celebrating their achievements when they succeed. Opportunities to consolidate independence and language skills are also well used.
45. Children's **creative development** is satisfactory overall. Music and singing form a natural part of many sessions and children engage enthusiastically in action songs. They explore a variety of materials to make marks on paper and are encouraged to use toys creatively. There is, though, a rather formal approach to providing these opportunities and they are not freely available throughout the day to encourage the children to engage with them. Similarly, there are limited opportunities to use dressing up clothes, musical instruments or imaginative play areas on a 'free choice' basis.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Inspectors were able to see lessons across all ages as well as looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning.

The provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of a co-ordinator means there is no strategic plan for the monitoring of language, literacy and communication across the school.
- Post-16 students make very good progress in literacy skills.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening skills in all age-ranges.
- Assessment and marking are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is inadequate.
- There has not been enough improvement overall since the last inspection.

Commentary

46. Pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and communicating because of the plentiful opportunities for questioning and discussion during lessons in all subjects. Teachers also ensure that everyone is given the appropriate amount of time to answer. They prompt when necessary and encourage pupils and students to think for themselves. Consequently, they gain in confidence in expressing their views and showing what they know and understand. They are beginning to learn to listen to the teacher and each other. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties learn to communicate through signs and symbols and make good progress in the use of the Picture Exchange System (PECS) to make their needs known. Across all the age ranges teachers use focussed questioning, have warm relationships with pupils and students, which results in good attitudes to work. This means that pupils and students are becoming more confident communicators. This particularly applies to the oldest students who are at ease with each other, and visitors, and are able to cope in a number of settings. The majority of classroom support assistants are effective in encouraging pupils to communicate, and are improving their own skills in the use of signing and PECS.
47. Pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress in reading. The lack of an English coordinator means that there is no specific whole school reading policy, which results in each class teacher following their own plans independently. Very few examples of younger pupils reading aloud in lessons were seen, although in one lesson pupils were working on vowel sounds. Pupils and students with profound and multiple difficulties take pleasure in the enlarged pictures shown on a revolving screen as the teacher reads the story. This is a good example of how technology is being used imaginatively by teachers to provide experiences of literacy for those with the most specific needs. However, this is not always the case. Since work is not sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of the individual, lower and higher attaining pupils in some classes are not consistently provided with suitably modified or challenging materials to enable them to gain the reading skills appropriate to their abilities. The opposite is true for students at post 16, many of whom make very good progress. This is because the work is explicitly planned to their individual needs, good use is made of ICT, and expectations of what they can achieve are very high. Higher attaining students enjoy reading back their work at the end of lessons and are fluent and confident. However, there is no accredited English course available to them, which limits challenge and opportunities for them to extend their skills and gain a recognised qualification. Although there is a good supply and range of books in each classroom, the current lack of a library is restricting pupils' opportunities to develop library skills and undertake independent research. In other subjects some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to read, which impacts on their overall achievement.

48. There is satisfactory achievement in writing for pupils by Year 6 and Year 11. It is good for students post 16. Scrutiny of the work of younger pupils shows there is not a systematic approach to the teaching of early writing skills. As pupils get older, opportunities for them to continue developing their skills are frequently missed. The school has not identified how 'writing' can be promoted through other subjects and teachers frequently accept single sentence answers from pupils who are capable of writing in more detail. Students at post 16 produce good standards of written work, and higher attaining students, in particular, write full sentences and paragraphs creatively and unaided. This is because they are encouraged to be confident in their abilities and are given sufficient time and opportunities to improve their skills. The use of computers for word processing is good and examples of students' work show that they have a good understanding of basic punctuation. Lower attaining students make good use of symbols software by which they can reproduce their work. Good examples were seen of self-correction of spelling mistakes.
49. Teaching and learning is good at the Foundation Stage, satisfactory for older pupils between Years 6 and 11 and very good for students post 16. A significant strength of very good teaching is the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of his students. Lessons are planned to provide work that is very specific to individual needs with resources, tasks and supervision organised to ensure very good learning outcomes for each student. Very good use is made of ICT. For younger pupils, where lessons are not so successful, teaching is less stimulating and modification of tasks tends to be through the supervision and intervention of the teaching assistants. There is a heavy reliance on worksheets and a lack of stimulating resources to provide more challenging work for higher attainers. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties work one to one, or in very small groups, on tasks which are well chosen to match their individual needs. For example, one teaching assistant worked with a pupil on communication of response to sensory stimuli, recording the outcomes that would inform future planning.
50. Procedures to check and record what pupils have learned are unsatisfactory. Work scrutinised was not marked or assessed and there was no indication of how pupils' are informed of their progress. Assessment overall is unsatisfactory because, although data on levels of ability is collected, the information gathered is not strategically linked to planning, either for individual learning or the needs of the curriculum as a whole.
51. There is currently no leadership and management of the subject, which is unsatisfactory. Communications, literacy and language are key elements of the curriculum, but are not co-ordinated and this is having a significant impact on the achievement of pupils. New working arrangements for the speech and language therapist in school will require coordination for her work to be most effectively used. There is no subject action plan outlining costs and priorities for development over the year, and no indication as to how the subject will be monitored across the whole school. Many of these weaknesses were evident at the time of the last inspection and, consequently, progress has been unsatisfactory since then.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

This provision is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a clear, structured plan of how different subjects can be used as a vehicle to promote literacy and language and there is no monitoring of the development of pupils' literacy skills throughout the curriculum.

Modern foreign languages / French

Two lessons were observed and planning and limited records were scrutinised.

Provision for French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy using conversational French.
- There is insufficient use of assessment to gauge pupils' progress and inform planning for the next stage of learning.

Commentary

52. Pupils in the secondary and post 16 classes make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. They engage confidently in greetings activities and demonstrate a readiness to experiment with trying out new words and phrases when exploring a new topic, such as hobbies and holidays. The teacher, who is not a subject specialist, is enthusiastic about the subject and brings it alive with the imaginative use of puppets, games and music. She uses humour productively and provides an empathetic approach to encouraging reluctant learners to overcome their natural reticence to using a foreign language. She works effectively with teaching assistants, who also develop their own skills as a result.
53. The simple curriculum framework provides a range of appropriate activities to extend pupils' knowledge and use of the language and to develop an understanding of French culture. Learning is consolidated during occasional French days in the school and on visits to local continental markets. The teacher's philosophy is that pupils should enjoy the subject and be ready and able to speak in response to questions. She is successful on both counts, but is not so effective in developing a more spontaneous un-drilled use of the language, and does not use the introduction and end of lesson plenary as effectively as she could to signal what pupils will be learning and review their progress. Pupils nonetheless benefit from their learning experiences and clearly develop confidence and social skills as a result of their lessons.
54. The teacher recognises the weaknesses in assessment and is aware of the need to develop a more rigorous approach to monitoring pupils' individual performance and to use this information more productively to focus her planning of work over time and in individual lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Inspectors were able to see lessons across all ages as well as looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning.

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a positive learning atmosphere in lessons because pupils are managed well and want to learn.
- Students in post 16 and pupils with profound and complex difficulties benefit from good teaching.
- The subject has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- Assessment is not used rigorously enough to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- The curriculum is well balanced, giving pupils a varied mathematical diet.
- Insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to practise and apply their numeracy skills in other lessons.

Commentary

55. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory in Years 1 to 11. Lesson routines follow the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy adapted to the needs of the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and both teachers and support staff know the difficulties that particular pupils may have, so that extra attention can be given when it is required. Most pupils enjoy mathematics because teachers manage behaviour well and pupils

work hard. Relationships are good and play a positive role in maintaining good behaviour and the quality of learning in mathematics. Adults take every opportunity to praise and encourage success. At the end of each lesson the teacher takes time to tell the pupils how well they have completed their tasks, so that they may identify the progress they are making, though recording these small steps is less rigorous. In post 16 and the class for profound and complex difficulties, teaching and learning are very good and pupils achieve well. Lessons are organised well and teachers use their personality and resources well to gain the attention of the pupils. Much is expected of the pupils at post 16 as they are encouraged to work independently, concentrating on their task and trying to find their own answers to the problem. Although no ICT was seen in use, there is an appropriate range of software which may be used to engage and motivate the pupils, or to support pupils in their independent learning.

56. The school has adopted a published scheme to assist in judging attainment. From the evidence it would appear that there is not yet consistency in judging levels and that further moderating experience is required. The school makes regular assessments and the information gained is used to generate targets, but these are not shared with the pupils often enough to be fully embedded and to help pupils make gains in their learning that they can understand.
57. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a wide range of mathematical experiences. There is an appropriate emphasis on the use of number, but pupils also have good opportunities to learn about shape and measure and also to collect, organize and interpret data. Teachers use real resources well, for example, when teaching about money, they use legal tender. Correct mathematical language and good use of support staff make things clearer to pupils. Teachers do not insist on too much recording and use of worksheets, preferring to encourage pupils to talk about what they are doing to reinforce their learning. However, homework is not set regularly, nor chosen carefully to help the pupils consolidate their understanding and promote independent learning when they are not at school.
58. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator acknowledges that the unsettled senior management over the past few years has adversely affected curriculum co-ordination. There has been no subject audit or subject development plan generated. For similar reasons no monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken by the subject co-ordinator. There is no medium term planning framework in place, though the very good knowledge that teachers have of the pupils enables an appropriately structured and varied curriculum to be delivered.

Numeracy across the curriculum

59. Too many learning opportunities are missed because of the absence of consistent practice in planning for developing pupils' mathematical skills in the lessons for other subjects. In a few lessons, teachers help reinforce numeracy skills, but this is done spontaneously and is not pre-planned. For example, pupils weigh ingredients in food technology and measure in design and technology. In physical education though, opportunities are missed to count jumps on a trampoline or measure distance when throwing a sorbo javelin.

SCIENCE

Inspectors were able to see lessons across all ages, as well as looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning.

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good because teachers plan well and provide a good level of challenge, based on their informal knowledge of pupils.
- Teaching and learning for pupils with profound and complex difficulties is very good.

- Pupil's observations and recording skills are good.
- There is no co-ordination of planning, nor monitoring of what pupils are being taught.
- Pupil's achievements are not accurately assessed or systematically tracked.
- There is no specialist room for science.
- There is no accreditation of pupils learning at the end of Year 11.

Commentary

60. Pupils achieve well in science because teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well based on their knowledge of the pupils and work provides a good level of challenge. Despite the lack of a specialist science room, pupils have good opportunities to undertake investigations. These they pursue with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils in the nursery and Reception class showed concentrated interest in the changes taking place when mixing substances. Pupils in Years to -6 were keen to experiment with dissolving substances and made careful observations. Students post 16 have good opportunities to experience the practical applications of science through their college visits and in developing their independence skills.
61. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas through carefully structured questioning and prompts. Language development is good. Scientific terms are introduced and used accurately by staff and pupils. The written recording of results and observation is well developed in Years 2 to 6 and is impressive in Years 7 to 11, where the highest attaining pupils were writing their observations in a series of sentences. However, the use of signing and symbols is inconsistent. Teaching and learning for pupils with multiple sensory impairments is very good. The work is very well structured and resourced to enable them to develop an awareness of their surroundings and to make responses. These are accurately recorded and used to plan.
62. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Staff know their pupils well and, consequently, are able to plan effectively. However, there is no consistent approach to tracking pupil's achievements so the detail of their progress in science is not captured. Where assessment has taken place, this underestimates pupil's abilities and has not been effectively checked for accuracy.
63. Schemes of work are not in place and the curriculum is left to the individual teacher to design. Despite this, pupils receive a satisfactory balance of the different aspects of science. Accreditation for science is provided for students post 16, but not for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is unsatisfactory. The lack of a science room was noted in the previous inspection. No action has been taken to address this. Accommodation for science is unsatisfactory and teachers struggle to compensate for this.
64. Both leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Whilst the co-ordinator for science has a very clear vision for the subject and wants to be able to develop that vision across the school, she has not been enabled to fulfil her role beyond having informal discussions with other teachers. The science policy is currently under review and strategic planning is limited to the organisation of resources. There is no monitoring of teaching or learning and, consequently no structured guidance to staff on how to teach different aspects of the subject.
65. Whilst standards have been maintained in this subject since the last inspection, there remain a number of important issues that have not been dealt with. Science continues to be well taught, but the issues around assessment and accommodation have not been addressed, schemes of work are no longer in place and there is no co-ordination of science beyond organising resources.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Whilst only one discrete lesson was observed, inspectors saw the use of ICT in other lessons and were able to look at evidence of the use of the technology over time.

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- There has been an improvement in equipment and each class now has at least two computers, but they are not all networked, and so lack flexibility.
- Staff are confident in their use of technology and good use is made of digital photography as a teaching aid and to record achievement.

Commentary

66. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory. Most teachers are confident in the way they use computers and other devices, such as digital cameras, to support learning. In the one Year 6 lesson observed, activities appropriate to the pupils' needs were offered and pupils were making satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils were using the letters of the keyboard, space bar and shift or 'caps lock' key to write their name while others were using the 'arrows' or mouse to control a car moving around an obstacle course. A lower attaining pupil was using a touch screen to initiate colour changes and patterns, increasing his ability to hold attention. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy computer work, although some are inclined to rush their approach in their enthusiasm. In supervised situations, they are careful in their use of equipment and will wait patiently for help. When they understand their work, pupils often become absorbed in what they are doing and will concentrate for extended periods. They are keen to do well and succeed at the activity. Achievement is satisfactory.
67. There has been considerable investment in resources over the last two years. Each class now has at least two computers and the post 16 classroom is equipped with an interactive white board that is used extensively. Another room is to be fitted with one by the start of the next academic year. Each classroom has at least one printer and one touch screen. The co-ordinator has made good efforts to organise the subject and to maximise the use of the hardware available. However, there is no computer suite and the classroom computers are not networked, so that software resources have to be loaded many times. These resources include word processing, power point and graphic programmes and educational games. Internet access is readily available, but restricted. The use of ICT for pupils with profound and complex difficulties is satisfactory. The sensory room is used well and equipment such as bubble tubes, fibre optic and moving lights help to stimulate movement in pupils with the most severe disabilities. Teachers and support assistants make extensive use of a symbol vocabulary as an aid to communication.
68. The management of ICT is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject and has ensured that staff are well trained. He makes a strong contribution to training, so that most staff are now knowledgeable about the range of software and communication devices that are used in the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are confident in their use of ICT. Teachers use ICT extensively for recording pupils' achievements. Digital cameras are often employed so that photographs may be used to help pupils learn or remember details from earlier lessons, particularly those of visits out of school. For example, pupils with profound and complex difficulties will answer their name at registration by choosing their photograph from a small selection of those of pupils in the class. Teachers also use ICT for planning, setting targets and recording achievement. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection; however, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not yet firmly established.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. ICT is used satisfactorily by teachers, both in delivering the lesson and as a tool for recording pupils' successes, and by pupils as an aid to learning. For example, touch screens are used by pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties to enable them to make connections between cause and effect. In English, a graphics programme enables pupils to link a word with a picture, and in mathematics, a range of appropriate software was seen in use.

HUMANITIES

As inspectors were able to observe only one lesson of history and none in geography, insufficient evidence was gained to support an overall judgement on provision. A limited amount of the pupils' work was sampled for both subjects.

70. A scrutiny of the subjects' documents shows that pupils experience a satisfactory range of topics relevant to each subject. It is clear from the planning that there is satisfactory organisation and modification of the National Curriculum to reflect the changing needs and abilities of all pupils. In the lesson observed, good use was made of interesting and very relevant artefacts, which had a positive effect on learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Inspectors saw two lessons that spanned most age groups. Work and displays were analysed.

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiasm and commitment of the subject leader.
- The lack of depth of teachers' knowledge of faiths other than Christianity.
- The effective use of artefacts and practical experiences in lessons and visits.
- The lack of visual displays to promote understanding and awareness of faiths other than Christianity.

Commentary

71. The achievement of pupils is good, underpinned by the subject leader's commitment, good subject knowledge and use of interesting artefacts. She makes the lessons enjoyable through a range of practical activities, which support pupils' learning well. Pupils are developing an understanding of the Christian religion. They remember their visit to the local church, identifying different artefacts such as stained glass windows, candles and kneeling cushions from photographs they took during the visit. There are good examples of pupils working collaboratively, not only with each other but also with parents and staff to produce collages of the three major Christian festivals. Good opportunities are provided for them to participate in making moral choices. For example, in a lesson on the teachings of Buddha the key element in the story concerned selflessness and sharing. Higher attaining pupils quickly understood that the story was about 'greedy' behaviour and were able to join in a practical activity to share out sweets fairly.
72. Elements of spirituality are apparent in different activities across the school, not just in religious education lessons and assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to be quiet and reflective and good use is made of candles as a focus for moments of spirituality. Consequently, most pupils have a good awareness of appropriate responses to situations that they may not always understand fully. In the classroom, they show interest and listen to stories attentively.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning of the curriculum and individual lesson plans has improved and contributes well to pupils' moral development by providing opportunities for discussion of moral issues. Religious education makes a good contribution to citizenship and personal and social development by encouraging pupils to share, be kind to and think of others. However, although planning includes other faiths and beliefs with which pupils are not familiar, knowledge and understanding of other religions remains an area of development, as identified in the previous inspection. There is little evidence around the school of visual displays to heighten pupils' awareness of other major faiths. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in each of art and design, design and technology and music and it was not, therefore possible to make judgements about provision. However, samples and photographs of pupils work and some records of their achievements and teachers' planning provided sufficient evidence to support appropriate comment.

Art and design

74. Pupils experience a wide range of techniques and materials to make marks, express their ideas and produce artwork, often of good quality. Some of these pieces are well displayed to celebrate their worth and stimulate others to emulate them. The school previously had a specific area for art, but it is now undertaken in each classroom. Without a detailed scheme to guide them, teachers vary in their ability to provide stimulating challenges and standards therefore vary across the school. The lack of structured assessment also limits teachers' ability to plan activities based on their evaluation of pupils' needs and abilities. The best work is, however, imaginative and stimulating, exemplified by a series of colour montages using a combination of scraps of digital photographs taken by pupils, found elements from magazines, wallpaper samples and rubbings to produce single colour pieces of impressive quality. Once the co-ordinator is in a position to fulfil her brief properly, such quality should gradually spread across the school.

Design and technology

75. There is a strong focus on food technology, because the school has good facilities for this aspect of the subject. Consequently, each class plans, shops for and cooks a meal each week, and this activity is used appropriately to cover the planning making and evaluating focus of the subject. There is, however no provision for working with resistant materials. As with art and design, standards vary across the school, but are satisfactory overall. There are, however, some good examples of challenging activities like making Easter bonnets and plant pots, weaving and designing and producing T shirt makeovers to extend the range of the subject's activities. Many of the opportunities that post 16 students experience, both on site and further a field, also incorporate appropriate designing and making challenges. The school recognises that construction and control activities are an important development area. There is some isolated good practice in planning and assessment, incorporating good quality self assessment by pupils, but overall this aspect requires much development work as does the curriculum structure.

Music

76. The good standards in this subject reported during the last inspection have been sustained. Evidence from the one lesson seen, pupils singing during assembly and musical elements incorporated in other curriculum areas, point to pupils enjoying the experience and, together with their teachers, rising to the high expectations of the specialist co-ordinator. The subject is well resourced with good quality instruments and recorded materials. Sadly, there is no longer a music room to house them, but they are well used throughout the school. Music continues to make a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal, social and cultural development. It provides them with opportunities to experience the work of visiting musicians and participate with pupils from other schools in festivals within the region.

Physical education

Inspectors were able to see lessons taught to pupils across all ages, as well as looking at teachers' planning.

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good, overall.
- Pupils' learning is very effectively enriched through links with other schools and outdoor education opportunities.
- Planning is not always effective to ensure the best use of learning opportunities.

Commentary

77. Achievement in physical education is good. Overall, teaching is good. It is generally well matched to the different needs and abilities of the pupils, so that their learning is also good. In the best lessons, it is very well planned and organised, with very clear learning goals. Pupils are provided with opportunities to work individually, in groups, and in teams. In this way the activities contribute well to pupils' personal and social skills. Older pupils are given the opportunity to use exercise machines similar to those found in private gyms or health clubs. Pupils understand the importance of the warm-up session at the beginning of the lesson. During the main part of the lesson they benefit from good quality coaching and receive frequent reinforcement through encouragement and praise. For pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties, therapeutic exercises and tasks designed by the visiting physiotherapist are provided which link very well with their physical targets. Teamwork between staff and their relationship with pupils also supports achievement. Less successful teaching suffers from a lack of planning for the teaching of skills, or how tasks could be altered to enable each pupil to make the best of their abilities, and teaching assistants are not well briefed or deployed to provide appropriate individualised support.

78. Within timetabled lessons, the school provides for all aspects of the physical education curriculum. Pupils also have the opportunity to attend lunchtime clubs. School teams play football and quick cricket against other similar schools. Pupils participate in county special school events such as athletics and cross country running. Physical education lessons are further enhanced by dance activities such as the dance festival held in Lincoln. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Inspectors were able to see lessons taught to pupils across all ages as well as looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning for pupils in nursery and reception classes and for students post 16 are very good.
- Planning and assessment for pupils with multiple sensory impairments is very good.
- Learning opportunities are planned for and well used across the curriculum.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.
- The existing sex and relationships and drugs education policies are not being properly delivered.

Commentary

79. Teaching and learning are good overall, resulting in good achievement. Teaching and learning are very good in nursery and Reception, for post 16 students and for pupils with profound and complex difficulties, resulting in very good achievement for these groups.
80. Good planning and teaching for personal, social and health education and citizenship is threaded through all subjects and through lunch and social times. Staff are very effective at developing pupils' personal and social awareness through giving them opportunities to choose, express opinions and ideas and take responsibility for classroom routines. Health education is satisfactory. Pupils in nursery and Reception have made good progress in identifying body parts. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 discuss fitness and healthy life styles. This is well linked to their science and physical education lessons. Pupils are taught sensible routines for personal hygiene and have individual programmes to develop their independence when eating.
81. Well designed programmes support pupils' independence skills, increasing the challenge and complexity, in line with age and ability. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 regularly shop for and cook their own meals. Post 16 students attend college and develop their social and independence skills, accrediting these through the ASDAN framework. Very carefully planned teaching, supported by well trained teaching assistants, has enabled pupils with profound and complex difficulties to develop their awareness of the world around them and to express preferences. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their understanding of citizenship through their contributions to school routines and the development of the school's grounds and regular visits into the local community.
82. Assessment is unsatisfactory. There is no scheme of work and no system to track accurately pupil's progress. Pupils' progress on their individual targets is not regularly monitored and their levels of achievement are not assessed consistently. However, the progress of pupils with profound and complex difficulties is very well recorded and used effectively to plan.
83. The curriculum for sex and relationships and drug education is unsatisfactory. The programmes of work have not been agreed and the delivery of this important area of the curriculum is left to individual teachers to plan and resource.
84. Both leadership and management are unsatisfactory and the good quality of the provision rests solely on the effectiveness of individual teacher's planning and the good implementation of that planning with the help of teaching assistants. The decision of the governors to temporarily release the co-ordinator to a job outside the school has resulted in unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The sex and relationships and drugs education policies are well written, but have not yet been implemented. They have no strategic planning associated with them. The role of the co-ordinator in monitoring the curriculum has not been developed and there are no guidelines for staff on delivering or assessing the curriculum.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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