

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WINDSOR SCHOOL

Clacton-on-Sea

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115471

Headteacher: Mrs J Hodges

Lead inspector: Alan Tattersall

Dates of inspection: 24th-27th May 2004

Inspection number: 259021

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:	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils:	3-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	68
School address:	Ogilvie House 114 Holland Road Clacton-on-Sea
Postcode:	CO15 6HF
Telephone number:	01255 424412
Fax number:	01255 475938
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Rowlen
Date of previous inspection:	12/01/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Windsor School has 68 boys and girls aged between three and 19 who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A few pupils have the additional special educational needs of hearing and visual impairment or autistic spectrum disorders. Sixty-five pupils have statements of special educational needs and three are undergoing assessment. Just over half the pupils are boys. There are four children at the foundation stage. As would be expected, attainment on entry is very low as a consequence of pupils' special educational needs. One pupil is from an ethnic minority group and there are no pupils who have English as an additional language. A quarter of pupils require a free school meal and the same number are in public care, which is above average for similar schools. Pupils come mainly from Clacton-on-Sea and the surrounding area. The school occupies a refurbished part of a very large building and has the capacity for expansion. The school received an Investors in People award in 2001 and a School Achievement Award and School Curriculum Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20466	Alan Tattersall	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, modern foreign languages and English as an additional language.
32676	Nick Power	Lay inspector	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English, geography, history, personal social and health education and citizenship and special educational needs.
31914	Colette Gribble	Team inspector	Science, art and design, music and religious education.
18035	Roy Earnshaw	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology and design and technology.
21081	Charles Hackett	Team inspector	Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Windsor School is a **very good** school with **excellent** features. An excellent ethos for learning has been established. Very good teaching has ensured that pupils achieve very well. Very effective leadership and management ensures that the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior managers and governing body, provides outstanding and visionary leadership for the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes, interest in learning and relationships with each other and staff.
- There are exceptionally good arrangements to enrich pupils' learning through activities outside the school day.
- Pupils achieve very well in communicating and reading and the school plans to improve pupils' current good standards in writing.
- Students at post-sixteen are prepared very well for life beyond school.
- Systems of assessment are very good for most subjects and the school plans appropriately to ensure the same standards for all subjects.
- The buildings and grounds provide very well for pupils' learning however, the library is too small.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Leadership and management have improved and because of this many of the other aspects of the school's work have been developed very well. All subjects now provide very good guidance as to how they should be taught and a good time allocation exists for the teaching of mathematics. Careers education and guidance has been established very well. Senior managers check very well the quality of teaching. There has been an excellent improvement to the way that the arrival and departure of transport is managed.

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	Very good
Year 6	Very good	Very good
Year 9	Very good	Very good
Year 11	Very good	Very good
Year 13	Very good	Very good

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

Pupils' achievements are **very good**. The few pupils who have additional special educational needs achieve as well as others because of the very effective support they receive. Children in the foundation stage achieve very well. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics, science information and communication technology, music and art. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed. They achieve very well in reading and the school is planning for pupils to improve upon their good progress in writing. Pupils achieve very well in physical education where participation in MOVE (mobility opportunities via education) enhances achievement very well. Pupils make very good progress in discrete lessons and during the day in personal, social and health education and citizenship. The personal development of pupils including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Children in the foundation stage are supported very effectively and consequently they settle very well in to school when they start. Students receive very good support to prepare them for leaving school. Pupils have exceptionally good attitudes to

learning and get on extremely well with one another and adults in school. Behaviour is **very good**. Attendance is good and pupils arrive at school promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. The school provides a very broad and relevant curriculum that is enriched extremely well by lunchtime clubs and residential trips. Accommodation is very good and the outstanding quality of the grounds and play areas demonstrates the very high regard the school has for pupils. The school has identified the library for development to improve access for all pupils. Resources for learning are very good and are used very effectively by staff to make lessons exciting and interesting. There are very good links with the community, schools and colleges to enhance pupils' learning and social development. The quality of teaching and learning is **very good** and this reflects the headteacher's success in leading improvements. Staff have embraced opportunities to improve their effectiveness with enthusiasm and they work as an excellent team. Teachers know pupils very well and assess their achievements rigorously in most subjects. The school intends to improve assessment further in all subjects. The level of care and welfare provided is very good and does much to promote pupils' self esteem, particularly through the excellent arrangements for specialists and other professionals to provide pupils with support. The partnership the school has established with parents and carers is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and ensures that the school continues to improve. The deputy headteacher, department heads and subject leaders provide the support to ensure that leadership and management are **very good**. Senior managers provide an outstanding example to inspire others to follow. Governance of the school is very good. Governors are committed to the aims of the school and very supportive of staff and their work. They play a key role in supporting the headteacher in developing the school, challenging and endorsing her decisions. Together they are very well aware of the few areas for improvement identified during the inspection. Finance is managed very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school. They feel the school is very well managed, staff care for their children very well and that they receive very effective guidance to support their children. Pupils are very happy and proud of their school and are delighted to show visitors their achievements. They enjoy participating in many activities and contribute ideas enthusiastically to the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to maintain the current very effective education it provides the school should:

- Continue to develop pupils' skills in recording their work. *
- Ensure that the very good assessment provided for most subjects is available in all subjects. *
- Provide a suitable library. *

* *These are already included in the school improvement plan.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of boys and girls throughout the school is **very good**. The standards judged against 'p' level (nationally recognised measurement of small steps in learning) and for several pupils, who are judged against national curriculum attainment targets, show that standards are very good in relation to pupils' special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning for pupils' individual needs ensures that they make very good progress towards the targets set for them.
- Pupils make very good progress in English overall but the school has plans for pupils to develop better skills in writing.
- Pupils consolidate and improve important skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT during the day.
- Parents applaud the school's success in ensuring pupils' progress in personal development.
- Pupils and students achieve very well in their accredited courses.

Commentary

1. The school has had a very strong focus on improving pupils' achievement since the last inspection and has succeeded in making a very good improvement. More recently, the very good records of pupils' achievements over the past two years shows that pupils have made very good progress when judged against their prior learning. Current assessments and inspection findings confirm that achievement is very good. Children in the foundation stage make very good gains overall in the areas of learning. The small number of pupils who are undergoing assessment for a statement of special educational needs make very good progress since they are fully included in the teachers planning for lessons. There is no difference in achievement of the high proportion of pupils who are in public care. All different groups of pupils, including the few who have the additional special educational needs of hearing, vision or autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) achieve as well as the remainder of pupils in the school because they receive support that is very well matched to their needs.
2. The achievement of pupils and students in lessons is very good and closely matches the very high standards of teaching. Staff have encouraged pupils to have a positive attitude to learning and this complements the excellent relationships between pupils and staff to ensure full participation in lessons. The exemplary teamwork evident between staff in lessons ensures that pupils receive the support they require to make progress. This is demonstrated through tasks that are planned to enable pupils to make progress against the very good targets set for them to learn. On a few occasions, pupils' learning is exceptional. In these lessons, pupils quickly remember how much they had enjoyed previous lessons and quickly become enthusiastically involved to learn more. This was evident in a music lesson for pupils in Years 9 to 11. They understood what they would learn in the lesson at the start and since they had listened so well, they were able to follow instructions. Consequently, they achieved all the challenging targets for them to learn in the lesson to distinguish between long and short sounds.
3. The school has a very clear idea of how well pupils are achieving because of the impressive improvements made to the way that pupils' achievements are assessed. Results shows that pupils achieve very well in English. Communication is a strong feature of most lessons and is the means of engaging pupils effectively in their work, often through the use of signs, gestures and speech devices to achieve very well. Similarly, pupils achieve very well in reading through the use of well chosen activities such as using large books and the provision of symbols. The school's close attention to detail in assessments is backed up by teachers' skilled everyday practice and knowledge of pupils. This has demonstrated that pupils have more difficulty in

learning to write. Although writing skills are good overall, there are very good plans for the school to determine ways to improve skills in writing even further, and other appropriate means for pupils of all of ability to record their work.

4. Pupils make progress in several different aspects of learning during lessons. One example is that in music pupils may also learn about colour. There is a particularly strong emphasis in lessons for pupils to improve their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT) during many lessons throughout the week. Pupils consolidate their very good achievement in numeracy for instance, through counting in songs and during class introductions and break times, matching drinks to the pupils' present. In a dance lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 11, pupils made excellent progress in mathematics when learning about equal spacing and timing.
5. Parents value very highly the school's success in ensuring pupils achieve very well in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. One parent was highly delighted by her child's success in learning the personal skills to be able to move away from home, as well as to participate in further education on leaving school. Pupils achieve very well through a comprehensive series of lessons that promote their PSHE. They also achieve very well during the large time allocation for pupils to learn at other times of the day such as in the early morning, breaks and lunchtime. For instance, pupils, who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, progress very well in their plans for feeding, and higher attaining pupils learn important skills in working together and supporting each other.
6. Pupils and students cover a significant amount of work for their ASDAN*, Towards Independence and Transition Challenge accreditation. Students' success in developing personal and social skills through attending college and other further education provision for part of the week has laid a very strong foundation for their life beyond school.

ASDAN, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network.*

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **excellent** and behaviour is **very good**. They progress **very well** in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has encouraged pupils to develop extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils respond very well to the guidance they receive to behave appropriately.
- Pupils get on extremely well with each other and staff.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Commentary

7. Pupil's attitudes and behaviour have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were judged as good overall. They have exceptionally good attitudes to learning. Pupils need little persuasion to throw themselves wholeheartedly into their work. This is a significant factor in the very good progress that pupils make. Pupils' and students' very positive responses to questionnaires showed how much they value work and like coming to school. They enjoy lessons and are keen to draw visitors' attention to their many achievements displayed throughout the school. Pupils and students volunteer for many additional activities and participate with equal enthusiasm.
8. Staff and pupils demonstrate mutual respect for each other. Pupils are consistently asked to reflect on their own behaviour and on what they have done during the day to help others. Their values and behaviour are open, honest and considerate. The school has a very effective policy to encourage good behaviour and considerable efforts have been made in improving and

sharing individual behaviour management plans. These are largely very successful in improving behaviour. Pupils' very positive responses to effective behaviour management strategies ensure they behave very well and contribute to a school that is free from any kind of bullying, racism or harassment.

9. As pupils are so enthusiastic about school, there is an excellent ethos for learning. Pupils and students have responded positively to the examples that staff set for working together and the respect given to others. Consequently, relationships in the school community are excellent. Pupils are extremely considerate and take care to include each other in activities and be sensitive to individual needs. An example observed was of a pupil passing a plate of sandwiches and giving the choice to a pupil who could not move to reach them. Concern for others is a key aim throughout the school and, during the inspection, pupils were seen helping younger children at break-times and helping other pupils in lessons, in their movement around the school and at mealtimes. Pupils and students demonstrate very high self-esteem and self-worth as they show examples of their work to visitors.

10. The school has worked very positively to create opportunities for social, spiritual, moral and cultural development since the last inspection. The pupil's moral and social development is fostered by their remarkable tolerance and understanding of the needs of others and their keenness to celebrate each other's efforts. Pupils enjoy a consistency of expectation and approval leading them to have confidence and enjoyment in learning. Individual success is celebrated in all classrooms and during assemblies. Pupils develop appropriate social skills and the outcomes are evident in students' very effective preparation to move on to the next stage of their life when they leave. Art and music, including impressive performances, and dance make a strong contribution to promoting pupils' cultural development. Schemes of work, and attractive and colourful wall displays demonstrate the wide range of opportunities for pupils to celebrate different cultures and learn about Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Japanese and Chinese religions. Pupils develop a knowledge of the world through stories, art, drama and food for instance, and through reading the book "*Tumpa, Tumpa*" about Ghana. Pupils show concern for others through raising money for Water Aid.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	11.4	School data :	0.2
National data:	10.8	National data:	0.6

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

11. Since pupils enjoy school, they report that they are keen to attend and do not want to miss a day. As a result, nearly all absences are accounted for through medical reasons and there are very few unauthorised absences. Most pupils arrive by organised transport and this is usually prompt. It is extremely positive that no pupils have been excluded from school in recent years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The educational provision of the school is **very good**. The school provides a **very good** curriculum that includes excellent arrangements to enrich pupils learning beyond lessons. The quality of teaching is **very good**, as is the quality of care that pupils' receive. The school has established a **very effective** partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' planning meets pupils' needs very well.
- There is excellent teamwork between teachers and assistants.
- Learning resources, including those for ICT are used very effectively in lessons.
- Systems of assessment provide a very effective basis for teachers to plan for pupils to make more progress.

Commentary

12. There has been a very good improvement to the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. A significant factor has been the staff enthusiasm to make positive changes in line with their very high expectations for pupils to achieve. Teachers plan and organise their lessons very thoroughly so that all pupils are usually fully involved in the lesson. Through such rigorous planning, they successfully meet the needs of all pupils including the few who have the additional special educational needs of hearing and vision or ASD. They also plan much more effectively to promote pupils' personal and social development. There has been a very good improvement to the planning for when pupils arrive in the morning. Teachers use the early morning session effectively to settle pupils into school, tend to personal needs and provide pupils who are able with the opportunity to pursue independent and purposeful study and be involved in whole class 'social time.'
13. Teachers work with teaching assistants exceptionally well to meet pupils' needs. There is an enthusiasm to ensure that pupils progress as well as they can. Because all adults in class know pupils so well they are able to challenge pupils effectively to work towards and achieve their targets for learning. Each member of the teaching team knows what they have to do during lessons and this enables them to target support efficiently to pupils. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 4 to 6. All staff provided excellent role models of participation during 'story time' to introduce the lesson about the reading book 'The Rainbow Fish'. This immediately led to similarly enthusiastic responses from pupils. Staff were very well prepared for the lesson and knew what each pupil should be doing throughout and this enabled them to select resources to enhance the story for each pupil to stimulate an interest in what would happen next.
14. A strength of many lessons is the way that teachers provide pupils with learning resources that bring lessons to life and hold their attention. During music for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, the introduction of many red objects during singing reinforced pupils' interest and early understanding of colour. This was heightened more when they observed a red jelly wobbling on the plate during a song about it and anticipated eating it. The regular use of a very good range of ICT in lessons enhances the support for pupils' very well. For pupils up to Year 3, the familiarity in using electronic toy animals to accompany the reading book makes the lessons lively. Pupils develop an awareness of the sequence of the story through excited anticipation of the next toy they will operate.
15. The assessment of pupils' work is very good overall. Because teachers know pupils so well they set very appropriate learning targets in their individual education plans and use them when planning and organising lessons in all subjects. The very good assessment procedures in most subjects complement teachers' knowledge and they plan effectively to match the work to pupils' abilities. In English for instance, staff assess pupils progress against very small steps in learning. Consequently, they can plan for pupils to make very good progress. This detailed knowledge enables teachers to set targets that are challenging and pupils' progress towards them can be measured accurately. This also happens for instance, in mathematics and science where pupils' progress is recorded and evaluated very well. Work is in hand in subjects such as

religious education and humanities to make sure that the very high standards of recording information are consistent throughout the curriculum. This reflects the school's aim to continue to improve the assessment in all subjects as a means of raising achievement further.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4.5%)	28 (64 %)	12 (27%)	2 (4.5 %)	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. Care should be exercised when interpreting percentages since one lesson represents more than 2%.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils is **very good**. There is an **excellent** range of activities to enrich pupils' learning. Staffing, accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are exceptionally good arrangements to extend pupils' learning beyond the school day.
- The school has responded very well to embrace national initiatives to improve what pupils learn.
- Pupils who have additional special educational needs are very well provided for.
- The MOVE curriculum contributes very well to promoting pupils' physical development.
- Very good accommodation and resources provide very well for pupils overall although library facilities require improvement.

Commentary

16. Planning for what all pupils and students should learn during their time in school is very good. There are extremely high quality clubs and visits that take place during lunchtime and after school. When students attend their residential outdoor activity centres, these contribute to the excellent opportunities that enrich the curriculum for all. As many students as possible attend these regular courses at special centres. Those that cannot attend receive well-organised alternative local visits to places of interest that meet their needs equally well. It is evident from videos, photographs and from discussions with staff and pupils that pupils benefit significantly from the very broad range of experiences available within the curriculum.
17. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been incorporated very well into planning in order to improve standards in English and mathematics. This is evident in the way that introductions to lessons are planned very effectively so that pupils are confident in what they will be learning. In science, ICT, music and religious education, the very good quality of the information available for teachers on which to base their planning has been a strong factor in establishing very high standards for pupils. All other subjects are providing a very good range of learning opportunities that are contributing to pupils' success in school and recognised through national awards. In subjects such as music and art, dance and movement, pupils demonstrate very good skills and enjoyment. This is because of the high quality of opportunities they receive.
18. The arrangements are very good to enable the few pupils and students who have additional special educational needs to gain equal access to the curriculum to participate fully. Throughout the school teachers plan tasks to meet the individual needs of those pupils who have visual and hearing impairment and ASD. Teachers follow the advice of visiting specialists for hearing and vision to tailor tasks very well. There is effective use of techniques such as the picture exchange communication system to support pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Teachers and teaching assistants implement the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related

Communication-handicapped Children) system to ensure that pupils understand what they will do through the use of a 'visual timetable'. Pupils' needs are reviewed very well and the school draws on advice when required for instance, to support pupils who have challenging behaviour.

19. The "MOVE" programme (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) exemplifies the very good collaboration with other professionals. Pupils achieve excellent results through its systematic, well planned and monitored approach to developing pupils' physical abilities. Parents have been able to see the enormous benefit of the "MOVE" programme through the progress their children have made. For example, one father was very pleased when his child was able to walk into the school for the first time and shortly afterwards was able to walk up the aisle at a family wedding.
20. The accommodation and resources are very good overall. There are a good number of teaching staff and teaching assistants and this reflects the headteacher's priority to ensure effective provision. Arrangements for staff development are very good to ensure that expertise continues to improve. The impressive building has been converted very well to provide high quality rooms, particularly for specialist subjects such as art. The school is spacious and this enables pupils to move around the corridors well. The rooms provided for students at post-16 are excellent since they are age appropriate. There is much internal space available to make further improvements and there are plans to continue to upgrade the covered 'verandas', which are very good additions to the space available for students. The school rightly judges that the library is too small and is taking appropriate action to make improvements. Resources for learning are very good and provide very well for pupils' needs to enable them to achieve very well. The resources provided to meet pupils' special educational needs such as mobility and technological aids are particularly noteworthy. There has been a very good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures the care and welfare of its pupils very well. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very high quality care for pupils.
- The school supports pupils' personal needs very well.
- Pupils receive very good information and encouragement for their achievements.
- Staff welcome pupils' views.
- Pupils and students receive very good guidance for the future.

Commentary

21. The governors take an active role in ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for. A governor has attended training in child protection so that they are fully informed about current issues. Governors regularly inspect the premises and a governor has specific responsibility for health and safety matters. They contributed very well to the school's excellent improvements to the management of the arrival and departure of school transport which has improved their health and safety considerably.
22. All staff know their pupils very well. As a result they understand their needs and know what to do to ensure their time in school is very well used. Pupils have excellent relationships with the staff at the school and are confident that any concerns they have will be addressed whoever they communicate them to. This is because the staff make great efforts to build successful relationships with the pupils in their care. This, together with established procedures ensures that their welfare is managed very well.
23. The school has succeeded in fulfilling its key aim of giving pupils their entitlement to respect and dignity. The atmosphere in the school is always calm and purposeful. This helps pupils make

the most of their time in school. Teachers and other staff rarely miss opportunities to help and guide pupils' personal development. Parents have also reinforced this positive picture in commenting that "everyone respects and helps each other in school." Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers as part of a classroom "family" of care and support for all pupils. Parents are very confident that the school takes very good care of their children.

24. The school has a very good system to celebrate pupils' achievements. Teachers keep a very careful track of the achievement of pupils and celebrate success through stickers, certificates and assemblies. There is a weekly and termly achievement award for post-16 students and governors' annual achievement awards for pupils who have made the most progress throughout the year. Pupils are nominated by staff and their peers prior to selection by the governors of an overall winner. The school praises all achievements and this means that pupils feel valued and enjoy coming to school and learning. The yearly reports provide very good information for pupils and their parents about their progress.
25. The school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views very well. This is evident in the success achieved in gaining their opinion on school developments through the school council. They feel well involved in the school, for example, they were consulted and contributed to drawing up school rules. Pupils and students are keen to attend lunchtime clubs because they chose the clubs that are organised. Those who are able, contribute regularly to the review of their progress towards meeting their IEP targets and the setting of new ones.
26. Pupils and students receive very good guidance and support for the future. The very high quality of provision of vocational education, careers education and accredited courses are areas that have improved very well since the last inspection. There are very good links with other agencies in the community to provide additional advice and support for pupils and students. Their contribution to care, careers, work experience and behaviour plans are very valuable when planning the next stage for learning and life beyond school. They receive regular and effective careers education through Connexions. The way that the curriculum is planned ensures that there is a strong emphasis in preparing pupils to attend college and other similar establishments part-time to gain experience through support from school staff prior to leaving school. Work experience prepares pupils very well and this is enhanced significantly through discussions about 'transition planning' so that their views about the future are recorded. This preparation for life after school is a very good improvement since the last inspection when it was a 'key issue' for the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the help they receive.
- The school keeps parents very well informed.
- The school involves other agencies exceptionally well through the school's nurse.
- Educational links with other schools are very good.
- The school has established very effective links with the community.

Commentary

27. Parents value what the school does for their children. "The progress of my child has been amazing" and "We are so lucky to have such a caring school" are typical examples of their written comments in support of the Ofsted questionnaire. The school regularly consults parents through questionnaires. For example, a recent survey sought views on the school's annual report to parents. The school is now carefully considering how these views will help to improve the quality of the reports.

28. Parents receive very good information about how pupils are studying and how well they are achieving. Regular newsletters spell out clearly what pupils are doing and important events that will take place. They provide useful additional information such as the timing of parent support meetings and coffee mornings for parents to discuss mutual problems and concerns. Annual reports are very informative and the information provided prior to annual reviews provides parents with a very good opportunity to contribute to the meeting. Home-school books are very helpful. They provide positive information about pupils' achievements as well as the notification of important events or medical information. Parents value the books and the diligent way that the school keeps them informed. Parents feel that staff are very sensitive to their children's needs
29. The school's links with other agencies such as medical, social and community services are excellent and co-ordinated by the school's nurse. She unobtrusively ensures that pupils are able to make the best use of the services that are available to them. She provides training and advice to other schools, colleges and agencies so that the links that exist are effective and worthwhile for all involved. The school, in a joint venture with social services, organises a forum to inform and support those leaving the further education department. Many organisations attend this event which provides valuable information to pupils, parents and carers about the options available to them when the pupils leave the Windsor School. The school also provides a comprehensive information pack for pupils to refer to and works hard to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life beyond school.
30. The school actively seeks opportunities to include their pupils in other schools through regular visits to take part in lessons. In addition, the school provides training for other schools which allows their pupils to benefit fully from their time in mainstream schools. The links with Clacton County High School are particularly successful in enhancing art, drama and music projects. Students have very good opportunities to attend further education courses for part of the week. These links are very effective and significantly enhance the school's intention to include local people in the life of the school and pupils in schools in the community.
31. The school has developed very worthwhile links with the community. The large number of visitors to school and the many cheques it receives for school improvement underlines how very highly it is regarded locally. Many lessons are enhanced by visitors from the surrounding area. The school uses the environment very well for visits to enhance pupils' learning and the use of local sports and swimming facilities goes a long way to making up for deficiencies in provision for physical education on site.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The work of the governors is **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership.
- Senior managers have succeeded very well in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff work outstandingly well together.
- There are very good systems and strategies in place for the self-evaluation of the school's work.
- Governors offer very good support to the school and make a major contribution to its success.
- Staff receive very high quality and relevant training.
- Finance is managed very well.

Commentary

32. The headteacher's clear vision for how the school should develop is shared by staff and governors. She is very sensitive to the needs and demands on her staff while maintaining a continuous drive towards school improvement. The commitment she shows to raising standards in all aspects of the school's work has contributed to the maintenance and improvement of the quality of education offered since the previous inspection. Although the school is involved in consultations regarding its development as a "New Model Special School", she has successfully kept the main focus on promoting the needs and achievement of the current population whilst still rising to the challenge of planning for possible future major developments.
33. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have worked effectively to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning have improved very well since the last inspection. This has been achieved chiefly through improvements to the way that teachers plan lessons and the use of very effective systems of assessment. Senior managers have monitored the quality of teaching and worked very effectively with colleagues to encourage, for instance, better planning.
34. The school has very effective management systems in place and managers at all levels are very committed to the objectives of the school. The deputy headteacher shares significant responsibilities with the headteacher and together with department and subject leaders they form a very strong team. The way they operate provides an excellent example to others. This is a strong factor in the way that staff work as exceptionally good teams in each class to share responsibility for promoting pupils' learning and welfare. The shared responsibility for making improvements has been a significant factor in ensuring that the school has few weaknesses and these are already known and being acted upon.
35. A strength of the school is the way it evaluates how well it is performing and takes the required action. This is an important factor in the continued improvement and in raising of standards. Target setting for whole school achievement and the checking of pupils' progress towards these targets are very well established. The use of 'p' levels are very well embedded as a measure of performance and provide the means for the school to judge whole-school progress year on year. However, the school supplements this information with the very good informal knowledge of pupils' achievements. This has confirmed for instance, that there is a need to improve pupils' skills in writing. Regular reviews of the school's achievement in partnership with the local education authority has provided very good challenge for the school to continue to refer to outside bodies to judge the effectiveness of improvement.
36. Governance of the school is very good. Through their committees and regular visits, they know the school very well and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. The breadth and extent of experience of the governors is a real strength and they contribute very actively to school improvements and initiatives where they can. For example, the literacy governor visits regularly to discuss this important area of the curriculum. Governors question the headteacher, the senior management team and subject leaders, and discuss issues carefully before reaching decisions. Extensive records are kept of the regular formal and informal visits that governors make to the school. Their involvement is a very positive influence on the way the school has improved.
37. Arrangements for staff development are very good and performance management is well established. Staff development needs are closely linked to the school improvement plan and are identified through the performance management cycle. An example of this is the success in improving staff expertise to provide signing support for pupils. Support staff and governors are appropriately included in whole school training. New staff undertake an effective programme of induction to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities. However, not all of these procedures have been formally written down to ensure consistency in induction.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1102277	Balance from previous year	267437
Total expenditure	905285	Balance carried forward to the next	196991
Expenditure per pupil	14601		

38. Financial planning is very good and the principles of sound management closely underpin the school's financial arrangements, such as in the way it consults and compares to gain best value in spending. There is a very large sum carried forward to the next year. However, much of this sum is already allocated to school improvements that are in the development plan but have not yet been implemented. There is also prudent consideration and consequent contingency planning for the outcome of the consultation regarding the development of a new model school. One consequence is that the school holds considerable funding to improve the school library but has delayed the major building project because of the consultation.

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 provision for children in the foundation stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses across the areas of learning

- Teaching and learning is very good overall.
- Staff work as a very effective team to ensure that children participate very well in lessons.
- Resources stimulate learning very well.
- Children settle in very well to school because of the very effective routines in place.
- Children learn a very good range of skills in lessons.
- There are effective partnerships with other agencies to support children.
- Assessment ensures that children receive work matched to their needs.

Commentary

39. There are only four children attending full time so a judgement is made about their overall achievement, teaching and learning rather than in each of the required areas of learning. Evidence shows that children make very good progress during their time in the foundation stage and achieve very well. This is because they are taught very well alongside pupils up to Year 3 and follow a suitable curriculum for their age. A judgement cannot be made about improvement since the last inspection because there was only one part-time child under the age of five in school at that time. However, it is clear that the school has established a department that is very well managed to ensure that it provides children with a very good start to school.
40. A feature of most lessons is the effective encouragement given to children to make their needs known. This is particularly the case in lessons to promote **communication, language and literacy**. Teachers plan very well for children to progress towards the required early learning goals in each part of the subject. The staff team are very well briefed for their part in the lessons and so they are alert for the smallest sign of recognition from pupils such as a look or showing a reaction when they hear a sound. They praise children for their effort and encourage more. Staff use signing well to encourage communication.
41. During reading, children are making small steps towards understanding the story in 'Move Over'. The class re-enacts the story about animals choosing a bed through the very effective use of toys and models to accompany the big book. Each activity requires very close co-operation from staff to intervene at the correct time, passing a model or encouraging a physical action such as demonstrating how to operate a switch. There are good opportunities for children to write for instance, to make marks on paper in response to the story about animals. Children have regular lessons to begin to understand number and make progress in **mathematical development**. They responded particularly well to a lesson on big and small. Staff noted their achievement through eye movements and expression as they compared brick towers that they had made. Staff have been emphasising important vocabulary such as big, small, more and less. Higher attaining children trace around different shoes with help and responded very well to praise and demonstrated progress by choosing between big and small.
42. Children develop confidence when they start school through gradually spending more time in class. Children who are attending during a period of assessment make progress in line with other children because they receive the support they require to learn that is carefully matched to their needs. Very effective classroom routines make a strong contribution to promoting

children's **personal, social and emotional development**. For instance, when children arrive in the morning, staff prepare them for class quickly and as each is ready, they start to work at tasks such as developing skills to feed themselves breakfast. The home school books provide a very effective link with parents and carers as staff are made aware of relevant information such as missing sleep the previous night. This ensures that in everything that they do, staff take children's requirements fully into account. As children play with familiar toys or work with staff for instance, on early reading skills, they become settled and ready for the day.

43. In **creative development**, children explore materials, colour and texture through interesting resources. There is a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs. For instance, staff are extremely alert to ensuring that children have eye contact. They all succeed in touching and feeling materials enhanced by a light shining on each object and respond to the staff encouragement 'can you touch the light?' Further selection of materials is enhanced by the effective use of sound and smell.
44. There are very effective links for children to make progress in different areas of learning through investigating. For example, they visit the beach to learn about their own environment and community. On return they examine seaside artefacts to increase their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Children use a very good range of switches and toys to learn cause and effect as part of a class story. They operate electronic toy animals, pressing a switch or squeezing a toy to make a response. This is good preparation for children to develop early skills in using ICT as they move on to use computers and make choices by touching the screen.
45. Teaching and learning are very good. There is a very good partnership with other agencies to support children. This is particularly effective in enabling children to participate in MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) with therapy support as part of the very effective provision for their **physical development**. There are excellent features to this work. Children have made very good progress in understanding how they should make an effort to move during the sessions. For instance, they begin to walk independently in the excellent frames provided, or may learn to sit unsupported. Throughout all of the work, there is very good planning for pupils to make progress against assessed needs and encouragement and praise is given for the smallest but significant achievement. Children with profound and multiple learning difficulties benefit very well from hydrotherapy, relaxing and becoming confident in the water.
46. Teachers and assistants know children very well and this enables them to provide guidance for further improvement. This informal knowledge is enhanced very well by the comprehensive systems of assessment. Records of the class progress are appropriately based on the whole-school system of measuring small steps in learning through 'p' levels. It is particularly good that there is then a check against how well children are progressing towards the required early learning goals of the foundation stage curriculum to ensure that there is additional information for children undergoing assessment. This also provides the information for staff to prepare children for moving on.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 4 AND POST-16.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

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

47. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are proud of their achievements in learning French. They are very keen to show visitors the video of their lessons in a previous term. They refer to the excellent display of photographs to explain how they designed clothes for a French fashion show. After several lessons, including rehearsal, they performed a fashion show for the remainder of the school and

parents. It is significantly positive that they can remember so much of the vocabulary to describe their articles of clothing. Their books contain very good examples of the opportunities provided for them to write words in French and the encouragement given to pupils to record their achievement. Higher attaining pupils have opportunities to write sentences such as ' I am wearing...'

48. Very good leadership and management has ensured that planning is imaginative, ensuring that pupils follow interesting subjects that supports their learning of significant vocabulary during their time in school. The teacher adapts the lessons well to the school's locality for instance, pupils visit the local snack bar and refer to it as the café. The topic of food has provided another successful theme in previous years and pupils revise and remember through labelling the food on display during their more recent fashion show. Pupils enjoy continuing to use French throughout the year through greeting each other and counting or naming colours in French.

English

Lessons were seen in all year groups.

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students are very keen to learn.
 - Progress is checked very well and demonstrates very good progress in reading.
 - Communication is well supported by the consistent use of symbols, pictures, photographs and objects throughout the school.
 - Although achievement in writing is good, opportunities are missed to develop this skill across the curriculum.
 - Leadership in English is very good.
 - Literacy is taught very well in lessons throughout the day.
49. Pupils and students throughout the school achieve very well in English because of the very strong emphasis the school places on developing communication and literacy skills across the curriculum. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Planning identifies individual needs, and lessons are very well organised and stimulating. Support staff know the pupils and students very well and, with the class teachers, very effectively ensure that all pupils and students are engaged in learning. Consequently pupils enjoy lessons and want to learn more. The few pupils who have the additional special educational needs of hearing, vision or ASD achieve very well in communication, speaking and listening and reading skills, and make good progress in developing their writing. Pupils and students display very good attitudes towards all aspects of the subject.
50. Pupils' achievements are monitored very effectively and this shows that they achieve very well in reading. The teaching of reading is very good and as a consequence pupils develop an interest in books and stories. Higher attaining pupils and students learn to recognise their name, the names of everyday objects and basic everyday words. They know how to use pictures in books to find out what is happening in the story. Teachers ensure that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have very good opportunities to develop early reading skills.
51. The school's provision for communication is very good. Higher attaining pupils with severe learning difficulties can hold a conversation and respond appropriately to questions from adults and other pupils. Pupils learn to use signs and symbols very effectively to communicate with others. The speech therapists work very well with staff and individual pupils and students to support those with difficulties in communication. Pupils who require help to make their needs known use a range of suitable equipment, such as specialist speech output devices, to help them to communicate. Communication targets from pupils' individual education plans are well

linked to all planning, which ensures that the needs of pupils and students are always met very well.

52. Pupils and students make good progress in developing their writing skills. However, the rate of progress in this area is not as rapid as it is in other aspects of the subject because opportunities are missed to promote writing across the curriculum, especially for higher attaining pupils. Resources are used effectively by teachers to encourage pupils to explore different materials and to hold and let go of objects. Throughout the school, pupils' and students independence in writing is well promoted by their use of a computer program that produces symbols.
53. English is very well led and managed by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good. The very good development plan for English appropriately identifies the need to provide more opportunities to promote writing in the subject. There is also recognition that although the accommodation provides very well for pupils overall, the library does not meet pupils' needs regarding access and size and a range of appropriate options are being considered to rectify this. Resources are generally very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Literacy is very well supported in other subjects by the consistent use of symbols, pictures, photographs and objects throughout the school. All staff know each pupil's literacy targets and these are displayed well in each class. Teachers use the targets very effectively when planning lessons and this contributes very well to pupils' very good progress overall.

MATHEMATICS

Lessons were observed in all year groups.

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning and teachers planning ensures that pupils make very good progress.
- Staff encourage pupils to be very interested in learning and develop very high standards of behaviour.
- Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support, reinforce and extend learning.
- Learning resources make lessons interesting and support pupils' learning.
- Teachers plan very well to promote pupils' skills in numeracy throughout the day.

Commentary

55. Teaching and learning is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress in drawing up guidance for how teachers should plan lessons in the subject. In addition, the headteacher has ensured that there is sufficient time allocated to mathematics within the timetable and a very good scheme of work provided that is closely linked to pupils' realistic individual targets. Evidence of the impact of these initiatives was observed in a very well planned lesson for pupils in Years 6 to 8. They made very good progress in using and applying the mathematics skills they had learnt to sort and match objects in terms of big and small. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and the few pupils who have additional special educational needs made very good progress experiencing numbers through counting songs about frogs and ducks. In another lesson for students at post-16, they made good progress in applying number in real life practical situations, using computers to work with money and to shop.

56. Lessons are planned very imaginatively and this ensures that pupils are fully engaged and try hard to improve. Lessons often work through a theme, which is reinforced through the use of pupils' senses such as singing number songs and rhymes or focussing on colours illuminated by a spotlight. Progress is identified through staff evaluation and the very good knowledge of pupils and the very good systems of assessment. Information on individual and group progress is carefully analysed and used to plan for pupils to improve further. Students at post -16 make very good progress following ASDAN accreditation, which includes learning important skills in using the computer during mathematics lessons. The management of pupils' behaviour is very effective and is very well supported by teaching assistants working to detailed individual behaviour management plans. Staff in each classroom work as a team with teaching assistants and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning and care needs.
57. The subject leader provides very strong leadership and management. This has included a very good integration of the National Numeracy Strategy into lessons and the consequent very good planning of lessons. She has worked hard in analysing results of pupils' attainment and guiding staff in setting and meeting individual targets for pupils to learn
58. A very positive feature of the whole school approach is that each classroom has very good resources to support pupils learning. This ensures that pupils have access to the apparatus that they require to inspire them to participate and try hard. This was evident in a lesson for pupils up, to Year 4 to select big and small interesting resources such as colourful interlocking large bricks. There is very effective planning to ensure that pupils have access to suitable information and communication technology. This is particularly successful in the provision of BIGMacks* to enable pupils to communicate through recorded speech. The increasing use of interactive whiteboards is proving very useful in enabling the teacher to demonstrate concepts such as computation. One of the challenges of the subject is how pupils can be supported to independently record their work. ICT has a key role in meeting this challenge. However, there is currently some difficulty in providing appropriate software for older pupils that matches their age and interest but also caters for their needs.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. There is a whole school approach to the teaching of mathematics and teachers throughout the school plan very well for pupils to develop mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils were observed practising their skills in using and applying mathematics by reinforcing number sequences in a physical education lesson and in applying their key mathematical knowledge in design and technology through measuring quantities.

Example of outstanding practice

A lesson planned by the teacher for pupils in Years 8 to 11 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties to learn mathematics through a dance lesson taught by a mainstream teacher.

The visiting teacher's introduction to the dance lesson demonstrates that pupils have made excellent progress in repeating their movements in their dance from the previous week. Most have remembered that each sequence is based on counting and they take turns to demonstrate each step as they count in 4s and 8s by snapping fingers and slapping thighs. There is a very strong team spirit and pupils help each other, particularly the more able pupils guiding the less able and this encourages pupils to remember. There is a very high regard for inclusion and pupils in wheelchairs are as fully involved in demonstrating how they spin in circles or ensure that the circle of pupils is equally spread. The pupils are carried along by the excitement of the lesson, building up sequences of original moves to make the whole, spurred on by reminders of the success of their previous production of Joseph's Dream Coat as they listen to the music. Aims are achieved for pupils to remember and build upon the sequence of the dance as part of their learning objectives in shape and space in mathematics. They have made rapid progress in both mathematics and dance and will perform to an audience after their next lesson. Pupils will continue to study shape and space and counting in 4s and 8s in their numeracy lessons.

BIGMack - a simple, one message communication device, which allows a single message of up to 20 seconds to be recorded and played back.*

SCIENCE

Three lessons were observed, pupil's work scrutinised and discussions held.

The provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management ensures very good standards.
- Teachers plan lessons very well and set very good targets for pupils.
- Resources for learning are used very effectively.
- Pupils derive great pleasure in learning science.
- Pupils receive very good support to help them learn in lessons.
- There are missed opportunities in lessons for pupils to record their work.

Commentary

60. The very experienced and enthusiastic subject leader provides very good guidance and support for teachers. Her very good subject knowledge has been the basis for the very high quality schemes of work and topics that are covered. As a result of her guidance, teachers feel confident when planning lessons. Consequently, there has been a very good improvement in science since the last inspection.
61. Teachers set challenging, but realistic targets for pupils and ensure that they plan to include opportunities for pupils to use interesting resources that excite and encourage them to participate. Experiment with sounds and textures is an example of such participation. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties of all ages work very well alongside more able pupils. Since tasks are very well matched to pupils' needs, they demonstrate involvement and enjoyment through their success.
62. There are very good resources available in school. The excellent science room enables pupils to participate in experiments. The resource boxes for each class provide very high quality equipment and these contribute very well to making lessons more stimulating. This was evident when pupils in Year 9 and older pupils were intrigued by the model of an ear and keen to ask questions. This challenged them to communicate their views and feelings. They learn how to name each part in what could have been a complex lesson to absorb. Nevertheless, previous work on sounds and listening skills has prepared them very well for more extended scientific discovery. As a result, they show very good achievement in the lesson.
63. The very good staffing levels in lessons ensures very good support for all pupils and therefore opportunities are seized to make sure that pupils understand the topics. As a result, there are always very positive responses from pupils. Pupils enjoy lessons immensely and show delight when they or their fellow pupils are successful in their work. This is encouraged by the consistent praise from staff for achievements and progress towards targets for learning.
64. There is very effective planning to deepen pupils' understanding through reinforcement of learning in science in other lessons. This happens for instance, when younger pupils study living things at the seaside and older pupils do gardening. Science lessons always plan to promote learning in other important areas such as speaking and listening, communicating with signs and symbols. The well-chosen ICT programmes are used effectively to enable all pupils to take a full part. There is a strong emphasis on pupils using scientific vocabulary. However, there are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to record their work in lessons to remind them of previous work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Three discrete lessons were observed and several other lessons observed where ICT was used.

The provision in ICT is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management has ensured that teachers plan lessons very well.
- Lessons are interesting.
- There is a growing use of computers to improve pupils' recording skills.
- Pupils benefit from very good resources for learning.
- Teachers plan very well for pupils to use computers throughout the day.

Commentary

65. The subject leader's drive and enthusiasm in developing this subject has significantly contributed to the very good progress made since the last inspection. Staff have received effective training via the New Opportunities Fund and are confident in using equipment. Lessons are planned more effectively to teach pupils skills and this is an important factor in ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is very good. In a lesson observed, pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties in the class for pupils representing most age groups made very good progress against the individual targets set for them in the subject. A strength in the lesson was the teacher's planning for the matching of the tasks to individual needs including the few who have the additional special educational needs of hearing, vision or ASD. This meant that staff worked with pupils to observe their reactions. In such a case, pupils reach out to touch a clear plastic globe to make it light up and smile with the success.
66. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 made very good progress following a range of absorbing tasks that were chosen very effectively to meet their needs. They gained in skills such as using the mouse because staff were alert to guide and encourage pupils, demonstrating very well when required. Higher attaining pupils were motivated very well to find information from the Internet for their task to find news about 'Eastenders'. Lower attaining pupils used an interactive whiteboard to sequence pictures in preparation for a description of the order of dressing.
67. Pupils have very good opportunities to use computers to help them with their learning and in particular to be able to develop some independence in using and developing literacy skills. The use of computer-printed symbols enables pupils to take an independent part in reading instructions and recording outcomes. The school is aware of the challenge that pupils face in recording their work in different subjects throughout the day and teachers are gradually making more use of computers to support this.
68. There has been very good acquisition of new equipment and technology to support the curriculum including the interactive white boards. Every class is connected to the Internet and this allows them to send e-mails. The very good provision of equipment supports very well the comprehensive scheme of work. This, in turn, guides teachers to plan to meet pupils' individual objectives. Instructions for planning lessons also ensure that teachers frequently include planning for pupils to use ICT when they teach lessons throughout the day. Digital cameras are used very well to record achievement. There is extensive use of the Internet to download resources to enhance lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop independence in using computers in the early morning as the class get ready for lessons. The school has ensured that there is a strong emphasis on pupils using computers frequently by identifying times on the timetable where ICT

will be used. This frequently occurs for instance, in English, mathematics and science. Pupils often use BIGMacks to enable them to communicate in lessons. There is very good use of interactive whiteboards to enhance lessons such as in science for pupils in Years 9 to 11 so that the class can observe the large screen to explore how the human ear works.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in religious education since lessons took place outside of the inspection period. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of work, displays, videos, photographs and discussions with staff and pupils. One lesson was seen in both geography and history and work scrutinised and discussions held. However judgements are not made regarding achievement, teaching and learning or provision.

Geography and history.

70. In history and geography, planning is good. Pupils receive very good opportunities to learn about their locality and the wider world. The curriculum is enriched very well by 'special' days, for example, about the history of dance, which make the topics memorable for pupils and students throughout the school. In planning for history, teachers ensure that those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have opportunities to develop an understanding of chronology through experiencing daily and weekly routines. They reinforce these learning experiences through the use of objects of reference and photographs to provide a concrete or pictorial indication of the order of events.
71. In geography, pupils explore geographical themes. Pupils look at changing weather conditions and become familiar with moving about in the school environment. There are good systems to record pupils' progress and the school is planning appropriately to improve upon these in order to show more effectively pupils' small steps in learning. Pupils undertake many visits in the locality and this help them to appreciate their environment and culture. Those up to Year 3 visited the nearby coast and, on return, looked at seaside artefacts to deepen their understanding. Pupils develop their knowledge of the locality through visitors to school as well as visits. The visit of the local fire engine was fascinating to pupils in Years 6 to 8. They were highly motivated to climb aboard and examine the special clothing. This ensured that all pupils, including those with additional special needs such as ASD, participated very well.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject has ensured very high standards.
- There are very good links with the community to enhance pupils' knowledge.
- Although good, there are plans to further improve the assessment of religious education.

Commentary

72. Pupils are achieving very well in religious education because the subject leader is very effective. She teaches all classes and plans lessons to ensure that the school follows the locally agreed syllabus in a very structured manner. As a result, pupils develop a wide knowledge including studying several world religions. This represents very good progress since the last inspection.
73. Pupils from Years 3, 9 and 11 show exceptional confidence when talking, gesturing and signing about their participation in a Hindu wedding. They refer to very good quality photographs and artefacts displayed in the corridor and classrooms. They can compare the differences between Hinduism and Christianity very well. They point very carefully to specific details in photographs

from their work on a Hindu wedding and then show they recognise the contrast in photographs from the church wedding of a member of staff.

74. Teachers are now finding better ways to make assessment of the subject more effective. They know very well what levels pupils achieve, but want to record this more effectively in the future. They are being helped to do this by the very high quality of resources available such as digital and video cameras to record events and these provide very good references for pupils for work done in previous weeks. The spacious classrooms provide very effectively for the role playing of the religious celebrations of world faiths. There are excellent arrangements for visitors and leaders from many religious groups such as Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Christians to attend school to share their experiences with pupils. The familiarity that pupils develop contributes very well to their development of tolerance and awareness of different world faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Three lessons were observed in design and technology, work scrutinised and discussions held. Judgements are not made about provision, achievement, teaching and learning.

Design and technology

Commentary

75. In the two lessons observed in resistant materials there was a strong link with art. Teaching and learning was very good. Pupils responded with enjoyment to the imaginatively planned multi-sensory lessons. In both lessons, pupils investigated a range of different materials through touch, taste and smell. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 used painting, printing and tie dyeing techniques. Teaching assistants worked enthusiastically to ensure that all pupils participated.
76. The subject is very well led and managed and this has endured that a well-planned scheme of work is in place, which recognises the contribution of food technology to pupils developing independence skills. Resources for learning are very good and pupils benefit from a large purpose-built, bright and well-equipped food technology room. One food technology lesson was observed for Further Education students during the inspection. The students were following a 'Home Management' course, which involved them setting their own programme. Students prepared food and recognised the characteristics of familiar products when following recipes in this well planned and practical lesson. Lessons make an important contribution to encouraging pupils and students to become independent.

Art and Design

Lessons were seen in all year groups.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and guides pupils to produce very high standards of work.
- There are many exciting artistic events and visits to promote pleasure and appreciation.
- Management of the subject is very good and has ensured pupils receive very good opportunities to study art.

Commentary

77. Teachers plan lessons and activities very well. This is very evident from the displays throughout the school that demonstrate that pupils' achievement in art and design is at a very high level. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. There are examples of very high quality

designs, prints, paintings and artefacts decorating every spare space. Lessons are planned very effectively to meet individual needs. Pupils up to Year 3 explore the textures of different materials by selecting them from a 'feely bag'. This helps the lower attaining pupils to select by touch and higher attaining pupils to consider the colour and appearance such as shine as they co-operate to make collages.

78. Pupils take great pleasure in showing visitors their work. They know and appreciate the differences in working with a variety of media. Year 6 pupils have made elaborate and colourful screen-prints and delightedly show their own work as they handle their array of riotous coloured fabrics adorning their classroom. They have attended galleries and taken part in many exhibitions such as 'Artwork' and a 'Children's Art Day'. As a result, pupils value art and show pride in their work.
79. The subject leader has established very effective links with staff at a local art centre. Pupils have benefited from the remarkable light experiences created by the artist Cruz-Diez in his room of light at this centre. It is very evident from lessons and portfolios, that pupils' make very good gains in skills though the very extensive art curriculum. Visitors to school, such as artists in residence have contributed very well to the curriculum. They have inspired all pupils to work on individual projects and extend their knowledge of several well-known artists.

Music

Lessons were seen for pupils up to Year 11.

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of music is excellent.
- Resources make a very important contribution to the subject.
- Pupils achieve very well because of the very high quality teaching.
- All pupils receive the opportunity to participate in music.
- Regular performances and visitors enhance the curriculum very well.

Commentary

80. There is exceptional leadership and management of music. The subject leader regularly checks how effective teaching is across the school. This results in teachers planning very good lessons to challenge pupils to improve a wide range of skills in music. There has been a good improvement in music since the last inspection.
81. Lessons are held in a very good specialist music room. There is a very good range of instruments that pupils enjoy playing. Lessons are fun and appreciated by all pupils. Pupils, including those with additional special educational need in the class of pupils up to Year 6 are soothed and calmed by the tranquil music played by the specialist teacher. They become engrossed by the dulcet tones of the flute and are delighted when they can compose their own very high quality music on drums.
82. Teachers plan lessons very well to ensure that pupils make very good progress in singing. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2, they made very good progress in singing to an audience and by the end of the lesson they completing the round 'London's Burning' with style, panache and humour. It is a delight to witness the absolute concentration of a group of pupils in Years 9 to 11 in an excellent lesson to recognise long and short sounds. Pupils demonstrate impressive listening skills as they take part in circle time, counting beats with exceptional accuracy. They show excellent levels of confidence and also applaud each other's efforts at every opportunity.

83. Teachers ensure that all pupils make equally good progress. This was evident in the class for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties representing most age groups. Pupils are becoming familiar with the songs through the use of well-chosen resources such as passing a mirror to experience what each can see as the staff sing verses with them when they take turns to look at their reflection. Pupils who have additional special educational needs of hearing, vision and with ASD are fully included because the lessons are planned very effectively to meet their needs. For instance, the lesson is timed carefully so that a pupil with ASD can make a contribution to a class song and then withdraw for individual work.
84. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of musical performances and visits from groups and individual musicians. Evidence from pupils' work shows they have performed very well in the musicals 'Grease' and 'Oliver' recently. They clearly love to take part and are confident in their abilities. Their enthusiasm is very apparent in photographs on display around the school.

Physical education.

Lessons were observed in all year groups together with the MOVE programme.

The provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very careful planning and the setting of individual targets enable pupils to achieve very well in a range of activities.
- The curriculum provides very well for pupils' needs.
- Students at post-16 are developing a good understanding of physical education as a leisure activity.
- Physically able pupils have limited opportunities to be involved in competitive games.

Commentary

85. The planning for physical education shows detailed documentation of what activities will be covered as pupils move through the school. These are all very appropriate and give pupils the chance to try a variety of games and sports. For each activity there are individual targets set for pupils that link very closely to their overall targets for physical development. This level of planning ensures that very good attention is given to achievement for each individual pupil and because of this pupils achieve very well. Their progress in swimming is an example of this. Pupils who initially are fearful of entering the water are now happy and confident to splash and move about, often without the close support of staff. Through very effective staff praise, pupils are aware of progress and they are delighted to achieve certificates for their efforts.
86. The well thought out curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities and links very well with physiotherapy and the MOVE programme. Activities include games, gymnastics, dance, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils have gained considerable confidence through their horse riding sessions where many now enjoy riding without the need for adult support alongside them. Their success in a local gymkhana where they achieved a large number of rosettes was a boost to their self-esteem. Through the physical education programme and the consistently very good teaching they receive, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders gain a great deal of understanding of their own body movements and spatial awareness. This is particularly the case in dance; pupils enjoyed considerable success in a recent dance module led by a teacher from the local secondary school. Photographic evidence also shows pupils taking part in a sports day where they took part in running and field events.
87. The curriculum for students at post-16 is very good and provides them with an understanding of the role of sport as a leisure activity. During the inspection a group of students were involved in

a yoga session. They clearly understood the principles of the activity and most could remember the names of different movements. They listen carefully to the teacher and are able to follow her instructions. Although challenged by the stretches and movements shown to them, students were prepared to try their best to achieve them. This was the case with other physical education lessons seen. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils and this provides pupils with the confidence to try new activities. In swimming, pupils kicked and splashed and were not afraid to try something different because of the very positive encouragement given to them by staff.

88. In physical education lessons staff often make good use of music and lighting to change the mood and pace of lessons. This occurs in hydrotherapy pool sessions for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils relax in the water and clearly benefit from the experience. By dimming the lighting this also helped pupils in Years 8 and 9 to realise that it was near to the end of their swimming session and that they were cooling down after more strenuous activities.
89. Although the subject leader for physical education is currently undertaking this work in a temporary capacity, she has maintained the good level of leadership and management recorded at the time of the previous inspection. She has a good overview of what is happening throughout the school and regularly monitors and supports the work of her colleagues. The one element missing within the physical education program is that more physically able pupils have limited opportunities to take part in competitive activities. This is partly because of the small numbers of pupils who fall into this category. However, there are plans in place to increase these opportunities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Lessons were observed in all year groups.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good quality programme of work has been introduced throughout the school.
- Teaching is very good.
- The school is very successful in supporting pupils' learning throughout the day.
- Pupils and students develop skills in the community.
- Leadership and management ensures that there is a consistent approach to planning.

Commentary

90. The achievement of pupils and students is very good and they make very good progress through discrete lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship. The lessons they follow include a wide range of relevant topics, which enable pupils and older students to build on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. For example, younger pupils learn about healthy diets, healthy living and personal hygiene. Older pupils and students have very good opportunities to learn about alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy, contraception, racism and friendship.
91. There is effective assessment and recording and this helps teachers to set clear targets in pupils' individual education plans. Lessons are very well planned and support is provided to promote the development of pupils' social and self-help skills very well. In a very good sex education lesson, students were given the opportunity to question a mother about the development of her 14-month-old toddler who she had brought into school with her. Pupils and students make very good progress towards achieving the targets set out in their individual education plans.

92. There is very effective planning for learning beyond lessons for instance, through the lunchtime programme. This is planned very well to develop pupils' social and communication skills as well as help pupils with targets for feeding themselves. Teachers promote personal issues such as hygiene, with sensitivity and imagination and use appropriate tactile and sensory resources. As a result, pupils respond confidently and achieve very well. Pupils and students are given good opportunities to take responsibility by being representatives on the school council. The school involves all pupils and students in a wide range of visits into the community to enhance their learning in subjects. These contribute very well to the school's emphasis upon pupils developing social skills and understanding citizenship.

93. The subject is led and managed very well. This ensures that there is a consistency in the way that teachers plan discrete lessons and plan to make very effective use of the large allocation of time to promote pupils' PSHE throughout the school day. This has ensured that there has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.

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	2
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
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).

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

