

INSPECTION REPORT

TRINITY SCHOOL

Dagenham, Essex

LEA area: Barking and Dagenham

Unique reference number: 131102

Headteacher: Helena Hardie

Lead inspector: Jacque Cook

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 December 2003

Inspection number: 259025

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	215
School address:	Heathway Dagenham
Postcode:	RM10 7SJ
Telephone number:	020 8270 1601
Fax number:	020 8984 1449
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Glenda Spencer
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large, mixed, day school for 215 pupils aged 3 to 19, which is the only special school in the local education authority. It caters for a broad range of needs, mainly severe learning difficulties (38 per cent), autism (32 per cent) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (13 per cent). As a result, pupils' attainment on entry is usually low or very low. Pupils are predominately (73 per cent) of white British ethnicity. There are also 13 per cent of African and a few pupils of Asian, Caribbean and Chinese ethnicity. Thirty-three pupils (15 per cent) are in the early stages of English language acquisition. As in many special schools a small proportion of pupils join the school during the year.

The school has Beacon status as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative and gained the School Achievement Award in 2001. There is an outreach provision and a recently established Living and Learning Centre for pupils and students with severe autism and very difficult behaviour. Barking and Dagenham, where the school is located, is, according to government statistics, the third worst disadvantaged area in the country and the poorest. However, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than expected at 38 per cent.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Lead inspector	Religious education
9712	Jan Barber	Lay inspector	
2512	Brian Emery	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
18936	Carol Frankl	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	Foundation stage Information and communication technology Spanish English as an additional language
20165	Alan Lemon	Team inspector	Post 16 Music
31963	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	English Art and design Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Trinity is an effective and inclusive school where almost all pupils achieve at least well because the quality of teaching and learning is good and, in a substantial number of lessons, very good or excellent. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, strong senior management team and the very effective governance help to create a very positive ethos and ensure the school is managed well. As a result, weaknesses are systematically dealt with and value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the nursery and reception and pupils in Years 1 to 11 make good and often very good progress in their lessons. Pupils and students attending the Living and Learning Centre make very good progress.
- The achievement of students in the Further Education Centre is only satisfactory because of the effect of weaknesses in their curriculum.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Staff have gained considerable expertise in successfully teaching pupils with special educational needs particularly those with autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- There are very effective partnerships with parents, schools and the local community.

Since the last inspection there have been improvements in all areas of the school, strongly rooted in the very good improvement in leadership and management. Teaching and learning and particularly the expertise of staff have improved very well as have pupils' attitudes and behaviour, their care and guidance and links with parents, other schools and the wider community. Almost all key issues have been successfully tackled. The policy on augmentative communication is applied consistently, appropriate class groupings have been established and personal, social and health education has developed well. There is now an effective assessment system. The curriculum for the early years classes and Years 1 to 11 has improved considerably. There have been improvements in the Further Education Centre particularly in the quality of teaching and in the achievement of students but there remain weaknesses. In spite of the best efforts of the headteacher and governing body there is a continuing, but smaller, shortfall in the provision of therapy for pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. Children in the early years classes achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and physical development because the quality of teaching is very good in these areas of learning. They achieve well in mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

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

The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 11 is good. They achieve well in English, where their reading, writing and communication skills improve well, and in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement and their progress are good in music and physical education, including swimming, throughout the school and in art and design and design and technology in Years 7 to 11 because of

the high quality of the teaching. Very good progress is also made by pupils and students in the Living and Learning Centre. The achievement of students in the Further Education Centre is satisfactory overall. They make good progress in English and in improving their social skills.

Pupils' **personal qualities – including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - are very good** which contributes to their very good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. There is a substantial amount of very good, and, at times, excellent teaching and very few lessons where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Children in the early years classes are taught well overall. Teaching is very good in music and physical education and, in Years 7 to 11, in art and design and design and technology. Pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and skills in these subjects. Expertise in teaching pupils with autism and profound and multiple learning difficulties ensures these pupils learn effectively. The teaching and learning of students in the Further Education Centre are satisfactory overall.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are very good throughout the school. The very strong links developed with parents, schools and the community contribute very well to the good achievement of pupils. While the curriculum is well designed for pupils in the early years classes and in Years 1 to 11, it is not sufficiently developed for students in the Further Education Centre.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good and effective. Developments and improvements are carefully prioritised and planned very well for maximum effect to improve the progress and meet the needs of the pupils. As a result, innovative strategies, such as the formation of the Living and Learning Centre, are successful and work in and with other schools (outreach provision) is of a very high standard. Improvements to the provision in the Further Education Centre have not yet brought it to a satisfactory standard overall. The governing body is very effective and an important part of the monitoring and evaluation processes.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. They are confident about the good quality of teaching, particularly the high expectations of staff, and feel their children are doing well and enjoying school. They are happy to talk with the school if there is a problem. Concerns raised about a lack of speech and language therapy for a number of pupils are accurate. A great deal has been done to alleviate the problem including the school employing its own therapists, but a shortfall remains.

Pupils are pleased with and proud of their school. They enjoy attending, feel they have to work hard but know they can get help when necessary. They particularly enjoy swimming and have made good friends.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Improve the curriculum, leadership and management of the Further Education Centre.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Continue to pursue the provision of speech and language therapy where there is a shortfall.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of children of nursery and reception age and pupils in Years 1 to 11 is good overall. In a number of areas of learning and subjects they achieve very well. Students in the Further Education Centre achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the early years classes make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and physical development.
- Pupils' achievement is very good in music and physical education.
- Pupils gain awards in an increasing number of subjects by the end of Year 11.
- The achievement of pupils and students in the Living and Learning Centre is very good.
- Students' achievements in the Further Education Centre are satisfactory, but not consistent.

Commentary

1. It is difficult to compare one year with the next in terms of pupils' achievements because the groups are not always sufficiently similar. Last year, the following awards were gained:

Year 11 (14 pupils) and Year 10 (14 pupils)	General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)	Entry level	Associated Examining Board Tests	Unit Awards
Science	4			9
Art	2			
English		9		
ICT		8		
Physical education		12		
Numeracy		9 + 9 in Year 10		
Literacy			3 + 8 in Year 10	

Year 13 3 students	Award Scheme and Development Network (ASDAN)
Towards independence	2 gained 6 units 1 gained 4 units

2. This year, as part of the drive to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities, there are indications that the school's confidence in meeting the target that all Year 11 pupils will gain awards is well placed. This is because a great deal of work has established a broader range of subjects specifically designed for the levels of ability in the school. This school target and the other targets for Years 6, 9 and 11 are suitably challenging and the school is so far on track to meet them. Pupils make at least good and often very good progress towards meeting their targets on their individual education plans.
3. Children in the early years classes improve their communication skills very well. They learn to understand signing and what symbols and objects of reference (items that have a special meaning such as a spoon for cooking) mean. Children begin to vocalise and in a number of cases develop speech. They enjoy stories and join in actions, often anticipating refrains. A great deal of emphasis is placed on an orderly community with clear routines and, as a result, children learn to sit with a group and to be aware of others. They are encouraged to make choices and behave appropriately. Staff work closely with children with autism, giving them a

structure using picture schedules so they know what is happening. Swimming and a broad range of structured and unstructured physical activities including music and movement are taught very well and help children to become more confident. Children's play helps them to make good progress in improving their mathematical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Opportunities for exploring sand and water and other materials, using construction toys and dressing up contribute to knowledge and understanding in these areas.

4. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve well and make consistently good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Reading skills develop well through pupils' enjoyment of books. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties particularly respond to stories that are told using sensory resources. Many make purposeful marks on paper and a significant number write sentences independently; others under or overwrite words that have been written for them. Communication skills continue to be taught well and as a result pupils make good progress. Their repertoire of signs and symbols increases and, where appropriate, speech improves well. More able pupils write short paragraphs by the time they are in Year 11. In mathematics, pupils begin to count and to sequence numbers and learn about the properties of shapes. The more able work on solving problems successfully. Many pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties understand the concept of more or less. They learn to match objects and to distinguish between colours. Pupils with autism become skilled in copying and repeating patterns of increasing complexity. Pupils are encouraged to use scientific processes. They form hypotheses by responding to questions such as "what do you think will happen?" and selecting from choices offered. Pupils find out about electricity and heat and explore methods of recycling items.
5. In music and physical education pupils improve their skills very well because of the expertise of the staff and the suitability of the activities that are planned. In Years 7 to 11, pupils achieve very well in art and design and design and technology because the subjects are taught very well by knowledgeable and experienced teachers. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 6. In all other subjects including information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship and religious education pupils' achievements and progress are good.
6. Overall, there is no measurable difference between the achievement of boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language achieve well due to the strong emphasis on teaching language and communication. The high priority given to developing effective strategies to meet the special educational needs of pupils, particularly those with autism and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, has been very effective. As a result, these pupils achieve at least as well as their peers.
7. Pupils and students attending the Living and Learning Centre make very good progress towards meeting the targets in their plans. There is good evidence that significant gains have been made in social and communication skills.
8. The achievement of students in the Further Education Centre is more varied. They do well in areas such as in English, PSHE and citizenship and meal planning, make satisfactory progress in mathematics and religious education and unsatisfactory progress in science, where the course is unsuitable, and at times in ICT because it is hindered by not using up-to-date equipment. Students do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school because the overall plan of the curriculum is, at present, inadequate, following weaknesses in leadership and management in the centre.
9. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is good. Pupils' achievement has improved well, and the achievement of students, which was unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and each other are very good. Staff are very good at fostering pupils' desire to learn and in giving pupils every opportunity to be independent. Behaviour is very good and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good with effective monitoring procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students want to learn.
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school.
- Pupils are given every opportunity to have a voice in the running of the school.
- Pupils are confident and grow in self esteem.

Commentary

Attendance

10. The level of attendance has improved well since the last inspection and unauthorised absence is minimal. The school has good procedures should there be any concerns over attendance or lateness. Pupils arrive on time, although occasionally there are difficulties with the traffic. The low level of unauthorised absence can be attributed to the support of parents and the school's good monitoring procedures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.4	School data	0.5

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

Attitudes and behaviour

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are happy and feel safe. This is because the relationships they have with all the adults in the school are based on high levels of trust, encouragement, respect and care. Pupils that join the school speaking English as an additional language are helped to understand and quickly become as interested and involved in their work as the other pupils. Adults have high expectations of all pupils and provide every opportunity for them to succeed. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties smile at and often laugh with the adults who work with them, listening and responding to what is being said to them.
12. The way pupils are encouraged to behave very well enables them to ignore minor lapses of others. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and behaviour are very good. There are clear rules, rewards and sanctions, which are consistently applied, linked to the 'Golden Rules'. The positive class rules are constantly reinforced so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them in terms of behaviour around the school. The introduction of circle time is a positive contribution to the good behaviour management strategies that are already effective.

Exclusions

13. Pupils are excluded rarely and only in extreme circumstances. Staff try hard to work with pupils experiencing difficulties and meet their needs. In spite of their best efforts and

substantial support, one pupil was excluded on six occasions last year before being transferred to more appropriate provision.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	6	0

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

Personal development

14. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility. These range from fetching and carrying the registers to and from the office, to participation in the newly formed students' and pupils' councils. These are forums where pupils are consulted about changes and improvements they would like to see in the school and, although still in their infancy, promise to be a voice for the students in the future. Pupils with autism learn to return each module of their work to appropriate folders, helping staff keep work together. Students in the Further Education Centre use public transport to get to the shops and, at times often with assistance, select and pay for items needed to prepare their meal. There is a constant emphasis on offering pupils choice, particularly for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties but also for others. For example, children in the early years classes are guided to select what they would like to do and which book they would like to look at. Additionally, pupils are consulted about the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

15. All adults in the school are positive and encouraging with pupils and this has a very good effect on their self esteem. Very supportive relationships throughout the school lead to pupils showing respect for each other. Many instances were noted where pupils looked out for their friends and classmates. In one lesson pupils and the teacher were able to tease each other good naturedly, as part of the learning in the classroom. There is a real sense of fun in many areas of the school community. No evidence was seen of bullying and parents are happy that this is not a problem. Parents commented that they were sure any incidents of bullying would be quickly and effectively addressed.

16. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Assemblies encourage pupils to reflect about their own and others' lives. Good links are made between personal experience, the experience of the school community and the wider world. There are many opportunities for reflection in lessons. Younger pupils feeding fruit to the rabbit are engrossed and wonder at the greeting given by the rabbit! There are good opportunities throughout the school and particularly through the PSHE and citizenship curriculum for pupils to understand and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and grow in confidence through the school. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and opportunities for social development are extensive. There are many trips away from school, including the residential experience to Trewern, participation in the Town Hall science presentation, visits to the local leisure centre, participation in Red Nose Day and the Christmas lunches that enable pupils to develop friendships not only within the school community but in the wider community as well.

17. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is very good, but it is especially good in pupils' cultural development. Many cultural opportunities are offered for pupils and students. What is taught in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education very strongly develops pupils' cultural awareness. Displays of pupils' work and artefacts enrich understanding of this country and the wider world, both past and present. In the week before the inspection, a singer-songwriter worked for two days in the school, sharing Yiddish music. Classes visit local places of worship of a number of faiths. The school organised a successful

Faith Day where the traditions of many faiths and cultures were celebrated in school. There are good links with the London Symphony Orchestra.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. There are real strengths in the care, welfare and support given to pupils and the ways in which the school involves and works with parents, schools and the wider community. The weakness is in the curriculum for students in the Further Education Centre.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a substantial number of lessons, the teaching and learning are very good, and at times excellent. In a few lessons in the Further Education Centre, the teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are particularly good in music and physical education.
- There are very high levels of expertise in teaching pupils with special educational needs.
- Lessons are usually planned well to ensure work is pitched at the right level of difficulty.
- Staff work very well together and build strong relationships with the pupils.
- Staff often make lessons fun and use praise and encouragement; as a result, pupils want to learn.
- National strategies are used effectively.
- There are instances where work is not suitable for young adults.

Commentary

18. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is a significant increase in the percentage of lessons where teaching is at least very good. Very few lessons occur now where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This is because:
- There is a comprehensive programme of monitoring teaching and learning with effective feedback to staff.
 - Extensive professional development tailored to individual members of staff has improved teaching skills and expertise.
 - Successful training has ensured that staff are very able to meet the special educational needs of the pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 89 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7 (8 %)	29 (33 %)	42 (47 %)	9 (10 %)	2 (2 %)	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 percentage.

19. In music and physical education, the subject specialists teach throughout the school and ensure pupils' learning builds on previous learning successfully. Hydrotherapy and swimming are taught very well and as a result pupils are confident in the water and many learn to float and to swim. The expertise of staff teaching art and design and design and technology in Years 7 to 11 leads to pupils gaining a broad range of skills and producing pieces of work to a high standard. Children in the early years classes learn very well in personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and physical development. Staff are particularly

skilled in developing children's communication skills, helping them to relate well to each other and encouraging them to follow instructions.

20. Throughout the school, the teaching of pupils with autism is good and often, very good. Teachers use the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) methodology which effectively provides the pupils with a structure and routine, to a greater or lesser degree depending on need, that helps them to make sense of the world and make progress. Pupils in the TEACCH classes quickly learn to "check schedules" and staff keep requests simple and direct so that they are understood. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are also taught very well. Staff are proficient in signing and consistent in their use of objects of reference and symbols. Where necessary, they wait patiently for a response. Pupils' independence is encouraged through offering choices and being sure the pupil is aware of what is happening. Although there are TEACCH classes and also class bases for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, where possible these pupils join age appropriate classes, sometimes for all their lessons. Teachers ensure that all the pupils in the class learn well by planning lessons effectively so that:
- Activities are well chosen to interest both boys and girls and to be suitably difficult. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson on advertising, after the class activity, the two pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties matched symbols to make slogans about the food they liked, while other members of the class wrote sentences about different chicken dishes.
 - Staff are deployed effectively. Co-educators and teachers may work with one pupil, for instance working through activities in a TEACCH bay whilst another member of staff directs and supervises the other pupils. At times, co-educators will support several pupils, or any pupil in the class that needs helping.
 - Resources are well chosen and to hand. When making salt dough, each pupil in the group had their own set of ingredients and measured cups of flour, salt and water. No time was wasted and pupils' interest and concentration were sustained.
 - Particular needs are met, such as enlarged worksheets for visually impaired pupils.
 - Pupils' ethnicity and religious beliefs are taken into account and they are introduced, where appropriate, into lessons. For example, a pupil described what happened in her house during the eve of Shabbat (Sabbath) meal.
21. The teamwork of the staff in the classes is an important factor. They are all aware of how much and what support each pupil needs to succeed. Pupils trust them and, because of the close relationships they develop with staff, have the confidence to attempt different or more complex activities. In almost all classrooms, there is a consistency, for example, in the way staff deal with any behaviour difficulties or encourage pupils to respond. Praise and rewards are used very well to emphasise to pupils that they are succeeding. Often all staff will join in with praise when pupils achieve well, which reinforces pupils' understanding of how well they are doing. This contributes effectively to the assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers use assessment records well to help them plan their lessons. The introduction of a commercially produced scheme for recording pupils' progress is proving effective. There is a particularly good system used in TEACCH classrooms which is easy to complete and shows clearly the achievements of the pupils.
22. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well supported by all staff and their learning is in line with their abilities and their special needs. The school assesses their needs carefully, including their abilities in their mother tongue, using interpreters appropriately in discussions with their families.
23. Enjoyment is a strong feature of the most successful lessons. Pupils achieve a great deal when they find lessons fun. For example, children laugh and smile when joining in with music and movement sessions and try hard to do what is asked of them. Practical activities also help pupils understand more easily. A TEACCH group explored cause and effect through

using a kettle and a microwave to warm up “the coffee that their teacher had forgotten to drink”. In a religious education lesson, pupils sampled food from Islamic countries and talked about the customs and beliefs. There are good examples of ICT being used very effectively in lessons, but in other lessons it is not used so often. Pupils rise to challenges and strive to meet the high expectations set by staff. In a games session pupils played boccia enthusiastically and within the rules. Pupils in Year 6 show data about cars on pictograms very clearly. National strategies are used well. Literacy and numeracy are well established and the Key Stage 3 Strategy is also implemented.

24. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in the Further Education Centre, work is not presented in a sufficiently adult way or is not appropriate, for example, to learn about glass making in science. Weaknesses are also caused through using inadequate ICT equipment, poorly chosen resources – such as dice on which the numbers are too high and a lack of number lines to help calculations. At times, in other parts of the school, timing is not as good as it should be; for example, sometimes activities are carried on a little too long so pupils begin to lose attention, for example when reading a fairly long story, or sessions at the end pulling learning together are too rushed.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 to 11. It is very good for students in the Living and Learning Centre but unsatisfactory for students in the Further Education Centre. Extra-curricular activities and other opportunities enrich the curriculum well and the accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 to 11 meets statutory requirements well.
- There is a good range of courses leading to awards in Years 10 and 11.
- The provision for outreach is very good.
- The curriculum in the Living and Learning Centre is working very well.
- The curriculum for students in the Further Education Centre is not as well developed as the rest of the school.
- Provision for meeting pupils’ special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for the early years classes is planned effectively from the Foundation Curriculum and provides a good start for children’s learning. In Years 1 to 11, what is taught is well based on National Curriculum guidelines which are appropriately adapted for all the levels of ability. Clear long-term plans and more detailed termly plans establish how learning will systematically develop. As a result, learning is reinforced well through links made between subjects. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 religious education session, there was ICT, literacy, numeracy, PSHE and art and design included. As part of the ongoing drive to improve, a whole school overview of subjects is being undertaken which started with English and is planned to focus on mathematics in the spring. This is an important development that rationalises previous provision and aims to make the planning and allocation of resources more efficient.
26. Courses leading to awards have been developed well for pupils in Year 11. This year, pupils may work towards awards in ten different subjects or areas which include careers and work experience. A measure of the success of the school is that, due to the careful selection of courses, all pupils in Year 11 are expected to gain awards. Additionally, pupils in Year 10 may gain awards in numeracy and literacy and, this year, Year 9 pupils are studying for an award in Spanish.

27. The school is making very effective provision for a number of its pupils to follow courses and learn alongside pupils in mainstream schools. As a result, there is considerable scope for the highest attaining pupils to pursue GCSE courses such as one Year 11 girl studying for a GCSE science examination at a local secondary school. Other pupils attend nearby schools individually for lessons in mathematics, music and religious education. Similarly, a small group of higher attaining Year 7 pupils go out weekly to a mainstream school where they join pupils there for English lessons. In all the instances of pupils attending mainstream schools the learning opportunities provide them with wider variety and greater challenges leading to higher achievement. These partnerships are also succeeding in pupils transferring successfully and full time to the rolls of mainstream schools.
28. In the Living and Learning Centre, although the curriculum is very much tailored to individual needs, there is a very clear rationale for the content. Of prime importance is the aim to prepare students for adult life within the community through links with relevant everyday situations. Working with students in the home is very effective in helping them and their families overcome anxieties and gradually to attend the centre.
29. A need was identified to change the curriculum in the Further Education Centre from courses based around the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' course to courses that can be written to suit the students in the year groups. However, this has not been well managed and the result is a curriculum without a firm basis, as the ASDAN award has been discontinued, and only two modules of the new courses are written for the current year. Areas of the curriculum including the development of literacy and numeracy and personal and social skills are included appropriately.
30. Pupils' special educational needs are met very well through a range of strategies that are used throughout the school. TEACCH is used very effectively for pupils with autism, particularly so in the Living and Learning Centre. The needs of the pupils are of paramount importance and in the Centre and in a number of specific classes a highly structured curriculum is devised and taught in a very structured environment. In other classrooms, where pupils are taught successfully, a clear routine and aspects of TEACCH work well. Very good expertise has been developed to help pupils to improve their communication skills. These include widely used signing and symbol systems, objects of reference and the recently introduced Picture Exchange System (PECS).
31. The curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils well, including those who are learning English as an additional language. The emphasis on teaching communication skills and use of wide range of strategies and explanations of key vocabulary are very effective in building knowledge and understanding of English. Account is taken of additional language needs in planning lessons. Good opportunities are taken to include home languages, for example, in religious education when describing artefacts, customs and beliefs.
32. Additional activities for all pupils are many and varied. There are very good opportunities for outdoor education and these are supplemented by annual residential visits where older pupils can canoe, climb and take part in activities that build their confidence and help them to become more self-reliant. Pupils participate in the London Youth Games that is organised for pupils of all abilities and in the President's Sporting Cup that caters for pupils with special educational needs. Dance and drama workshops are shared with a local secondary school and school teams have a programme of fixtures competing with other schools in a variety of sports. A range of therapies are very successfully included for pupils where appropriate including speech and language therapy, music therapy and hydrotherapy. It is notable that therapists work in a range of ways according to the needs of the pupils, with individuals and with groups of children, and many work both in and out of the classroom.
33. The curriculum is considerably improved by the termly thematic days. On these days the whole school is taken off the ordinary timetable and engages in a series of activities planned

around a single theme. Next term there will be a science day planned in conjunction with the local education authority's science adviser. On these days and others visitors such as artists, actors and musicians come in to provide a stimulating and diverse range of influences to broaden what pupils will learn.

34. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and includes sex education and education about drug misuse well. Careers education and work experience are planned effectively and good links have been made with local firms that provide placements for the older pupils.
35. There has been good overall improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection in all areas apart from the Further Education Centre.
36. Accommodation is good overall. There are very good specialist areas, for example in art and design, design and technology and music. However, the lack of an outside court area limits activities in physical education. There is a good learning resource centre that produces high quality teaching materials. Displays considerably enhance the learning environment. The school has drawn up plans to establish a Further Education Centre that is separate from the school to help students gain greater independence. Learning resources are good on the whole and very good in a number of subjects including design and technology, physical education, PSHE and religious education, though there are few facilities, such as interactive whiteboards, which are useful for the display of computer generated images to whole groups or classes. The resources for ICT are not adequate in the Further Education Centre.
37. There are sufficient staff and most teachers and teaching assistants have suitable qualifications and experience for teaching the pupils in the school. Training programmes are devised for those who do not and also to keep all staff up-to-date. Co-educators and other staff who work directly with pupils also have or gain the expertise they need. Staff are open to learning new approaches and this is evident in the way they have very successfully adapted to the introduction of TEACCH.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good and a strength of the school. There is very good level of support, advice and guidance for pupils. The way the school involves pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also very good. This is very good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There is a thorough knowledge of pupils' needs and as a result, the interests of all pupils are promoted and safeguarded.
- The school monitors how well pupils are doing very carefully and uses all the available monitoring information to support pupils' achievement.
- Health and safety are given a very high priority.
- There is a shortfall in the provision of therapy, particularly speech and language therapy.

Commentary

38. The school's provision for the educational and personal support of all pupils is very good. Children of all ages settle quickly into school life due to effective induction procedures. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have very informative 'personal passports' ensuring that all adults that work with them know what is best for the pupils. Individual education plans have clear targets for the pupils to work towards and they are regularly reviewed. There is very effective careers guidance which is well supported by the Connexions team.

39. The two deputy headteachers are designated as liaison for child protection issues. Staff are well trained and child protection procedures are part of the induction process.
40. Regular health and safety checks are carried out on equipment, the school building and grounds. The health and safety manager regularly reports to the governors' health and safety committee. There are clearly defined procedures for medicines and first aid treatment. Most medicines are dispensed by the school nurse and the school has 13 members of staff with first aid qualifications, which are updated regularly. Management plans for each pupil needing medication are located in the classroom with a copy in the medical room. Risk assessments are carried out before school trips take place and security measures for pupils leaving the building during school hours by filling in the off-site activity form are scrupulously adhered to. Every pupil is handed over personally to escorts or parents at the end of the school day by a member of staff.
41. Good links have been forged with a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils can benefit from their services where appropriate. These include the health trust (physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, wheelchair assessment specialists, and health visitors), social services, optometrists, Connexions and Trident. The school nurse attends children's statutory reviews when necessary for medical reasons, to ensure continuity. There remains, as at the last inspection, a shortfall in the provision of speech and language therapy to meet the specified needs on pupils' statements. This is in spite of the best efforts of the headteacher and the governing body. To meet the shortfall as far as possible, the school has employed its own speech and language therapists. There is also insufficient physiotherapy and occupational therapy.
42. Pupils' views are sought on a range of issues and these views are discussed by staff and governors and contribute to the school development plan. Questionnaires are devised so that all pupils can answer them. For example, for the inspection there were the usual forms, forms written using symbols, forms written using smiley faces and very simply one that indicated likes and dislikes. Pupils responded, using words, symbols and pictures often assisted by staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good. There is also a very good partnership with the local community. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. Overall, this represents a very good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are provided with very good information about how well their children are doing.
- Parents' views are valued.
- There is a valuable weekly Autism Support Group Meeting.
- There are effective links with the local business community.
- Work experience provision is very good.

Commentary

43. Before starting school, parents and their children are visited at home by staff members accompanied by the school nurse. This contributes to a smooth transition and helps to develop the partnership between school and home. Parents consider staff to be approachable and welcoming and are generally confident in raising concerns informally with them. There is a supportive parents association, Friends of Trinity, which raises considerable sums of money for the school.

44. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Regular newsletters are sent home and the school works hard with parents who do not speak English offering translation services to ensure good communication. Staff are sensitive to cultural issues and try to make it possible for all parents to take a full part in their children's education. The home-school diary keeps the parents informed on a daily basis and encourages them to reply to let the school know any pertinent facts straightaway. Parents' evenings are held twice a year to display children's work and discuss progress with staff. Annual reports give a detailed picture of progress and attainment. The prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to Parents fully comply with statutory requirements and are attractively formatted. Parents' views are sought via an annual questionnaire and the responses show a high level of parental satisfaction. Several developments have been incorporated into the school plan as a result of observations from parents, in particular, the purchase of playground equipment. The school deals effectively with any concerns and complaints, aiming to respond within one day.
45. A family worker who is successfully forging links with pupils, staff, charities and services is a valuable member of staff. This support includes providing advice and informed speakers, when requested, for the weekly Autism Support Group meeting held at the school.
46. Strong links exist with the local community. The school has worked hard to build an impressive list of local employers who offer work experience to students. These include supermarkets, charity shops and farms and the feedback is very positive about the contribution the students make during these placements. Visits to local places of interest and school trips enrich what the pupils learn at school. They have enjoyed the benefits of residential experiences at Trewern, Llanymneck and Oswestry and participated in day visits ranging from the Imperial War Museum to the local pantomime. Shared experiences with mainstream schools, such as the visit to Trewern, proved beneficial to all pupils and are a good example of inclusion working successfully. A range of visits is made by the pupils, particularly to the local area including the leisure centre. Local community groups and individuals come into school. For example, the sports development team works in the school enhancing the 'dance days' and developing links with mainstream schools. On last year's day, 100 primary school pupils worked very successfully with Trinity pupils.
47. Partnerships with local schools are very well organised. Secure working relationships are established between schools based on joint planning of provision and sharing professional expertise. A significant number of pupils join mainstream classes for a few lessons and in some cases this leads to a pupil transferring to the school on a permanent basis. Effective induction procedures are carefully planned and the transfer of information on pupils moving to mainstream schools is efficient. New opportunities are being developed in an active way and this is effectively promoting the school's aim of a wider educational role in the borough. There are a good number of new initiatives in the pipeline, for example, developing opportunities for groups of pupils from the primary department to attend local schools. A very effective resource base has been developed which serves other schools in the borough as well as Trinity. An efficient loan system enables books and resources to be easily borrowed by teachers in other schools. As part of its Beacon status, a wide range of activities to share the school's expertise have included the establishment of a Makaton training service in the borough and the provision of training for mainstream staff in areas such as the role of a specialist co-ordinator and autism. Links with colleges of further education are good and many students transfer to them when they leave Trinity.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher's visionary and inspirational leadership is excellent. The management of the school is good. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategic planning is excellent.
- Leaders provide excellent role models for other staff and pupils.
- There is very effective self-evaluation.
- Financial management and administration are excellent.
- The governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The leadership and management of the Further Education Centre are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

48. The headteacher is committed to ensuring that all pupils and the school achieve to the best of their abilities. She inspires, motivates and influences all those she works with and her vision and sense of purpose are exceptional. Senior staff lead by example and support the philosophy that has been established by the headteacher and governors since the headteacher was appointed some two and a half years ago, that teaching and learning are central to everything the school does and that inclusion is a major commitment. As a result:
- The strategic planning is very coherent and reflects very high expectations for pupils' progress.
 - Developments are prioritised well. For example, a significant increase in the number of pupils with autism and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties has led to intensive work in these areas. The school is rightly pleased with the way it has met its aspiration to develop a 'high standard of pedagogy; (science or art of teaching) to meet these needs'.
 - The senior management team takes great care to assess the needs of all pupils for whom English is not their first language. They ensure that the provision is good with appropriate support given to enable these pupils to do well. The achievement of pupils from different ethnic groups is monitored effectively.
 - Additionally, a specialist provision the Living Learning Centre, for pupils with autism aged 14 to 19 with associated severe learning difficulties and potentially challenging behaviour as a consequence of their autism, has been established. Although in the first year of development, this innovative facility is exceptionally well planned with clear aims and further development detailed.
 - Leadership and management are effective in fulfilling the school's aims of a wide educational role in the borough and is active in generating new initiatives such as the learning resource centre and increased opportunities for pupils to work with pupils in mainstream schools.
49. A very effective management structure enables the school to run very efficiently. The management team of deputy and assistant headteachers, support managers and subject leaders all have clear responsibilities focusing on pupils' achievement and care, learning and behaviour. All are committed to improvement through effective monitoring and evaluation procedures and almost all lead and manage their areas very well. However, the management is only good overall because there are weaknesses in the leadership and the management of the Further Education Centre. This is clearly recognised and the centre is the area that is currently the priority for development following the outcomes of an earlier audit of provision which highlighted shortcomings. Steps have been taken successfully to make improvements, for example to assist the manager in gaining qualified teacher status, to raise the quality of teaching and learning by establishing structure in lessons, and to improve record keeping and the organisation of classrooms. However, changes to the curriculum have not been sufficiently established. Also, while the deployment of staff from other areas of the school has, as planned, increased subject expertise in the centre, at times the work is not pitched at a sufficiently adult level for the students.

50. The school development plan is a rigorous and visionary document. Areas for focus through consultation, monitoring and evaluation are identified and are carefully costed to ensure longer term projects are funded. It is a shared document that governors, all staff, parents and pupils have an involvement in and is totally committed to improving pupils' learning and progress. All areas of the school have specific plans to guide development that contribute to the overall plan and are monitored well to check their progress. Staff development is closely linked to the school plan, as are the performance management targets of staff. There are effective induction procedures for new teachers and co-educators and all staff are aware that appropriate ambitions for professional development will be fully supported by the school. The school's record in supporting the professional development of staff including non-teaching staff, is excellent. The headteacher and senior managers are very skilled in recognizing and developing the potential of staff. For example, teachers who have qualified overseas have been supported to gain qualified teacher status in this country and co-educators have trained successfully to be assistant teachers.
51. Day-to-day organisation and management are very effective and smooth. Financial management, clearly established through the school development plan, is very well managed and efficient. The budget surplus, for example, is earmarked for building the new Further Education Centre. The office manager and her staff, the bursar and other support staff are effective and make major contributions to the success of the school. Arrangements to ensure that best value principles are implemented and are very thorough.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3397526	Balance from previous year	272858
Total expenditure	3226346	Balance carried forward to the next	444038
Expenditure per pupil	16981		

52. The governance of the school is very good. The chair of governors and her colleagues are very effective in the way in which they challenge and support the headteacher and senior managers of the school. They are very well informed: the chair of governors visits the school at least weekly for a formal meeting with the headteacher and other governors all have a regular programme of visits. Very detailed and comprehensive termly reports from the headteacher cover all aspects of school life and include contributions from all the managers in the school. As a result, governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, dealing with problems, such as the lack of therapy provision, as effectively as is possible. Speech and language therapists have been appointed to the staff of the school to help meet the shortfall and representations have constantly been made to the health authority regarding the lack of provision.
53. The leadership, management and governance of the school continue to be major strengths. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher significant improvements have been achieved in major areas of the school, with only one area continuing to need attention. Particularly good improvement has been made in the key area of teaching and learning.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. This provision has shown good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and assessment.

54. Children are admitted from the age of three, either with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or for assessment. All the children admitted have significant special needs; different class groups are available which are more appropriate, for example, for children with autism or with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Whichever group they join, children are fully included in all aspects of the life of the school. There are very good arrangements for the admission of the children and the support of parents. The quality of assessment for these children is very high. The department is very well led and managed by a manager who offers a model of excellent practice by teaching alongside other staff in all Foundation Stage classes. The standards of care are very high and there is excellent teamwork between teachers, co-educators and therapists, as the following example of outstanding practice shows.

Example of outstanding practice

To get to music therapy, young children, including those with autism, need to go from their base to a room some distance away and to arrive safely and in a frame of mind to benefit from the session.

The children are clearly excited as the yellow rope appears. Like a little train, they line up at the door, each child and each member of staff holding the rope, one behind the other. The classroom door opens and the music therapist appears holding the wind chimes, which they have come to know mean it is time to go to the music therapy room. A happy little procession sets off down the corridor, singing:

“Walking, walking, walking along,

Walking, walking singing our song,

Walking, walking left and right” and with the final line of each verse they lower and raise their arms together singing “Down to the floor and up to the light”. All the way along the corridor they proceed, happily and safely, enjoying the song and the movement until they reach the therapy room and go in to start another enjoyable session.

55. Teaching is good overall with examples of very good, and sometimes excellent, practice in all areas of learning. However, there is still some unevenness across different groups as some teachers are still gaining experience and developing their skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop excellent relationships with staff and with each other.
- Staff help children develop both independence and the ability to work and play with other children.

Commentary

56. On entry to the school many children have great difficulty in relating to other people and some display constant distress both at home and at school. Foundation Stage staff work together to reduce the stresses on the children so that they can first become comfortable in their group and then begin to learn. Children quickly develop confidence, try hard in their work and treat

each other well because every member of staff treats them with respect and values them as individuals. Children are encouraged to make choices and to develop their ability to persist with a task for a reasonable length of time. In some groups the use of picture schedules helps them gain a clear idea of the sequence of events in the day and brings under control behaviour that could otherwise be chaotic. All groups include both individual work and sessions in which all children work together. Teaching in this area of learning is very good and there are examples of excellent practice that contribute to staff development and the children's very good achievement. Music therapy plays a very important part in the development of social awareness and skills, giving children opportunities to relate to each other in joyful group activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good.
- Teachers, therapists and co-educators use an appropriately wide range of approaches to improve communication.
- Very good assessment strategies ensure that a child's attempts to communicate are recorded and built on.

Commentary

57. There has been good improvement in this area since the last inspection. The communication policy is consistently applied. Signs, symbols, pictures and objects that carry a special meaning are used appropriately, together with 'talking' devices that enable a child to hit a switch or press a picture and produce an appropriate recorded word or phrase. Children are all enabled to take part in speaking and listening activities with the help of these approaches. Regular enjoyable story sessions help children understand what books are about, and the skills of turning pages and matching pictures are systematically taught. There are many activities to help develop skills that can lead to writing or other ways of recording work. The school's approach to language and communication ensures that children who do not have English as their first language make good progress alongside their peers.
58. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff are very skilled at noticing children's progress in communication during classroom activities. There are also regular sessions in which teachers work individually with children to track developing skills and share observations and suggestions with colleagues. For those children with the greatest difficulties, the multi-disciplinary music and movement sessions provide a particularly valuable way of assessing how to move forward with individual children's communication, combining the skills and knowledge of each member of staff.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of activities planned to give children experience in this area of learning.
- Planning is not always sufficiently detailed to ensure that all staff know how each individual child should benefit from the experience.

Commentary

59. Children make good progress overall. They have good access to play activities involving sand and water play and this helps them develop concepts about number, size, weight and shape. Teaching and learning are good and staff regularly reinforce children's knowledge of counting through songs and rhymes like *Five little Reindeer*. In classes where the approach is more structured, planning is very good and concepts are introduced and reinforced systematically. In other classes, although the activities are appropriate and beneficial, planning is more general and does not always specify what challenges each child should be offered to promote progress.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities for using construction toys and games.
- There are good activities that stimulate use of all the senses.
- Adults intervene well in children's role-play, encouraging them to play at more complex and constructive levels.
- Planning is not always sufficiently detailed.

Commentary

60. The Foundation Stage classes are well equipped with bricks, construction and 'small world' toys and access to these helps children learn how things work and develops their knowledge of different kinds of everyday activities. Children also have many good opportunities to experience the texture, taste, smell and moulding qualities of materials – for example, cream, finger paint and glittery play dough. All children are able to take part in these experiences whatever their difficulties. There are good opportunities for children to play at shopping or "home corner" activities. As a result, they make good progress. Teaching and learning are good overall and staff often intervene well, prompting children through questions, example or suggestions to develop their role-play at a higher level. However, this is not totally consistent and opportunities are missed, at times because of the lack of sufficiently detailed planning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to play outdoors.
- There is very good planning and sharing of expertise in physical education lessons for the children with the most complex needs.

Commentary

61. Children have regular and frequent access to outdoor play areas and to a good selection of wheeled toys and other large apparatus. Some of the toys are large enough to be shared by an adult and a child, or by several children, and this ensures that all children can participate in physical play. Special sessions are organised for children with complex needs, in which staff, led by the early years manager, work together to provide a varied and enjoyable sequence of activities. There is a very good balance between directed activities and free exploration of the apparatus; this can involve rolling, balancing, running or having a 'blanket ride'. Planning for

these sessions is very good, as is the assessment that arises from them. Swimming offers very good opportunities for children to experience movement in a warm, safe and interesting setting. Music and movement sessions also make an outstanding contribution. As a result of the very good teaching and learning, children achieve very well in this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and children achieve well.
- Children take part in role-play and performance, as in the Foundation Stage performance of the Nativity.
- Music therapy gives children enormous pleasure, as well as promoting their social and language development.
- Music and movement sessions ensure that every child is enabled to share with others an experience of singing and rhythmic movement.
- Children's artistic expression, while satisfactory, is, on the whole, rather routine in its scope.

Commentary

62. During the inspection, children greatly enjoyed the experience of dressing up and acting out the Christmas story, with Joseph wrapping and unwrapping the Christ child and rocking him carefully in his arms, and Mary, the angels, shepherds and kings all enchanted by the dressing up, the audience and the music. They also love their regular music therapy sessions; they follow the therapist who leads with her jingling wind chimes along the corridors like a pied piper, and they and the staff sing as they go. Once in the music therapy room, supported by teachers and co-educators, they experience the joy of dancing, singing and playing instruments together, to the sensitive and responsive accompaniment of the therapist. The benefit to their social and language development, as well as their cultural development, is enormous.
63. Children have experience of painting, drawing and making things. While some activities are exciting and stimulating, others are rather adult-directed and give too little scope for the children's own ideas.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 to 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and support staff are effective.
- The use of communication aids is good and is developing well.
- Planning is good and staff are constantly reviewing its effect.
- Assessment is very good.
- The programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is effective.
- Literacy is well taught throughout the school.

Commentary

64. Teachers and co-educators use language, signing, symbols and objects of reference well to develop pupils' communication skills. They adapt their approaches very effectively to individuals. For example, pupils with autism in Years 1 and 2 achieve well as they learn to work to routines explained to them using symbols reinforced by spoken instruction. They begin to handle books appropriately and to explore them, looking to match objects with words. The PECS is being introduced, at present, to a small number of pupils. This is proving successful in helping them make their needs and wishes understood. The very good use of praise and encouragement develops more able Year 6 pupils' spoken responses to stories. This helps them to extend their comments well. In a lesson working from a book on shopping pupils grasped the concept of plurals and most of them successfully completed an exercise writing out plural nouns.
65. In a discussion in a Year 9 class about the diary of Anne Frank, the teacher is skilful in getting pupils to state how much they recall of the book they have shared over several lessons. More able pupils write short sentences with the help of the teacher. Most pupils follow parts of the Anne Frank text the teacher shares with them. Pupils in Year 11 with profound and multiple learning difficulties react to a good range of musical and visual stimuli in a multi-sensory environment. They turn their heads towards lights and sounds and vocalise. Teachers and co-educators are constantly communicating with individuals to ensure that pupils get the most from the experience. More able pupils recall a restaurant role-play lesson from the previous week when the teacher acted as a waitress. The lively and engaging approach of the teacher makes such sessions memorable and helps to develop vocabulary very well.
66. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and of their pupils and they use effective procedures to check how well pupils are learning. As a result, lessons are planned well. The structure of the literacy strategy is applied effectively. Good introductions to lessons set out what pupils are to do clearly, activities are well matched to the needs of individual pupils and closing sessions test the progress pupils have made over the lesson as well as pointing to what has been achieved and what is to come next. The relationships that teachers and the other adults have with pupils are very good and do much to create good conditions for learning. Lessons are mainly enjoyable experiences. They are sometimes joyful occasions. This engages and maintains pupils' attention well.
67. The subject is well led by an assistant headteacher with co-ordinators for Years 1 to 6 and 7 to 11. An effective overall strategy for teaching and learning of English is developing well. Plans are appropriately monitored and analysed and lessons are observed as part of a systematic and continuous programme. There is good improvement since the last inspection in the development of a whole-school policy on the use of methods of communication such as Makaton signing. Assessment of pupils' work is comprehensive and regular. Learning resources are good and have a beneficial effect on learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Language and literacy are well developed in all subjects. Teachers carefully introduce new words in lessons to make sure that misunderstanding is not a block to learning. At appropriate times, words are written on boards or on worksheets to serve as reminders to learners. As a result, many pupils recognise subject specific words and know what they mean. In a religious education lesson on Islam a CD-ROM is effectively used to give a clear guide to the pronunciation of key words and more able pupils are encouraged to read their worksheets and their answers to the class. In art the teacher uses lively language backed up by clear introduction of key words associated with Christmas to make the language more easily understood by the pupils. Teachers and co-educators use sympathetic question and answer sessions well to make sure that lesson points have maximum effect. This was so when the teacher in a Year 9 art lesson introduced pupils to Picasso's *Guernica*. In this lesson the recall

and the words pupils used describing details from previous study of the painting was impressive.

SPANISH

Provision in Spanish is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The language skills of the teacher are extremely good.
- Information and communication technology is very well used to support learning.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well.

Commentary

69. Spanish is taught only to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and has only recently replaced French as the modern foreign language taught in school. All lessons are taught by one teacher, who has excellent language skills and a good understanding of methods and approaches appropriate for the pupils of this school. His leadership and management of the subject are good. The scheme of work he has written for the school is sensible in its scope and is working well in these early months of teaching the subject. The focus is appropriately on oral work with a very small amount of written work. The teacher uses Spanish fluently and very well throughout the lesson but also explains in English whenever necessary; he is also very positive in his response to pupils' efforts so that they are confident in attempting to speak. Pupils can greet each other in Spanish and are able to understand and pronounce everyday words and phrases to do with themselves, their families and food likes and dislikes. Many of the pupils achieve good pronunciation and take great pride in this. Pupils who have difficulty in saying English words clearly, nevertheless listen carefully and make very great efforts to pronounce the Spanish words.
70. There is particularly good use of video material recorded on computer by the pupils themselves. This motivates them to try very hard to speak well; seeing themselves on video speaking Spanish in subsequent lessons helps them remember what they have learned. The teacher is able to give them a very vivid picture of Spanish life and culture.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement and progress are good.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively in all mathematics lessons.
- There is a very good match between activities in lessons and pupils' abilities.
- Assessment is very thorough, informative and well managed.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall.
- The subject is well led by the co-ordinator.

Commentary

71. Pupils make significant gains in their knowledge, understanding and use of mathematics building on what they learn each year. The quality of teaching is never less than good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have high aspirations for their pupils, being determined to use the subject to provide pupils with an understanding of the world around them and to develop independence. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils, by playing counting games, are beginning to develop an understanding of 'more' and 'less'. In a Years 3

and 4 lesson, a group of pupils with autism quickly learned which was the plate to choose when presented with different numbers of sweets. Older pupils are able to use their previous learning to solve problems, for example in a Year 9 class, pupils, a few with profound and multiple learning difficulties, were able to respond to the teacher's demand to produce a sequence of numbers in fives. Each member of the class selected number cards from a random pile in order to correctly place on the whiteboard 5, 10, 15, etc. By Years 10 and 11, pupils' mathematical knowledge as well as skills are improving well. Many are able to correctly identify a range of mathematical shapes and describe their attributes; one boy said "a cube has lots of square sides, six!" whilst another pupil gave a good description of a sphere, "it's like a ball".

72. All lessons in mathematics follow the three part process of the National Numeracy Strategy well. The introduction and plenary are planned very carefully to ensure that pupils fully understand the objectives and purpose of the lesson and finally they rehearse what they have been doing and have learned. Activities chosen are usually very appropriate; they capture and maintain pupils' interest and are carefully matched to pupils' needs. For example, in a TEACCH class, the activity was carefully chosen to ensure all pupils could undertake a mathematical process despite their difficulty in communication. Teachers' subject knowledge and their knowledge of their pupils are good. They use ICT when appropriate very well to reinforce concepts, for example the use of the 'All About Number' program which very successfully helped a boy develop his skills of sequencing numbers. Co-educators are used effectively in mathematics lessons; they have good understanding of the concepts being taught and know the pupils extremely well.
73. Currently the Year 7 to 11 co-ordinator is leading the subject on a whole-school basis, but is being joined by the Year 1 to 6 co-ordinator in due course. The co-ordinator's subject knowledge is very good and she has established effective assessment arrangements very well to monitor progress and indicate learning needs. The co-ordinator's opportunities to monitor the subject are limited to looking at planning and pupils' work. Directly monitoring staff teaching is set to happen in the near future. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Mathematics is used well and taught in a number of subjects. For example, in a physical education lesson pupils were observed being asked to "take three steps" and "now take one more" and in a basketball lesson the teacher asked pupils to "count the seven rules". Simple databases are used by pupils in ICT and in food technology they weigh ingredients. Staff are aware of the need to reinforce mathematics concepts and understanding as a way of promoting the subject's objectives to help pupils make sense of the wider world and opportunities to use numeracy are usually identified in lesson planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils make good progress.
- Teamwork between teachers and co-educators is very good.
- Teachers and co-educators know the children very well and assess progress effectively.
- The curriculum is well planned and identifies clearly what pupils are expected to learn.

Commentary

75. Pupils' achievements are good in science. Teaching is challenging and encourages youngsters to develop as scientists. Autistic pupils participate in activities that extend their understanding effectively. For example, pupils in Year 2 are learning to make an electric circuit. A variety of tasks are designed to meet individual pupils' needs and the pace of the lesson is appropriately varied to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils explore batteries and bulbs and can identify the torch as a light source. Teachers and co-educators work well together, explaining, demonstrating and recording what pupils are able to do. Pupils in Year 9 are developing an awareness of the effects of heat on melting chocolate. Use of very good resources and tasks that are carefully matched to pupils' abilities ensures that pupils use equipment such as sand timers, lamps and recording sheets well. Pupils are encouraged to discuss amongst themselves and with the adults what they are doing and how they might do it differently if necessary. Pupils in Year 11 are able to predict what they think will happen and know how to set up a fair test. Pupils understand that new things can be made from old and are able to make new paper from old Christmas cards. Good links are made with recycling projects in other subjects.
76. Science lessons are calm and purposeful, enabling pupils to focus on their learning effectively. Planning usually identifies what pupils will learn in the lesson. This practice ensures that all adults and pupils are clear about what they are doing. There is a good focus on key words for each topic. Pupils in Year 6 who are exploring the nature of different liquids use words like 'sticky' and 'thin' to describe the differences between oil, water and soy sauce. In a very small number of lessons, there were missed opportunities for pupils to be involved in setting up experiments. Pupils with the greatest needs benefit from well organised lessons when adults supporting them are able to ensure the sensory experiences offered are appropriate and enjoyable.
77. The assessment of pupils' progress is good. Samples of pupils' work are dated and carefully annotated to describe any help given. Progress at the end of topics is carefully recorded and pupils in Year 11 are preparing for appropriate examinations.
78. The leadership of science is good. The co-ordinators for Years 1 to 6 and for Years 7 to 11 work well together to ensure pupils' learning builds on what has been taught before. The curriculum is a good basis from which class teachers in Years 1 to 6 plan their lessons to provide opportunities that include all pupils. Resources are generally good and the school has recognised the need to improve ICT equipment.
79. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. The accommodation for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is now satisfactory. Pupils' achievements have improved throughout the school and teaching is consistently good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and enjoy using ICT.
- The subject is well led in all age groups.
- Teaching is usually good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent.
- There is good use of ICT in support of language and communication development.
- Use of ICT to support lessons in other subjects is not yet firmly embedded throughout the school.

Commentary

80. This subject shows very good improvement since the last inspection; in particular, training has improved the standard of teaching and, thereby, the achievement of the pupils. The

department is well equipped, although it still lacks some very useful items such as interactive whiteboards. The general standard of teaching is good. It is generally a little stronger in the secondary classes than in primary classes. The ICT co-ordinators in both the primary and the secondary school lead the subject well.

81. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their use of computers, switches and controllable devices. They also enjoy learning about control technology by giving each other commands to move forward and backwards, right and left. Older pupils take pride in making video records of their own learning. All pupils gain access to computer use through appropriate use of keyboard, mouse or switches. They also learn how to control devices which will help them in everyday life, such as microwave cookers. The school takes expert outside advice where necessary on access for an individual pupil, and teachers pay careful attention to positioning pupils so that they can work comfortably.
82. For many pupils ICT is an important tool in developing language and communication skills. Switches which allow pupils without speech to make a choice or to answer a question are well used, as are wallets of pictures which, when pressed, say the name of the object. At a more basic level, computers are used to teach pupils the principles of cause and effect, as they explore what happens when they press a switch. Leadership in the subject is good with very high levels of expertise that is effectively shared with staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. There are examples throughout the school of good use of ICT to support other subjects, for example, in English, science, mathematics and music. There are now planned opportunities for computer use in primary classes. However, ICT use across all subjects is not yet fully consistent or fully developed.

HUMANITIES

84. Humanities are taught in Years 1 to 9. Pupils made satisfactory progress in the one lesson seen and were generally interested in the topic. Scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and staff and examination of resources and displays indicate that pupils' achievement and progress in history and geography are at least satisfactory. However, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision with such a small sample. The scheme of work is based on National Curriculum programmes and activities such as field work and visits are used to promote pupils' interest. The new co-ordinators in Years 1 to 6 are working well with the Year 7 to 9 co-ordinator to maintain a programme of work that helps pupils make progress from year to year.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attention is paid to ensuring all pupils learn effectively.
- Teachers plan lessons well.
- What is taught is based well on the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
- The subject makes a very good contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

85. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in religious education in all year groups. At times, because the quality of teaching is so good, they make very good progress and occasionally,

excellent progress. All pupils learn well because care is taken to ensure that the work is pitched at the right level for them. Young pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties begin to recognise the customs associated with Christmas as they watch flashing Christmas tree lights, retrieve shiny baubles from a bowl of water and feel tinsel against their skin. A prayer mat was taken to a pupil with visual impairment in a class of older pupils so he could look closely at the symbols and feel the texture. All pupils in the group used an enlarged worksheet and as a result he did not seem different. Co-educators work with individuals or groups of pupils effectively helping them to develop their understanding. Lessons are planned to include a good range of activities to capture and maintain pupils' interest. A carefully selected range of resources are used very well. Pupils learn a great deal from handling artefacts and are taught to give appropriate respect, for example, to copies of holy books. In one lesson, where the teaching and learning were excellent, pupils in Year 7 learnt about the Sikh way of life. They sat on the floor listening to traditional music and remembered that the Gurdwara was the temple where Sikhs prayed. They smelt incense sticks and tasted the sort of food that would be eaten. Religious education lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

86. Improvement since the last inspection is very good and is largely due to the high quality of the leadership and the management of the subject. Both co-ordinators are well informed about what is being taught by other staff through looking at lesson planning and lesson evaluations. It is planned for co-ordinators to have opportunities to observe lessons where religious education is being taught next year. Use of the Locally Agreed Syllabus as a basis for teaching ensures that long-term and medium-term plans form an effective basis from which staff can work. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding are built up well from year to year. There are instances where ICT is used very well but it is not used sufficiently frequently.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good** in Years 7 to 11 and **good** in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good specialist teaching in Years 7 to 11.
- The curriculum is very good throughout the school.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- Teaching is consistently good.

Commentary

87. Pupils' achievements are very good in Years 7 to 11. Year 11 pupils have made T-shirts and cushions based on Cuban art using an impressive range of materials. They have also just completed making clocks, cut out from MDF, decorated and mounted with the clock mechanisms. There is a great deal of individuality about pupils' work, which reflects the careful planning of lessons. Teachers and co-educators know pupils well and are able to match tasks carefully to pupils' different abilities. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well. In Year 6, they decorated Swiss rolls to make chocolate Christmas logs and are able to mix the ingredients for the icing and spread it on the cake, before decorating.
88. The newly refurbished accommodation gives pupils very good opportunities to experience working with food, textiles and resistant materials, such as wood and metal, to a high standard. This work is supported by a comprehensive curriculum that identifies what pupils are expected to learn. This helps teachers to plan effectively. Work in all areas of design and technology is appropriately focused on the finished product, although there is adequate evidence that pupils think in an original way about their designs. Much of the high quality work produced is a direct

response to the good subject expertise of teachers, especially in Years 7 to 11. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and work hard. Teachers and co-educators have high expectations of pupils and celebrate their successes and, as a result, pupils challenge themselves to produce their best and are proud of their achievements. Where pupils require high levels of support, this is given with sensitivity and pupils enjoy the sensory experiences. For example, pupils making the Christmas logs reacted positively to the smells and textures of the ingredients used.

89. Design and technology lessons are planned to provide good opportunities for all pupils to be included. Pupils with greater needs work alongside others who are able to help them. A broad range of cultures are celebrated and much of the work created is inspired by artists from other cultures. Examples include Native American and Cuban art.
90. Leadership in this subject is very good. The co-ordinator for Years 7 to 11 works very closely with colleagues to ensure pupils are offered the best opportunities and an appropriate examination course is in the process of being introduced. The co-ordinator for Years 1 to 6 provides good advice and support to colleagues. The improvement since the last inspection is good. The accommodation in the design and technology rooms is now very good with specific provision for textiles, food technology and resistant materials.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in art is very good in Years 9 to 11 and good in Years 1 to 6.
- Teachers provide a wide range of different media and techniques for pupils to use.
- Leadership is very good.
- Teachers are very well supported by the co-educators.

Commentary

91. Younger pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy working with a good range of materials, for example when they make snowmen using reclaimed materials, felt and cotton wool. Teachers make the most of opportunities to extend literacy skills as they prepare pupils for activities. The story about the snowman that preceded the task excited and challenged pupils provoking a good range of responses. Pupils with autism in one Year 6 class learn to explore colour, shape and texture, for example when they apply effects to a silhouette of the Three Kings. Though the adults in the class have to do much hand on hand work, they involve pupils very well using both signing and language very effectively to probe understanding of the task and to prompt individual responses.
92. Pupils in Year 9 make very good progress because they are taught by subject specialists. They produce a series of pieces of work influenced by Picasso's work. In a long and challenging project that leads them through a whole range of works, pupils learn to experiment with Picasso's style but to adapt it to their own in a series of personalised tasks. Self portraits in pencil and paint are discussed, amended and added to. Teachers and co-educators discuss what media might be best to fashion the work. The final results are often quite startlingly good. These very high rates of progress are sustained in Year 11 where a study of nineteenth century artists such as Seurat and Van Gogh develops in pupils a good awareness of a range of styles of painting. Their work shows progress as they explore ideas and work to improve their technique.

93. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 6 and very good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers and co-educators work very well together to ensure that pupils settle down well to tasks. They use language and other means of communication, such as signing, very well to help pupils participate in a wide range of activities. The teaching of the older pupils is very good because teachers are specialists with a very good insight into the aspects of artists that interest and engage pupils. They work on individual responses to the styles and techniques of Picasso, for example, and build on these, increasing individuals' confidence in themselves as artists and encouraging them to become aware of the effect their work has on others.
94. The subject leaders are effective. Planning is good and gives a clear framework for others to adapt to their own needs. The art room is a lively and inspirational place to work in. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Music

95. As only three lessons were seen in music it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. However, in this limited number of observations pupils achieved very well and teaching and learning were very good. The music teacher who teaches all classes is a specialist in his subject and has adapted his knowledge and skills in music very effectively to suit the learning needs of all pupils.
96. The lessons seen were planned thoroughly and produced intensive work through which pupils learnt rhythm, tempo, pitch and instruments. The work pupils do is consistently highly challenging and with the very skilled teaching they all could match these demands. As a result, pupils' appreciation of music and their performances reach high standards in relation to their capabilities. Pupils experience a strong sense of achievement and are highly motivated to concentrate and work hard. A group of Year 1 and 2 pupils focused sharply on making high and low notes using percussion instruments. The teacher's clear instructions to them and constant repetition of exercises meant pupils made progress in sustaining rhythms and distinguishing high and low pitch. Composing and performing rhythms is more sophisticated by Year 9 where pupils together performed a four beat phrase. The teacher, very imaginatively, got them to speak a phrase with four syllables such as "a cup of tea" in time to help them maintain an accurate beat. When pupils had achieved this with hand clapping they moved on to drumming. With expert tuition, they learnt to perform similar rhythms using a snare drum and cymbals as well as the proper technique for holding the drum sticks. Pupils in Year 10 worked independently on rehearsing Christmas carols on electronic keyboards. They followed simple musical notation and recognised symbols for a high or a sharp note.
97. The leadership and management of music are very good. The music curriculum is written down in a very detailed scheme of what pupils at different stages should be taught. Many good opportunities are provided to contribute to pupils' literacy, numeracy and competence in using information and communication technology. There is, for example, much counting of rhythms and Year 10 pupils assemble, dismantle and program electronic keyboards. Music throughout the school is greatly enriched by school concerts and visiting musicians. For example, members of the London Symphony Orchestra visited and performed for pupils and allowed them to experience playing. The school's own musical resources are very good and have been boosted by recent investment. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well.

- Pupils' experiences within the physical education curriculum are wide ranging and very appropriate.
- The teaching is very good.
- Teachers responsible for the subject have high standards and aspirations.
- Indoor accommodation for the subject is very good.
- Outside accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

98. Pupils' achievements are in a wide range of activities which are carefully tailored to meet their needs, including those who are non-ambulant. Pupils improve their skills in gymnastics and games, dance, swimming and outdoor pursuits, for example canoeing. Activities are carefully adapted, such as boccia, a game based on bowls and played seated, so that all pupils can be involved. The introduction of the Sherbourne Developmental Programme is contributing to pupils' development in the area of dance and control of movement. A major factor in pupils' success in physical education is the high quality of the teaching they receive. Teachers and instructors are highly skilled and sensitive and set high expectations for the pupils. Their very good subject knowledge allows them to place pupils in settings which are demanding and because pupils have total confidence in the adults they respond very positively. They try hard, experiment and explore and take risks.
99. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator, who is very experienced and demands high standards. The physical education curriculum she has constructed is carefully planned to support pupils' learning at a wider level than physical education, for example, contributing effectively to improving pupils' confidence, communication and numeracy skills. There is excellent provision made by the swimming instructor who ensures pupils enjoy being in water and helps many to learn to swim. Pupils also make great strides in their learning through attending the local education authority's outdoor pursuits centre. The work of highly skilled staff ensures that those who are able have learned to canoe independently and others experience the activity rafted together. The high standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained well.
100. Resources are very good and the purpose-built gym and pool make a major contribution to pupils' achievements and progress. The lack of an outside 'court' area with secure fencing and flat surfaces, however, means that opportunities for such activities as basketball, five-a-side football and netball are limited. They are also often spoiled by the amount of time spent chasing the ball and attempting to keep pupils within the game area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHE and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is a well-developed curriculum which ensures lessons are well planned.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is good.
- Effective assemblies promote good social and spiritual opportunities.

Commentary

101. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in PSHE and citizenship. The curriculum is well balanced and ensures that what pupils are taught is based on their experiences as well as the wider world. The youngest pupils participate in well planned good morning routines that give them the opportunity to greet each other in the classroom. These sessions are enriched by good use of signs, photographs, objects of reference and symbols which ensures that all

pupils are equally included. Teaching for younger children appropriately focuses on improving their communication skills. This is supported by very good teamwork between the teachers and co-educators in the classroom.

102. Registration sessions are used effectively in Years 7 to 11 to develop pupils personally. They are well organised and time is given for each student to be heard. The introduction of circle time is having a very beneficial effect on pupils' personal development.
103. PSHE and citizenship lessons give very good opportunities for pupils to develop independence through discussion. Year 11 pupils talk about their work experience and teachers and co-educators manage discussions with a sense of humour, giving praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils think carefully about their experiences and talk about how they feel.
104. The PSHE and citizenship curriculum is comprehensive and gives good guidance to teachers for their weekly lesson planning. The use of personal passports which clearly outline the best way to communicate with and help pupils are very useful in enabling staff to develop pupils' independence skills. Pupils' achievements are assessed effectively through photographic evidence, annotated work and use of a commercial scheme which helps teachers to plan the next steps for learning.
105. Assemblies are used to reinforce many aspects of PSHE and citizenship teaching in classrooms. The Years 3 to 6 assembly reinforced the 'Golden Rules' of the classroom and reminded pupils that things that look beautiful are not always the best! Regular presentations that celebrate pupils' successes in a variety of activities in the school help pupils to feel positive about themselves.
106. Leadership is effective throughout the school. There is a strong sense of continuity between Years 1 to 6 and on into Years 7 to 11. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The quality of teaching is consistently good and a comprehensive scheme of work has been introduced.

THE LIVING AND LEARNING CENTRE

107. The school has very recently established and got underway a new initiative, the Living and Learning Centre, to provide for severely autistic and very challenging young people. This is accommodated in a new and separate building within the school grounds. While it is too early to make an overall evaluation of its effectiveness, the high quality with which its aims and provision are explained gives a very convincing picture of a very well conceived resource based on wide ranging expertise and high expectations. Extensive and informative assessment when pupils and students are first admitted and subsequent records of their progress clearly show that they are making great strides in their learning. A student from the Further Education Centre successfully attends a few sessions joining another student in such activities as swimming and making snacks.

THE FURTHER EDUCATION CENTRE

Provision in the Further Education Centre is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress in communication and social skills as a result of their teachers' understanding of their special educational needs.
- Teachers and co-educators build very good relationships with their students, successfully encouraging them to work hard.
- The quality of teaching is sometimes adversely affected by shortcomings in the curriculum and staffing arrangements.
- The leadership and management of the Further Education Centre are unsatisfactory.

108. The ability of students in the centre is lower than in most other classes in the school. This is due to many of the more able students choosing to enrol for courses in further education colleges and other centres rather than stay at school. Furthermore, the special educational needs of students staying on are commonly more complex.
109. Since the last inspection, there has been improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, and in students' achievements. However, the overall provision remains unsatisfactory because, at this time, what students are taught lacks coherence and does not prepare them sufficiently well for their next stage. This is due to the decision to change the curriculum not having been adequately thought through and planned. As a result:
- The decision to change examination courses has not been adequately implemented and, consequently, students have currently very few opportunities to gain awards this year.
 - The curriculum does not always challenge students sufficiently to become more self-reliant and prepare them to be as independent as they can be. It does not satisfactorily reflect their needs in the development towards adulthood and in many respects what is taught is not sufficiently different from what students learned in Years 10 and 11.
 - While there is a clear intention that the curriculum promotes students' independence, the written plans often lack the detail to guide teaching towards achieving this aim. This leads occasionally to teaching and the choice of activities and resources for lessons not matching the age and increasing maturity of students.
110. **Students achieve satisfactorily, overall. Occasionally, when what they are taught really meets their needs, students achieve well; for example, in English where they are helped to write letters, and also in the planning and preparation of meals as a group which provides good opportunities for learning. Students work together effectively as they decide what they want to make and the ingredients that they will need. They go to the shops using the local bus service, find what they want to buy and then pay for their purchases. These activities enable students to develop important skills that they will need after they leave school. In a mini-enterprise activity, students produced Christmas cakes for sale. The extent of the teacher's planning for each stage of production resulted in good cakes, but reduced the overall challenge and enterprise for students, including their ability to make decisions and work independently because they had to adhere strictly to the instructions.**
111. Many students make good progress in their personal and social development, including tackling the difficulties that arise from their special educational needs. One student with autism, for example, has taken significant strides in accepting he is part of a group and now behaves socially towards others. This development has led to him improving his concentration in lessons, answering questions and, for the first time, making contributions to discussion. As a result of taking an active part in learning, he is beginning to recognise different coins and has more confidence to visit shops and make purchases. Students do not make the progress they should in ICT because the equipment used in the centre is not as good as it should be. Opportunities to work in the ICT room are not used.
112. **In most lessons all students are given appropriate opportunities to make the progress they should. The content of lessons is adjusted to ensure the relatively few girls have topics that interest them. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties are often given specific support, for example, time is taken to allow them to make a response and to interpret accurately what they are contributing. One student made a choice to add a banana to their lunch box.**
113. Teachers and co-educators support and encourage students effectively and build their self-confidence. As a result, students make good progress in literacy and communication skills, for example, more able students read and understand their personal timetables. More generally, students greet each other using signs and speech and discuss their weekend activities. More

able students follow the discussion with interest and a few ask relevant questions without prompting. The comparison of work in students' files indicates that expectations of the quality of writing vary too much from one subject to another. In creative arts, for example, a student wrote a neat description of a television programme using simple but well sequenced sentences with correct punctuation and spelling. However, in religious education the same student was not able to use these skills as only single word answers were required. Less able students achieve well in improving their communication skills. They indicate preferences, explore objects more actively and sustain their interest in classroom activities.

114. Students' work and teachers' records indicate that satisfactory progress and achievement are made in numeracy overall. Less able students improve their understanding of 'more' and 'less' and distinguish between the shape and texture of objects. More able students read the days of the week and place them in the correct order. They know the different values of coins, count up small sums of money and solve simple addition and subtraction problems with the aid of a number line. Students' achievements in religious education are satisfactory. They build on the knowledge and understanding of what they have learned previously. One class began to explore what it was like to meditate. They sat quietly on the floor with two students imitating the cross legged position, listening to and concentrating on the music they could hear. Afterwards, they talked about how they felt during the activity.
115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although teaching is good in a substantial number of lessons, sometimes the value of this in terms of learning is lost because of the shortcomings in the curriculum. At times, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This is often as a result of limited expertise in the subjects taught and not enough care being taken to plan and prepare relevant activities. In a numeracy lesson, because teaching was rushed, not all students could count the number of dots shown on pictures of dice. The snakes and ladders used numbers that were too large for the students to add together and there were no number lines available to assist. In a science lesson, the teacher was not sufficiently clear about what was important for students to learn, which led to very unfocused work.
116. Students are frequently taught by teachers from other sections of the school, working part-time in the centre. Although this has advantages in gaining subject specific expertise, these staff are more accustomed to teaching younger pupils. As such, their approaches and expectations are not always adjusted sufficiently to reflect the young adult status of the students in the centre.
117. The relationships teachers and co-educators build with students are usually very positive. They gain students' confidence and trust, particularly including those with autism, which has a significant influence on them being co-operative and taking part in lessons. Teachers and co-educators have a good knowledge of students' needs and often use this in setting appropriate expectations and improving behaviour. They communicate effectively with students using signing, symbols and clear and simple speech. Questioning is frequently used well to establish what students have learned. Where teaching is good, lessons are often planned well with small steps and time at the end for students to go back over each step.
118. The leadership and management of the Further Education Centre are unsatisfactory. There has not been effective development of an adequate curriculum suited to young adults that meets fully their needs towards their transition to their next stage. While the complexity of students' needs means it has been difficult to establish if there are suitable courses offering external accreditation, there has been, over time, a lack of direction and determination in resolving this question. The composition of the teaching team, using staff from other parts of the school, also means they do not form a sufficient part of the centre's organisation and life. The school, through its monitoring and evaluation, together with that of the local authority, are aware of the centre's strengths and weaknesses. Following their own in-depth review, early last term, and the completion of the manager's qualified teacher status, problems are being dealt with. The leadership and, as a result, the management of the centre are being

strengthened using proven expertise, and improvement plans have been drawn up to tackle the curriculum and staffing. It is planned to build new accommodation to give the centre a clearer and more distinct identity.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	3
How inclusive the school is		1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	n/a	3
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	4	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	4	3
How well pupils learn	4	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	5	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	2
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	2	2
The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	5	3
The effectiveness of management	5	3

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