

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTFIELD SCHOOL

Leominster

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 117055

Acting headteacher: Sue Harris

Lead inspector: Dr D Alan Dobbins

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th February 2004

Inspection number: 259031

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	35
School address:	Westfield Walk Leominster
Postcode:	HR6 8HD
Telephone number:	01568 613147
Fax number:	01568 613147
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Sheila Hammond
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Westfield School is part of the provision of the Hereford Local Education Authority for pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, but it is admitting an increasing number of pupils with autistic tendencies. It deals with pupils from 5 to 19 years of age, although currently there is only one pupil who is five years of age. It serves a large rural community that includes the whole of north Herefordshire and some of south Shropshire. Although the agreed number of places is thirty currently thirty-five pupils attend the school, nineteen are boys and sixteen are girls. One boy is dual registered with a mainstream secondary school. All pupils are white British. There are no traveller children and no one is learning English as an additional language. Because of their learning difficulties, the attainment of pupils is below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Investor in People status was re-affirmed in 2003. The school is part of the Inclusion Project and as a result of its participation has gained money from the single regeneration budget. In September 2003, the deputy headteacher was appointed as the acting headteacher. A newly appointed headteacher takes up the position in April 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27424	Dr D Alan Dobbins	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, physical education
19692	Bob Folks	Lay inspector	
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, French, religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Westfield is a satisfactory school. The needs of all pupils are satisfactorily met. The standards pupils achieve continue to be limited by the unsatisfactory accommodation. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The accommodation limits the quality and range of pupils' learning and their access to the work of therapists.
- The teachers' high expectations for learning and behaviour do not realise equivalent progress because of inconsistent planning for learning and inadequacies in the procedures for tracking the gains made by pupils.
- The work of the school is not checked sufficiently well by senior managers or by governors, especially the planning for learning and the procedures for tracking the progress of pupils.
- The caring ethos that is based on very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- The very good attitude pupils have to their work and their commitment to doing their best.
- For the older pupils, the length of the teaching week is too short.

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection, although some of the key issues identified then have not been fully attended to. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching remains too informal and the older pupils continue to spend too little time learning science. The curriculum now meets National Curriculum requirements, the development plan has improved and the procedures for financial planning are satisfactory. The unsatisfactory accommodation continues to impose limitations on what pupils can learn.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED*

**Pupils achievement is judged for the years that reflect best the organisation structure of the school, and not at the end of all the key stages.*

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 8	Satisfactory	Very good
Year 13	Satisfactory	Very good

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

Overall, the standards pupils achieve are **satisfactory**. In part, this is because of the very good progress they make in developing their self-confidence and self-esteem. This allows them to be fully involved in their learning and the standards they achieve in lessons benefit from this. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, over time, pupils achieve satisfactorily well. In design and technology, music, physical education and religious education they also achieve satisfactorily well. The opening of the new computer suite with very good quality specialist equipment has had a beneficial effect on the standards pupils achieve. These are now good. The very good knowledge teachers and the teaching assistants have of the special needs of pupils and careful planning to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons enables all pupils, irrespective of the cause or complexity of their special needs, to make equivalent progress. Too few lessons were seen in art and design, French, geography and history to make judgements on how well pupils are achieving.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**, overall. Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are very good. All staff are very good role models. Each helps pupils make very good progress in all aspects of their personal and social development. Attendance is **good**. There is no unauthorised absence.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. The very good relationships between staff and pupils underpin the very good progress pupils make in their personal and social development. The quality of teaching is **good**. Teachers know their pupils very well. The teaching assistants are very competent and are used very well in ensuring that all pupils work hard at their learning. In most lessons learning is fun because staff routinely encourage pupils and enjoy celebrating their successes with them. Pupils are active in learning over the duration of lessons and only rarely is there a need to remind pupils of their responsibilities. Consequently, the quality of learning is **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is relevant because it focuses on promoting personal and social skills and literacy and numeracy, so that pupils can live as independently as possible. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, although not all elements of the subjects are fully covered. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. It restricts what can be taught and the standards pupils can achieve in some subjects. The absence of a specific base for pupils older than 16 years of age, specialist facilities for teaching science, art and design, music, physical education, specialist rooms for the provision of therapy and toilet areas that are just satisfactory, compromises the learning, privacy and dignity of pupils. In addition, The accommodation is too small and cramped for the number, age range and special educational needs of the pupils it serves. The quality of care, guidance and support is **good**. The partnership with parents is **good**. Annual reports do not provide sufficient information on the progress pupils have made over the year. The links with local schools are **satisfactory**. More pupils spend more time in mainstream schools than is the case for pupils in many equivalent schools. But, the time is not always spent well because the targets for learning and for personal and social gain are not sufficiently clear and not always known by staff of the receiving school. Parents provide very good support to the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership is **satisfactory**. The acting headteacher has worked hard since her appointment in September 2003 to maintain conditions so that staff and pupils can achieve their best. She has gained very good support from staff and from advisors of the local authority. Much work remains to be done, especially in forming and operating procedures that check the quality of the provision, and in furthering the competencies of staff through more effective systems for performance management and their induction. The management of the unit is **good**. Day-to-day the work proceeds in an environment that emphasises support and encouragement, and is calm and ordered. Governance by the governing body is **satisfactory**. Statutory requirements are met, but governors gain too little formal information to evaluate the quality of the provision or to be effective in helping direct development. Weekly teaching time for the older pupils continues to be less than recommended, or provided, for pupils in many equivalent schools.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The links with parents and carers are **good**. They are very appreciative of the work of the school. Many are active in the Parent, Teachers and Friends group that provides important help for the school by donating additional extra money. Pupils indicate that they like school, especially their teachers and teaching assistants. They think that school is a 'good place to be'.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Work with the local education authority to minimise the effect of the accommodation on the work of the school.
- Raise the standards achieved over time by improving planning for learning and the procedures for tracking pupils' progress.
- Ensure that information is collected to check the quality of the provision and that performance management and induction procedures contribute to developing the provision.
- Increase the length of the teaching week for pupils aged 14 to 19 and create distinctive provision for post-16 pupils.
- Governors should operate formal procedures to check the quality of the provision, including the work of the headteacher.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils are grouped into four classes according to capability, with age being a secondary factor. This results in each class having pupils whose age range spans four or more years. In one class, the age range is greater than six years and three key stages. Given this form of organisation, it is not meaningful to report the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making over a key stage, as would be the case for most schools where pupils are grouped by age. Here, in order to reflect the organisational structure of classes, the standards achieved and the progress pupils are making are reported from 6 to 13 years of age and from 14 to 19 years of age.

When pupils' special educational needs are taken into account, the standards they achieve in lessons are good. Although they achieve well in lessons, over time they make **satisfactory** progress because of inconsistencies in the planning and the assessment procedures and because of limitations imposed by the accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and work hard to please their teachers and teaching assistants and this makes a considerable contribution to the progress they make in lessons.
- All pupils, irrespective of the cause or complexity of their special needs make equivalent progress.
- Very good progress is made in developing personal and social skills and in speaking and listening.
- Very good behaviour means that pupils achieve well over the full duration of lessons.
- The good standards achieved in lessons are not reflected in the progress pupils are making over a longer duration.
- Individual education plans do not provide a sufficiently good record of the progress pupils have made in meeting targets over their time at school or from one annual review to another.
- The very good resources in information and communication technology are helping pupils make good progress.
- Despite the lack of specialist facilities, the progress pupils make in science benefits from the regular opportunities they have to learn through practical work.
- The good number of pupils who take some of their lessons in mainstream schools do not are making too little progress against their targets.

Commentary

1. Teachers use specialist procedures to match the learning needs of pupils very well. This results in all pupils having equal access to all lesson tasks and achieving equivalent standards and progress, whatever the cause or complexity of their special needs. Pupils with the most complex special needs are appropriately taught by predominantly sensory approaches, which emphasise touching, seeing, hearing and smelling. Those with symptoms of autism are effectively taught some of their lessons through the specialised procedures of the treatment and education of communicationally challenged children (TEACCH). Targets in the new form of individual education plans, in literacy and numeracy, provide good guidance for selecting lesson tasks that match the needs of pupils. Targets in the older form of individual education plans were too imprecise to track back pupils' progress against them over a year or longer and provided too little help in lesson planning. Pupils trust and respect staff and have very good relationships with

them. The very good progress they make in developing their personal and social skills is, in part, the result of this.

2. They work hard at their learning. They like their teachers and teaching assistants and have fully accepted their role as learners. They behave very well. Inappropriate behaviour rarely disrupts learning, which routinely takes place over the full duration of lessons. The very good relationships they have with the staff makes them confident as learners and willing to ask questions when they are not clear of their tasks and to engage in discussion. This helps them act on the advice and guidance provided for them by staff and contributes to the very good progress they make in developing their personal and social skills. It also helps promote the good progress they make in speaking and listening, which is sustained over time. As a result, the highest attaining pupils between 6 and 13 years of age communicate their ideas using a growing vocabulary. The most articulate of the 14 to 19 year olds talk confidently and excitedly, for example of how they help their parents in the home. Those with good speech abilities talk easily and properly to visitors. Those who require help in communication either through electronic aids or signs, symbols and pictures are equally as comfortable when dealing with visitors.
3. The standards pupils achieve in the lessons in design and technology, music, physical education and religious education are good, but because of deficiencies in planning and in recording the small gains pupils are making progress over time is satisfactory. Too few lessons were observed in art, French, geography and history for firm judgements to be made on the standards pupils achieve.
4. Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete subject in the new computer suite. Since the opening of the suite in September 2003, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they have been making are good. Computers are used regularly in the lessons in the other subjects and this helps reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Those with the most complex special needs are adept at using a range of switches and peripheral devices to help them control their immediate environment. In all the classes, pupils regularly record their experiences with digital cameras. The most capable of the 14 to 19 year olds load the pictures into a computer, size and change as required and save to their own files. They have good control of the screen and are familiar with the basic functions of word processing, publishing and spreadsheet programs. They use these well to complete finished work, including presenting their findings through graphs and pie charts.
5. Even though the accommodation does not include specialist facilities to support teaching and learning in science, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making benefits from the emphasis given to learning through doing. For example in a lesson on light, younger pupils achieved a good understanding of the difference between light and dark because the activities were fun and stimulating and they were excited when using a large torch under a big parachute. By the time they leave school, the best at science attain National Curriculum Level 2. They predict outcomes of investigations, obtain and record results and know what makes a simple fair test. For example, they compare changes in food left in a freezer or refrigerator with food left at room temperature and understand why they are different. Lessons in science for pupils with the most complex special needs involve feeling and touching and tasting and smelling. However, because science is taught in ordinary classrooms, the curriculum is narrow. It does not include opportunities for pupils to learn all the elements of the subject that would be possible with appropriate accommodation.
6. A good number of pupils, more than in many equivalent schools have their learning experiences broadened by taking some lessons with pupils in mainstream schools. They are doing satisfactorily well. They enjoy visiting their other schools but these experiences are not wholly effective because their targets for learning and for personal and social development are not always clear enough to provide adequate guidance to the mainstream staff.
7. The good standards pupils achieve in lessons are better than at the last inspection, when they were judged as satisfactory for almost all subjects. Over time, they remain satisfactory. Improved planning and better procedures for recognising the small steps pupils make in their

learning should result in the good standards seen in lessons being reflected in equivalent progress over time. The recent introduction of the accredited programme of awards for life and living (ALL) should also help by providing a precise focus for the curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 19 years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are **very good**. Provision for developing pupils' spiritual, social moral and cultural awareness is **good**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good way that pupils respond to the high expectations for behaviour and learning of teachers and teaching assistants.
- The very good relationships pupils have with staff, which makes them confident learners who are ready to have fun in the lessons.
- The caring ethos and the good range of opportunities within and outside of the school make a very good base from which to learn right from wrong and values, such as trust, friendship and respect

Commentary

8. Teachers and their teaching assistants have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils respond very well throughout all of the school day. They react well with each other and frequently offer help to each other. Lunch times are enjoyable occasions. Teaching assistants and lunch time helpers make sure that pupils are fed well, but expect pupils to do as much as they can for themselves so that they become as independent as possible. Pupils' very good behaviour, the very good attitudes they have to their work and the very good relationships they have with staff contribute to making Westfield a happy place. Parents agree. They are pleased with their children's attitudes toward the school, the good effort they make to learn and their very good behaviour. Harassment in all its forms occurs very infrequently. It is dealt with very well. There were no exclusions during the last year.
9. The very good relationships between the pupils and staff help pupils become confident learners. This benefits the standards they achieve in the subjects and in their personal and social development. If they are not sure what to do, they ask questions using speech, sign or gesture and quickly get on with their work. They persist at their tasks because they concentrate very well. They take pride in completing their work to the best of their capability and enjoy celebrating this with their teachers, teaching assistants and classmates.
10. The caring ethos provides a rich base from which to develop concepts of spirituality, such as friendship and trust, their personal and social skills and an awareness of others. Each is fostered very well in lessons and throughout the school day. For example, in a science lesson for the youngest pupils, they took turns and shared a battery torch when they learned about light and dark. In lessons in religious education, pupils learn about the need for rules and codes of behaviour and through listening to visitors and role-play they learn about the ceremonies of the Christian and of other religions. In lessons in history, they make artefacts based on the Aztec, Celtic and Egyptian cultures and present these as wall displays. Visits to shops and restaurants in the local community provide valuable opportunities to practise personal and social skills and to gain in self-confidence. Horse riding, swimming and trampolining challenge pupils to become confident in new situations. The regular opportunities they have to take responsibility within their classrooms and across the school also help. Pupils take part in concerts, make refreshments for fund raising events, collect registers and do classroom duties, such as clearing up after lessons. The oldest pupils put their learning into practice when they decided on the rules they wanted to impose in their own classroom. At lunch times, they make choices on what they want and, those who are able, clear away their plates. They eat using place mats with a picture of themselves and a message on the food and drinks they like or should not have. They feel valued

because they know that their health and well being are important to staff. They learn about life in other countries, for example through the Internet link with a school in Sri Lanka, and theme days on life in Holland, Spain and France and through the involvement of staff in the Comenius project.

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Attendance has made good improvement in the last year. There is no unauthorised absence, the main reasons being illness and medical appointments. Punctuality is good. Attendance is monitored well and all statutory requirements are met.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
Unit data	8.3	Unit data	0.0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Unsatisfactory accommodation, which affects the learning experiences of pupils by limiting what can be taught, is compensated for in part by the good quality of teaching and learning, the good care taken of pupils and the effect of the good links with parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

The **good** quality of teaching results in good quality learning in lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good work of the teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to pupils' good learning in lessons.
- The careful selection of lesson tasks that match well with the special needs of pupils.
- The procedures for assessing the progress pupils are making do not provide sufficient help in lesson planning to sustain the good progress pupils are making in lessons over a longer duration.
- Information and communications technology is beginning to provide good support for teaching and learning.
- Many parents make good use of the home – school diary in helping their children learn at home.

Commentary

12. Teachers and the teaching assistants know the pupils very well and deal sensitively with them. Their expectations for learning and behaviour are high. Lessons are interesting and challenging for pupils because tasks are selected to match with their needs. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the good standards pupils achieve because they are deployed very effectively. They are at ease working with individual pupils and when they support the teacher who is dealing with all the pupils. The generous size of the main classrooms helps because pupils are able to work as individuals, or in small groups, without bothering each other. The very good relationships between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' delight in achieving success because they know their teachers and teaching assistants will celebrate with them. They work hard and make a good effort to do their best, but this doesn't stop them having fun and enjoying their lessons. Pupils are becoming increasingly independent as learners.

13. The procedures for recognising the progress pupils are making are relatively recent. They are limiting the progress pupils make over time because they provide too little information for teachers to use in planning lessons to ensure that learning is ordered and sequenced and that

new learning is always based on prior learning. This is the reason why the good gains pupils are making in lessons are not being transferred to longer durations such as a term, year or key stage. Records of pupils' work vary in quality and consistency over teachers and subjects. Information gained from assessing pupils' learning is, generally, not used well enough in helping plan lessons, although the special needs of pupils are catered for very well. Records of the progress pupils make are not checked by the leadership. This is an issue in all subjects, but less so in English and mathematics. In these subjects, the use of good commercial assessment procedures to recognise small gains in learning, and the detailed descriptors of attainment of the 'P' scales and the PIVATS procedures, are beginning to help record the progress pupils are making more accurately. The new format for targets in pupils' individual education plans is more acceptable. In English and mathematics, they are already beginning to provide useful information that links well to the 'P' scales for the younger pupils and to the levels of the National Curriculum for the older pupils. Using this information well in lesson planning will enable new learning to be firmly based in prior learning. When this happens, the gains made in lessons will be sustained over time.

14. In most subjects, information and communications technology provides good help in supporting teaching and learning especially the development of literacy. All teachers have completed the national training programme. They have good skills and a good understanding of how computers and peripheral devices, such as switches and Big Macs, help in teaching pupils with diverse learning needs and a wide range of capabilities. The new computer suite provides access to the Internet, which is beginning to be used well by teachers to promote independence in learning as pupils search for information they think relevant to their task. Each classroom has at least one computer and some have three or more. In most lessons, pupils move quickly and quietly to the computer, for example to match sounds to letters in English or complete repeated addition and subtraction sums in mathematics. Less use is made of computers in the other subjects because resources, such as CD-ROMs, are more limited. Pupils with the most complex special needs gain good access to their learning through an assorted range of switches and peripheral devices that control lights, sound and noise as well as the computer screen.
15. The home – school diary provides rich information on what pupils have achieved during the day. Many parents and carers use this well in guiding learning at home. Most have contributed to the targets identified for their children at annual reviews. This information is also used well in directing learning that takes place in the home.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0.0)	13 (39.3)	15 (45.5)	3 (9.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

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

* Two lessons were not judged for teaching as they were taught by teachers in other schools.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Resources to support teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. The accommodation is **unsatisfactory** because it imposes too many limitations on what can be taught.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- The curriculum is extended by a good number of innovations.
- The length of the school day is less than that recommended for pupils aged 14 –19 years of age.
- The generous number of very competent teaching assistants and mid-day supervisors make a valuable and effective contribution to presenting the curriculum.

- The curriculum for pupils 14 to 19 years of age includes too few opportunities to mix with adults outside of the school, including those at local colleges.

Commentary

16. The accommodation is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. It restricts the quality and range of the curriculum and compromises the privacy and dignity of pupils. It is too small and cramped for the number, age and special educational needs of the pupils it serves. The lack of specialist teaching facilities for science limits the access of the older pupils, especially, to practical and investigative science. Toilet areas are too small to change pupils in wheelchairs with appropriate dignity. There is no base for pupils older than 16 year of age to develop their independent skills, or specific rooms for therapy work and the storage of specialist equipment. Physiotherapy, for example takes place in the library. The multi-purpose hall is too small and cluttered to be safely used for many activities in physical education. There are no changing rooms to encourage high standards in this subject. A general lack of storage space across the school makes the efficient use of resources difficult.
17. Provision for personal, social and health, education (PSHE), including sex education, drug misuse, careers education and aspects of citizenship is very good. It contributes very well to the positive attitude pupils have towards their work and their sense of belonging and being valued. The good links with local schools and the community provide many opportunities for many pupils to develop self-confidence and their personal and social skills. Activities throughout the day, especially lunch times and play times provide many good opportunities for the development of personal and social skills. The planned programme for PSHE is supported very well outside of lessons. The gentleness, affection and humour that staff consistently show pupils when they care for them, handle and feed them, and the advice and encouragement that they regularly gain from staff, help them mature and take increasing responsibility toward becoming as independent as possible.
18. Many innovative activities enrich and extend the curriculum, especially for pupils with the most complex special needs. In addition to the more usual therapies of music, speech, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy pupils receive massage therapy, hippotherapy, rebound therapy on a full-size trampoline and yoga. Each helps them gain better access to the curriculum by improving their co-ordination, flexibility, strength and personal attributes such as attention and persistence. A programme for the arts, which includes visits to theatres, art galleries, museums and to craft facilities where pupils work collaboratively with artisans, broaden pupils' horizons. Occasionally, specialist artists visit the school to share their skills and interests with pupils. Their awareness of social responsibilities and of lives of others is formed through work, for example with partner schools in Europe and Sri Lanka, through fund raising for a number of local and international charities and through visits to exhibitions such as the Anne Frank Exhibition at Hereford Cathedral. As a consequence pupils' have a good notion of citizenship.
19. The length of the taught week is less than that recommended for pupils aged 11 to 13 years and considerably less than that recommended for pupils aged 14 to 19 years. This was identified as an issue at the last inspection, and has not been attended to. The situation is similar for science. At the last inspection the older pupils were learning science for less time than were pupils in many equivalent schools. This situation is also unchanged.
20. The curriculum for the 14 to 19 year olds is relevant because it focuses on the development of social and independent skills, so that pupils are as independent as possible when they leave school. It emphasises literacy and numeracy and the use of these in the real world. It is supported well by the work experience programme and the community participation programme, in which pupils, for example help prepare meals for those in a sheltered workshop. However, preparation for life after school includes fewer 'adult' activities than is the case for pupils in equivalent schools that have dedicated accommodation. The use of provision available in the local colleges is very limited.

21. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the very wide range of pupils' age, their capabilities and their special educational needs stretches the ingenuity and invention of staff in meeting their entitlement to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which includes the National Curriculum. The number of teachers is small, but the number of support staff is generous. Teachers have to accept responsibilities for co-ordinating more than one subject. In some they have had little training and hold little specialist knowledge. They are also required to lead their subjects over four key stages, a task not required of subject co-ordinators in mainstream primary or secondary schools. This is a big task, which is not fully met for most subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. Pupils have **satisfactory** access to the support and guidance they need as they progress through the school. Older pupils have **satisfactory** opportunities to contribute to the school's procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of care by all the staff, who know and understand pupils' learning and personal needs very well.
- Individual education plans do not provide a sufficiently good record of the progress pupils have made in meeting targets over their time at school or from one annual review to another.
- The good links with the Connexions service.
- Health and safety risks are not well documented in some lessons in science and physical education.
- The opportunities for pupils to share their views about the school are too limited.

Commentary

22. Pupils are treated with great care and respect. This enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and attempt the tasks that are planned for them in lessons and at lunch times with enthusiasm. The routines for moving, feeding and toileting pupils, especially for those who have the most complex special needs are well established and very effective. Inappropriate behaviour is managed quickly and calmly so that it does not interrupt learning.

23. Teachers and teaching assistants know the capabilities of the pupils very well. Pupils' individual education plans have targets for English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and specific targets to support those who take some of their lessons in mainstream schools. These are reviewed at the annual review and new targets set. The records that judge progress against the targets are of inconsistent quality and are not checked by the leadership. Consequently, recognising the progress pupils make against their targets from one annual review to another is difficult. Equally difficult to judge is the progress pupils are making in the subjects. There is no consistent school wide approach. Judging the progress pupils are making against descriptors of attainment such as the 'P' scales or levels of the National Curriculum is not being consistently done over all subjects and all classes. Many assessments are informal and are not recorded. The information that is recorded is in different forms for the subjects in different classes. Also, because too little information is gained when pupils enter the school, there is no baseline against which to judge the progress pupils have made during their time at school. Each of these contributes to the school being unable to accurately judge the progress pupils are making over longer periods of time, such as a year or key stage. They are also acting to limit the effect of the good teaching and learning on pupils' progress by providing too little information on what pupils understand and can do, that can be used for lesson planning.

24. Pupils from Year 9 onward benefit from regular contact with the Connexions adviser. She attends the annual reviews and provides good support, advice and guidance on the opportunities

available to them when they leave the school. She is an important link for pupils between school and the colleges most attend when they leave.

25. The health and safety policy is in draft form and has not been signed and dated by the governing body. It requires that subject leaders write health and safety policies for their areas. This has not been completed for all subjects. No unsafe practices were seen during the inspection. However, planning documents for practical subjects such as science and physical education do not identify sufficiently well the possible risks associated with some lesson activities.
26. Pupils' views on the running of the school are not taken account of as much as they are in other equivalent schools. Many pupils have considerable difficulty in communicating their thoughts and feelings and this limits the extent to which staff are able to seek their views. The views of the older pupils are sought for fund raising activities, for example and they have contributed to establishing a code of conduct for their classroom. However, in many other equivalent schools pupils are elected to the School's Council and will also have more opportunities to shape some decisions in their classes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents and the community are **good**. More pupils take lessons in mainstream schools than is the case for pupils in many equivalent schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good way the Parent, Teacher and friends Association supports the school.
- Links with the community benefit pupils by providing learning experiences they cannot gain in their classrooms, the links with local schools and colleges contribute too little to this.
- Annual reports do not provide sufficient information on the progress pupils have made over the year.

Commentary

27. Parents provide strong support for the school. Many do so through the Parent, Teacher and Friends Association, which is thriving. Many events are organised throughout the year to raise money that is used to beneficially extend pupils' learning experiences, for example through the purchase of specialist equipment and by paying for visits. Many local organisations raise additional funds.
28. The links with the community also benefit learning by extending and enriching the curriculum. These include visits to the school by local football teams, taking part in the riding for the disabled programme, swimming at the local pool and through visits to the town library and to places of historical interest. Annually, pupils enjoy the activities of the Leominster May Fair including having fun on the many rides.
29. The inclusion programme involves a good number of mainstream schools. Many have a very close liaison. For example, St. Michael's Primary School at Bodenham provides regular inclusion opportunities and their pupils attend the Westfield School Harvest Festival. Links with the local colleges contribute very little to the learning experiences of the older pupils. Pupils aged 14 to 19 years of age spend less time following courses or being on awareness days at local colleges than do those in many other equivalent schools. This was also the case at the last inspection.
30. A minority would like to receive more information on how their children are doing. In part, inspectors agree. The annual reports on children's progress are variable in quality. They do not include a clear judgement on how well children have done over the year. This apart, the other information provided for parents is good. The prospectus is presented well and includes all the required information, as does the governor's annual report. Regular newsletters are sent out and the many letters to parents and carers keep them well informed of forthcoming events. The home

- school books are used well by both teachers and parents. They are a very valuable channel of communication between the home and school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The acting headteacher has worked hard to develop the quality of the provision and to ensure that day-to-day the unit is managed appropriately well. In this, she has received very good support from all staff and the linked advisors of the local authority.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The acting headteacher ensures the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
- Too few procedures operate to recognise how effective the school is in carrying out its work and in judging the quality and relevance of the curriculum. This leads to difficulties in planning for the future.
- The procedures for inducting new staff do not operate well.
- Governors do not check the quality of the provision sufficiently well.
- The staff form a very effective and united team. All are good role models and have very good relationships with pupils.

Commentary

31. Since her appointment in September 2003, the acting headteacher has worked hard to increase the effectiveness of the school. In this, she has been partially successful. Day-to-day, the management of the school is good. Systems operate smoothly and pupils are safe and secure.
32. The provision is very wide ranging, extending from the Foundation Stage and including all four key stages and provision for post-16 students. Pupils' special educational needs and their entitlement to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum has to be met by a very small number of teachers in accommodation that includes too few specialist facilities. It is hard to form a clear vision of provision in the present accommodation that is high quality and extends over the very wide age range of pupils. This task is made harder because many of the procedures that help check the effectiveness of the school are not working well. These include those that recognise the progress pupils are making, for checking planning in the subjects and in lessons, and for judging the quality of teaching and learning. At this time, senior managers and the governors are not able to accurately judge the quality of the work of the school or identify sensible directions for development.
33. The acting headteacher is frequently in and out of lessons, and because of the very small number of teachers she knows their capability and competence very well. This is an advantage for schools of small size. Even so, the procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning are not formal enough. They do not include a discussion following a visit to a lesson, or the writing of a report. The performance management procedures are also not as formal as they need to be. The acting headteacher has not had targets identified for her by governors. Target setting as a means for improving the work of staff is not operating well. The procedures for inducting new staff are not clear enough to support them in quickly becoming effective in their work.
34. There are no procedures for assessing the quality of the many policies and planning documents, but they are, generally, satisfactory. Some teachers have responsibility for co-ordinating three or four subjects, including those in which they have had little specialist training. They have accepted their responsibilities well and have made good attempts to lead and manage in each of their subjects. In some, notably physical education, very good use is made of specialist instructors to provide expert tuition, for example in swimming, hockey and horse riding. Resources are overall satisfactory. Subject audits are of variable quality. Only in a small number of subjects do they

include priorities for development that can be discussed for inclusion in the school development plan.

35. It is testament to the commitment and competence of the teachers and teaching assistants that pupils are doing as well as they are in lessons. Even after a short time, most pupils recognise that being at the school is a purposeful experience and quickly establish very good relationships with staff. When they are in school, they know they are safe, secure and valued. Parents and carers also know this.

Governance

36. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The governing body is well formed. The chairperson is hardworking and committed. Governors made and acted on difficult decisions in the near past. The committee structure is sensible and covers all aspects of the work of the school. Statutory requirements are met. However, all their responsibilities are not met in full. Further work is required before governors are able to fully account for the effectiveness of the school. The procedures for checking the quality of all the work need to be more formal, as do those for overseeing the performance management of staff, including setting targets for the headteacher. When these are in place and are operating well, governors will be able to evaluate the quality of the provision and the work of the leadership and will then be meeting all their responsibilities.

Financial management and the implementation of best value

37. Financial planning is **satisfactory**. At the time of the last inspection, the improvement plan provided too little guidance on directions for development and this, in part, resulted in a surplus of money. Since that time, most of the carried forward money has been used to improve the playground and other facilities. As a result, the current carry forward is less than five percent. The committee for finance regularly monitor projected expenditure against actual spend. The four principles of best value are complied with. Financial planning and management are now satisfactory and are better than at the last inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)*		Balances (£)	
Total income	598914	Balance from previous year	96079
Total expenditure	696368	Balance carried forward to the next	34321
Expenditure per pupil	12678		

* Includes income and expenditure against the provision of the Early Learning Centre, which has since moved elsewhere.

Barriers to achievement

38. There are two major barriers to achievement. The accommodation limits what can be taught and the standards pupils can achieve in many subjects. The absence of coherent assessment procedures that operate over all subjects and all years limits the effect of good quality teaching by providing too little help in planning lessons that match with the learning needs of pupils, as well as their special needs. Another barrier has to do with the range of the provision. The age range of pupils and their special educational needs are both considerable. It is a forbidding task to present a relevant curriculum that matches with pupils' entitlement and their special needs over all the years, when the number of teachers is very small.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS FOR PUPILS AGED 6 TO 13 YEARS AND FOR PUPILS AGED 14 TO 19 YEARS.

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

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FRENCH)

Eleven lessons were observed in English over all the school. The co-ordinator, teachers and pupils were interviewed. The quality of completed work was analysed. The targets for literacy in individual education plans were looked at.

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teamwork between teachers and their assistants ensures that all pupils are fully involved in their learning.
- The gains pupils are making are not tracked well. Because of this the good gains made in lessons are not sustained over the longer period.
- The very good use of resources and the good selection of teaching strategies results in all pupils irrespective of their age, or the cause or complexity of their special needs, making equivalent progress.
- The recently appointed co-ordinator is improving the organisation, planning and procedures for assessment the progress pupils are making.

Commentary

39. The standards pupils achieve in lessons in each of the aspects of English are good, but with the exception of speaking and listening these are not sustained over a longer duration. Over time, the progress pupils are making is satisfactory. By the time they leave school, the best at English are at Level 2 of the National Curriculum in each element of the subject and will gain pass grades on the Certificate of Achievement.
40. Lessons are planned to give pupils many opportunities to practise their communication skills. This involves speaking and listening for most pupils but signing and using pictures and symbols for others. As a result, all pupils, including those with the most complex special needs, make good progress in speaking and listening and this is sustained over time. The highest attaining pupils between 6 and 13 years of age are confident in communicating their ideas using a growing vocabulary. The lowest attaining pupils are beginning to initiate communication by making eye contact or by gesturing. Their progress is helped by the work of the speech and language therapists, but progress would be even better with more specialist advice.
41. In reading, pupils aged 6 to 14 years begin each day with a short, sharp programme of phoneme awareness training, which introduces the speech sounds of English through combinations of consonant and vowel sounds. The better readers use commercial schemes that are relevant to their capabilities. Those with the most complex special needs make equivalent progress, for example, when they listen and attend to the poem 'On the Ning Nang Nong'. They locate, track and sequence sounds and use electronic aids to recite the poem in unison. The best readers aged 14 to 19 years read simple unfamiliar text accurately and with meaning. Others explore and manipulate objects and the toys linked to stories and show anticipation in response to familiar parts of stories.
42. Teachers provide regular and well-planned opportunities for pupils to practise their handwriting and to develop writing skills. By the time they leave school, the best writers produce work that is

neat and tidy. They spell simple words and use capital letters and full stops appropriately. Computers help in drafting and redrafting work and in improving presentation. Those with the most complex special needs continue to make marks with paint and crayon and chose symbols on a computer that reflect their needs and their feelings. They are beginning to be aware that these convey specific meaning.

43. Teaching in English is good. Lessons are planned well and are enjoyed by pupils. Planning, based on a good knowledge of pupils' learning difficulties, and ensures equal access to all aspects of the subject for all pupils. The very good teamwork between teachers and their teaching assistants is a characteristic of lessons and makes a substantial contribution to the good standards all pupils achieve in lessons, irrespective of the cause or complexity of their special needs. The very good use of materials, resources and strategies by teachers and their assistants enable all pupils to be fully engaged in learning over the full duration of lessons. For example, pictures, symbols and signing are used especially well for pupils with autistic spectrum tendencies. An electronic speech simulator is used by a pupil with very limited speech so that he can answer the questions put to him by the teacher. A pupil with very poor sight is learning touch typing to be able to access learning through the computer. Pupils with the most complex special needs see, feel, hear and smell, for example tactile books. They are learning to communicate by eye contact and facial expression, gesturing, pointing, signing and by using photographs, pictures and symbols, objects of reference and electronic communication aids and switches.
44. Too little information is gained on pupils' capabilities in reading and writing when they enter the school. The limited use of standardised tests for reading readiness, reading and spelling, and the changing format of the targets for literacy in individual education plans makes it difficult to track pupils' progress overtime, or to use this information to plan lessons that ensure new learning is firmly based on prior learning. Weaknesses in the assessment and recording of pupils' learning results in the good standards observed in lessons not being sustained over the longer duration.
45. Leadership and management have been satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is more pro-active and is seeking to develop English according to the directions outlined in the subject development plan. These are sensible and when achieved should realise considerable improvement in the provision. Pupils' experience of English is very effectively broadened by taking part in whole-school productions, such as the Wizard of Oz, visits to the local theatre, to the Hereford Book Week and the Children's Play Theatre. The library and the visiting mobile library are both used well in support learning in the lessons and to foster pupils' independence. The standards pupils achieve remain very much the same as in the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Language and literacy are promoted well in the other subjects through many incidental opportunities. The small number of teachers, and the fact that every teacher teaches English, means that they know pupils' capabilities in English and what they are working on in lessons. They use this information well in the lessons in the other subjects. For example, in lessons in mathematics, pupils learn the vocabulary associated with number, estimation and shape. In lessons in music, they practise singing and signing well-known songs. In lessons in art, they recall the story of animals in the jungle before making animal puppets. In lessons in information and communications technology, they write over the initial letter of their name on the interactive whiteboard.

French

One lesson was observed. Staff and pupils were talked to and completed work analysed.

47. Only pupils with the most complex special needs have lessons in French. Appropriately, these focus on enhancing communication. Pupils aged 14 to 19 years of age learn about other cultures through designated theme days, for example on life in Holland, Spain and France. The quality of

teaching in the one French lesson seen was very good. Pupils were very motivated to learn because the lesson activities were fun for them. They learned simple phrases describing the weather through tasks and games that matched very well with their needs and capabilities. The teaching assistants made an important contribution to learning by providing sensitive and effective support whenever pupils required help.

MATHEMATICS

Four lessons were seen. The co-ordinator and teachers were interviewed and pupils work analysed.

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their pupils very well and use their teaching assistants very well to ensure all pupils are fully involved in the lessons.
- Pupils are confident learners who are prepared to try new tasks and use new resources and computers.
- The new assessment procedures are inconsistently applied and provide too little help for planning lessons and for recording pupils' progress.
- The new planning documents are aimed at ensuring learning is sequential and is based on prior learning.

Commentary

48. The standards pupils achieve in lessons are good, but are satisfactory over the longer duration of a term, year and key stage. The assessment procedures provide too little help in lesson planning to ensure that the good learning seen in lessons is transferred to good progress over time. The new planning documents and a new approach to assessing the gains pupils are making are beginning to provide more information for planning lessons. When this information is used well by all teachers, the standards pupils achieve over time should reflect those recognised in lessons.
49. Pupils aged 6 to 13 years with complex special needs respond to objects and sounds, sort colours and shapes and enjoy number songs. They identify quiet and loud and heavy and light, and understand turn taking. By the time they are 13 years of age, the best at mathematics are working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. They build on this between ages 14 and 19 years to attain at Level 3 of the National Curriculum. When they leave school, they use their mathematical skills and knowledge in everyday life. They tell time, calculate the required money for a purchase and use their knowledge of weight and volume when making simple recipes.
50. The quality of teaching is good. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This helps them be confident as learners who are willing to take risks, ask questions when they are not sure of what they have to do and persist very well in completing their tasks. Computers are used well and give good help to teachers in meeting the wide range of pupils' needs seen in all the classes. In most lessons, one or a small number of pupils, spends part of their time, for example matching number shapes to objects. Older pupils reinforce their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skills by applying these to money, time and distance. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and make a considerable contribution to the good quality of pupils' learning. They are equally at ease supporting the teacher when she addresses the whole class, or when they direct the learning of small groups of pupils. Learning is supported well by the good range and quantity of resources. These include three different commercial schemes, each with linked opportunities for computer work and a good range of small resources such as number cards, blocks, dice, shapes and patterns.
51. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed. She has worked very hard at planning the curriculum so that it is presented as a developmental progression for each of the attainment

targets. This means that the teachers have a clear idea of what should be taught next and how this can be based on prior learning. This is good, because in each class the range of pupils' capabilities is considerable. For example, in the class for 14 to 19 year old pupils the range extends from 'P' Level 6 to Level 3 of the National Curriculum. The new form of targets in individual education plans are beginning to provide satisfactory guidance for teaching.

52. Provision in mathematics is the same as at the time of the last inspection, but it is improving because of better leadership and management. Long term and lesson planning are now good. The assessment procedures are catching up. The plans for recording the progress pupils are making and for using this information to make teaching more effective are good. Commercial schemes are beginning to be used to record the small steps that pupils make in their learning. Each will contribute to improvement in the standards pupils are achieving over time, so that they reflect those seen in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Mathematical skills are practised well in the other subjects. As was the case for English, the small number of teachers helps because teachers know what pupils' are capable of in mathematics and what they are working on in the lessons. They use this information well in creating opportunities for pupils to use their skills and knowledge in the lessons in the other subjects. For example, in a lesson in information and communication technology for the youngest pupils, they were called to the front of the class by number to use the whiteboard. In a hockey lesson in the hall, the oldest pupils formed partners and counted the passes they made to each other. In literacy sessions in the morning, many of the stories that pupils read involve the use of number.

SCIENCE

Two lessons were seen in science. The co-ordinator was interviewed and records and completed work analysed.

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of specialist accommodation limits what can be taught and the standards pupils achieve.
- Teachers are good at planning lessons in which pupils learn by doing.
- Assessment information is not recorded well enough to track progress over time.
- Pupils aged 14 to 19 years are not taught enough science each week.
- Lesson planning does not include the assessment of risk.

Commentary

54. The standards pupils achieve in lessons are good. This includes those with the most complex special needs who learn science through sensory-based strategies. However, over longer periods of time the progress pupils make is satisfactory. It is limited by the absence of a specialist teaching room, by the inconsistent application of the procedures for assessing pupils' learning and by a shortage of science teaching time for the older pupils.
55. There is no specialist room for teaching science. Teachers in the classes tend to develop their own resources to match the learning needs of their pupils. This works well for a small number of lessons. But the absence of a specialist room, especially for pupils aged 14 to 19 years, limits their learning in science and the standards they are able to achieve.

56. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good. In part, this was because the lessons were planned so that pupils learn through doing. Teachers and their teaching assistants knew their pupils' personal needs very well. In a small number of lessons, they deal with lack of specialist facilities by finding ingenious ways for pupils to take part in practical activities. These result in a good understanding of what is being learned and are fun to do. For example, in a lesson observed on light, younger pupils learned about light and dark because activities were fun and motivating. They enjoyed shining a large torch under a very big parachute to simulate darkness. By the time they leave school, the best at science are at Level 2 of the National Curriculum. They have a satisfactory understanding of how experiments can help in gaining new information. They predict the outcomes of investigations, obtain and record results, and know what makes a simple fair test. They compare, for example, changes in food left in a freezer with food left at room temperature and understand why they are different. Pupils with the most complex special needs, for example experience the properties of materials like wet and dry sand and dull and shiny objects. They feel and taste foods and, with support, say which foods they like best.
57. In some classes, assessment information is used well to set targets for individual pupils. But even in these classes, records of the gains pupils make are not rigorous enough to be able to judge how well they have done over a longer period. The annotated marking of photographic evidence, written and other work is good in that it provides a record of the quality of pupils' responses to the tasks. But it is helping little in recognising the progress pupils are making against the key elements of the subjects or in planning lessons that match well with pupils learning needs as well as their personal needs.
58. The amount of time for science is not enough for most of the secondary age pupils. It is less than that allocated to learning science in most other equivalent schools and is half of the time allocated to the younger pupils.
59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum plans are especially well adapted for pupils who have the most complex special needs. They are less specific about the expectations for learning for the highest attaining pupils. Lesson plans do not set out risk assessments.
60. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The accommodation, however, remains unsatisfactory. Pupils in many equivalent schools are better placed to learn science because they do so in more appropriate accommodation.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Two ICT lessons were seen, but many other lessons included the use of information and communications technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed and the work completed since September 2003 analysed.

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**, but only since the installation of the new computer suite in September 2003.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good new computer suite and the range and quantity of hardware and peripheral devices, such as digital cameras and a whiteboard provide very good support for teaching and learning.
- The level of skills and knowledge of teachers and the confident way in which they use computers to support teaching and learning in the other subjects.
- The very good work of the co-ordinator has resulted in considerable improvement in all aspects of the provision.
- The procedures for assessing the gains pupils are making are not wholly effective in recording the gains pupils make or in helping plan lessons.

Commentary

61. Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete subject in the new computer suite. This is good because pupils are able to work at their own computer and gain from seeing the application of computing technology at work, for example when they use digital cameras, the whiteboard or the Internet.
62. The new computer suite provides a very good base for learning. The subject has been developed very well by the co-ordinator. Completing the national training programme by all teachers has provided them with sufficient skills and knowledge to confidently use new technologies in teaching ICT lessons and in supporting learning in the other subjects. Each contributes to the standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making being good. For example, the most capable of the 14 to 19 year olds are able to load pictures into their computer, size and change as required and save in their personal file system. They have complete control of the screen and are familiar with word processing, publishing and spreadsheet programmes. They use these well to complete finished work, including showing their findings in visual form through graphs and pie charts. The younger pupils are learning about loading and saving files and how they can change their writing by making the font bigger or smaller. The best of the younger pupils use programs such as Writing with Symbols, Clicker, Planet Wobble and Maths Support confidently and successfully in improving their literacy and numeracy skills, and at the same time improve their control of the screen.
63. The very good range and quantity of hardware and peripheral devices help pupils with the most complex special needs gain very good access to their lesson tasks and very good opportunities to take control of their immediate environment. These include various types of switches and recording devices, light and sound beams and easy access to the ultra-violet room.
64. The co-ordinator has worked very well in developing the provision. The base for improving the standards pupils achieve has now been set. The computer suite and resources such as peripheral devices, digital cameras and scanners are very good. The national training programme has contributed to teachers being confident and knowledgeable. The teaching assistants have sufficient skills and understanding of computers to support pupils very well in completing their tasks. Pupils aged 14 to 19 years are beginning to follow an organised syllabus that leads to a relevant national award.
65. More work needs to be done, and this is recognised in the subject development plan. At this time the progress pupils are making, especially the small steps made by those with the most complex special needs, is not being recognised or recorded sufficiently well to either judge the quality of the progress or help lesson planning by having pupils complete tasks that are relevant to them. The subject development plan recognises the need to record pupils' progress with more precision and for using this information more effectively in lesson planning. Inspectors agree that this is a good direction for further development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The small number of pupils in lessons and their wide range of attainment make learning through the use of computers a powerful strategy for teaching. Teachers are well on the way to making very effective use of new technologies. In many lessons, they and the teaching assistants use computers to support their teaching. The co-ordinator is practised at using the whiteboard to promote new learning. Pupils use computers confidently. In lessons in English, many programs help them match letter sounds to shape and to learn spelling. In mathematics, the older pupils reinforce partially learned skills through the repeated presentation of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tasks. In the other subjects, a greater number of CD-ROMS, especially, will make computers more effective in promoting learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography, History and Religious Education

No lessons in geography or history were seen. In these subjects, no firm judgement is possible on the achievement of pupils or on the progress they are making.

67. Planning documents in geography and history show good regard to the relevant Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. For example, in lessons in history pupils learn about the Celts, Egyptians and Aztecs and the culture of the United Kingdom in the 1970s. In lessons in geography, they learn about climate and its effect on lifestyles and compare and contrast different places in the world with their own.
68. These subjects have a number of characteristics in common. Through visits to museums and historical sites and by learning about the life styles of people from different cultures who live in different places, each subject makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. For each subject, the planning documents, including those for development, are not sufficiently precise. Also, co-ordinators are not able to accurately judge the progress pupils are making because the assessment and recording procedures do not recognise the small steps pupils make in their learning, or set these against descriptors of attainment, such as those of the 'P' scales or National Curriculum levels. Resources are satisfactory and computers are beginning to be used to support teaching and learning, although in each subject there are too few CD-ROMS.

Religious Education

Two lessons were seen in religious education and the religious elements of assemblies noted. The co-ordinator was interviewed.

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In lessons, pupils learn to respect the values and beliefs of others.
- The good use of a wide range of teaching approaches helps develop the spiritual awareness of all pupils, including those with the most complex special needs.
- The assessment procedures do not recognise the small gains pupils make and provide insufficient help in planning lessons.
- Resources to support the teaching and learning are too limited.

Commentary

69. The standards pupils achieved in the two lessons seen were good. From these lessons, wall displays, photographs and discussions with pupils and staff, the progress over time is judged as satisfactory.
70. Teaching pupils with the most complex special needs focuses on learning through sensory and practical activities, including, for example listening to music and the sound of birds and bees. Good teaching then relates these to Christianity and God's creation of plants and animals. Pupils undertake very little written work, but create wall displays of trees, flowers and animals that reflect their learning. The spiritual awareness of pupils aged 6 to 13 years is developed through the effective use of music, candles and prayer. Pupils aged 14 to 19 years discuss the Jewish celebration of the Passover and are aware of the symbolism associated with the foods prepared for the Seder. The teacher led pupils to a broader appreciation of the values and beliefs of Judaism. Lesson tasks matched well with pupils' special needs. For example, the lowest attaining pupils learned about the Passover when they prepared 'charoset'. The highest attaining

pupils were able to compare the symbolism of the foods with special celebrations in other religions. In all the lessons, and at other times in the school day, especially at assemblies staff are very good at linking the topics to the need to respect and value the beliefs of others. This is made easy for teachers because they know the subject and their pupils' special needs very well..

71. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The provision is quickly improving, since the recent appointment of the co-ordinator. This follows a period of significant disruption in planning, as a consequence of the prolonged absence from school of the previous co-ordinator. To some extent this has contributed to underdevelopment of the assessment procedures and of the resource base to support teaching and learning. At this time it is not possible to record the attainment and recognise the progress pupils are making on one assessment scheme. These differ in the different classes. A whole school approach would be better for recording attainment and for helping in planning lessons. There are too few artefacts to support learning about different faiths and too few CD-ROMS to have computers provide animated examples of topics important in the different beliefs.
72. Religious education has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are much better and lessons are making a greater contribution to their personal and social development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and Design

Only one lesson was seen in art and design. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of the provision. Displays around school show that work completed in art and design is varied and interesting.

73. In the lesson seen for the youngest pupils, they were supported very well in their work by teaching assistants. They explored a good range of materials and processes in designing and making animal puppets and a jungle scene. The digital camera was used well to record pupils' work. The expectations for learning of all staff were high, despite the frequent and noisy interruptions of excited pupils.
74. The co-ordinator has specialist training. The development plan is good. It rightly recognises the need to operate a better system for recording the activities of pupils and for recognising the gains they make in the important elements of the subject. The artwork of pupils was recently displayed in the local library.

Design and Technology

Three lessons were seen in design and technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils talked to. The completed work was analysed.

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weakness

- The lack of specialist accommodation limits opportunities for working with resistant materials and textiles. Pupils have access to all aspects of food technology because of the good food technology room.
- Assessment is inconsistently used in recording what pupils have learned and in providing information for planning lessons.
- Teachers good knowledge of food technology and their high expectations for learning.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. They make a good effort to do their best.

Commentary

75. The design and technology curriculum emphasises learning about food technology. The lack of specialist rooms means that less time is assigned to working with resistant materials and textiles than is the case in many equivalent schools with appropriate specialist accommodation. The food technology room with its full range of equipment ensures pupils have access to all aspects of food technology. The room is used very well in preparing the pupils aged 14 to 19 years to be as independent as possible. They have good opportunities to design and make healthy meals as preparation for their life after school. This is not possible in the other elements of the subject. The lack of specialist facilities for work with resistant materials and textiles seriously limits the experiences pupils can gain and the standards they achieve. Pupils' experience of design and technology is much narrower than it should be.
76. In lessons in food technology, pupils achieve good standards and make good progress. Anecdotal summaries of what pupils have done provide too little information on the small steps pupils make in their learning and, therefore, provide little help in lesson planning. As a consequence, new learning is not always based on prior learning. This causes the progress pupils make over time to be satisfactory.
77. Teachers and teacher assistants have a good knowledge of food technology and are confident and comfortable in the very good specialist room. Lessons are planned well and organised well. Pupils with the most complex special needs gain much from their teaching assistants who take every opportunity to encourage choice, participation and independence. Good attention is paid to health and safety matters, for example, the washing of hands at the start and end of lessons and in donning aprons. Pupils are expected to observe, feel, smell and in some cases taste ingredients that go towards making, for example a bread and butter pudding. They take it in turns to squeeze and soften the butter and to crack eggs open. In a lesson in a classroom, the youngest pupils made satisfactory progress in designing and making a necklace out of beads, pasta and glitter. The task challenged each pupil at an appropriate level. They showed they understand the link between design and making by stopping from time to time to evaluate their work before changing it.
78. Pupils enjoy being active in their learning. They make a very good effort to do their best because their attitudes to their work are very good.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The planning documents and the procedures for recognising the gains pupils are making should provide better support for teaching and learning, to enable the good quality work in lessons to be sustained. Lessons make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The provision has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in lessons is better and the food technology room is better resourced.

Music

Two lessons were seen in music. The use of music in many of the other lessons and in assemblies was noted. The co-ordinator was interviewed.

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of a music room limits what can be taught because instruments cannot be left out and electronic equipment cannot be permanently connected.
- All pupils take a full part in lessons because they are planned well.
- Pupils' enjoy music. It makes a good contribution to their personal, social and spiritual development.

- Music plays an important role in the life of the school.

Commentary

80. Pupils achieve satisfactorily well and make satisfactory progress in music. There are many opportunities outside of lessons for pupils to practise their singing. These additional opportunities to practise music help make up for the lack of a dedicated music room, but in part only. Large instruments cannot be left out and electronic equipment to produce sounds, including keyboards, mixers, amplifiers and speakers cannot be set up and left. The range of musical experiences gained by pupils is less than that experienced by those in equivalent schools with a specialist room.
81. Lessons are carefully planned with lesson tasks that match well with pupils' special needs to ensure that all pupils are fully included. Pupils with the most complex special needs listen to and explore musical sounds. Over the time of the inspection, the theme was 'space'. They produce their own music by using a variety of musical instruments and electronic technology. As a result, pupils' planned and unplanned contributions using the keyboard, big drum, sound beam, cymbal and simple switches added texture to a David Bowie track that was playing in the background. In this lesson, the teaching assistants were very effective in helping pupils learn. Routinely, they provide physical and moral support, whilst encouraging pupils to be independent as possible.
82. Music has a high profile. It is used well in assemblies to support personal and social development and spiritual awareness. Pupils enjoy singing and signing along to the songs and hymns such as 'Give me joy in my heart' and 'God who made the earth'. They sing and sign with enthusiasm and maintain the tune with appropriate rhythm. They also gain by performing as a class in front of the other pupils. Music is used well to help learning in the other subjects. Number songs, stories and rhymes are a regular feature of lessons in mathematics and English. Singing is an important part of celebrating achievement at the 'stars' presentation at the end of each day.
83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The standards and the enthusiasm for music noted in the previous inspection have been maintained. A small number of pupils take part in music therapy and gain good benefit from this.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Four lessons were seen in physical education. One of these lessons was taken by an instructor. The co-ordinator was interviewed and the records of progress analysed.

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The absence of specialist facilities inside and outside, including changing facilities.
- The very good use made of the School Sports Co-ordinator's Scheme, which gives pupils very good experiences of many sports.
- The good use made of the Riding for the Disabled programme and of the local swimming pool.
- Very good co-ordination ensures that pupils gain a wide experience of the subject.
- The limited range of resources over all aspects of the subject.

Commentary

84. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they are making are satisfactory over a range of activities that include some, but not all, of the elements of the subject. Provision for physical education is adversely affected by the lack of specialist accommodation and any useable outside grassed area. This is made up for, in part only, by involvement in the Riding for the Disabled

programme, the use of the local swimming pool and the very good use of the School Sports' Co-ordinators Scheme.

85. The hall, which is used for lessons, is too small and there is insufficient storage space for large apparatus. Pupils are taught in a cramped space, with furniture and gymnastic mats and other resources stacked against the walls. This is potentially dangerous. There are no changing rooms. Pupils are not able to change properly or to shower after vigorous physical activity. In addition, there is no suitable outside grassed area and a very small hard-surfaced area. Pupils go elsewhere for hydrotherapy and hippotherapy. Physiotherapy is provided in the library, as there is no specialist room. This is not satisfactory.
86. Teachers at the school have little experience or knowledge of teaching physical education. Specialist instructors from the School Sports Co-ordinators Scheme teach about half of the lessons. They bring an expertise and enthusiasm for their sport and to their teaching, which results in pupils gaining very good experiences. This is even when the accommodation seriously limits what can be tried and achieved. For example, in the small hall the hockey instructor taught a very enjoyable lesson for pupils who practised the skills of stopping, hitting and dribbling. However, it was not possible to transfer these skills into any form of game because tables and chairs were stored around the side, stacked ready for use at lunchtime, and the mats and other resources for physical education were also stored against the walls. Both functionally reduced the already small size of the hall so that it was not safe to play even a modified game. Instructors visit for Boccia, dance and try-golf as well as hockey. The pupils gain from receiving instruction from specialists, but teachers do also. Watching specialists teach is broadening their vision for teaching the subject. The trampoline is used well, but only for bouncing as no teacher has the required certification to oversee the learning of higher level skills. Lessons in yoga help relax pupils and increase their flexibility. Sessions of hydrotherapy and hippotherapy benefit a small number of pupils. The last annual sports day, which was made up of athletic events loosely based on the Harry Potter stories, was thoroughly enjoyed by all.
87. The pupils with the most complex special needs take part in Riding for the Disabled. This is very well organised. They gain in co-ordination, strength and confidence from experiencing riding, that is safe and secure, and in learning about horses. In swimming, all pupils become water confident and some learn to swim forwards and backwards on their fronts and their backs. Until recently, the pool at the local leisure centre was used. This is currently undergoing a refurbishment, which requires that pupils travel for twenty-five minutes to another swimming pool. This is not ideal, but worth it because the journey to and from the pool is used well in promoting social and personal development. Also, pupils are able to continue working toward the Puffin and Rainbow awards of the Amateur Swimming Association. Post-16 pupils benefit social and physically from using the fitness suite at the local leisure centre.
88. The subject is led very well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has been recently appointed. The planning documents adequately cover important aspects of the subject, including outdoor and adventurous activities. Assessment is mostly anecdotal and describes how pupils react, for example to the new game. Digital cameras are used regularly to record how well pupils are doing at their tasks. Very recently, attainment has started to be recorded against 'P' levels and for some of the older pupils against National Curriculum levels. This is a good development and, ultimately, will help identify the progress pupils make over the range of the subject better than was the case in the past. Resources over all aspects of the subject are limited, but there is a satisfactory range of balls, racquets and mats. The co-ordinator is making very good use of resources and facilities outside of the school to limit the effect of unsatisfactory accommodation on the breadth of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.
89. The provision is improving. There is now an enthusiasm for the subject and for raising standards.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Two lessons were seen in personal, social health and citizenship education. Discussions were held with pupils about their work.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good learning in the lessons is supported very well by the ethos of the school and the very well planned lunch time activities.
- Additional curriculum experiences such as hydrotherapy, hippotherapy, rebound therapy, yoga and riding for the disabled make a very good contribution to developing pupils personal and social skills.
- The very good relationships between staff and pupils provide a solid base from which advice and counselling can be provided.
- Targets in pupils' individual education plans do not provide a good record of the progress they are making.
- Pupils gain too little from taking some of their lessons in mainstream schools because the reasons for being there are not clear to all who deal with them.

Commentary

90. Pupils achieve very well in the lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education. The gains are supported very well over all the school day, but especially during the lunch time activities. The feeding programmes for pupils are well thought out and pupils gain from being encouraged to be as independent as possible. The very good relationships between staff and pupils is a powerful base from which to offer advice, guidance and encouragement. In lessons and throughout the day this is carefully and freely given.
91. The planned programme is supported very well by additional curriculum experiences that have as their primary objective the promotion of self-confidence and self-awareness. For example, hydrotherapy helps pupils physically, but the close and trusting relationship when pupils are being supported in the water promotes self-confidence and self-awareness. Taking part in hippotherapy and riding for the disabled increase self-confidence through successfully riding horses and being around horses. Rebound therapy is exciting to pupils, as is yoga; both help increase their awareness of self.
92. Pupils have targets in their individual education plans aimed at promoting the development of personal and social skills. These are not always well written. When this is the case, they are not precise enough and often do not include sufficiently clear criteria for recognising success. Because of this, it is difficult to track back through pupils' individual plans and recognise the progress that has been made over the last year and since entering school. The recently introduced new procedures should provide better guidance for teaching and for recognising the progress pupils are making toward meeting their targets.
93. Pupils who take lessons in mainstream schools benefit from the experience. Yet they could benefit more. The targets written specifically as part of their inclusion are not written with sufficient precision. In some of the schools, they are not known to the receiving staff. Both help limit the effect of the potentially very meaningful opportunity to gain from being in the company of mainstream pupils and their teachers.
94. Leadership and management are very good. The resources to support teaching and learning are good, but there are too few CD-ROMs, to help animate some of the planned topics, including those to do with the growing body.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4

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