

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LUKE'S SCHOOL

Redbourn, St Albans, Hertfordshire

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117671

Headteacher: Mr Paul Johnson

Lead inspector: Jacque Cook

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 June 2004

Inspection number: 259051

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	163
School address:	Crouch Hall Lane Redbourn St Albans Hertfordshire
Postcode:	AL3 7ET
Telephone number:	01582 626727
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Lesley King
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Luke's is a mixed day community special school for 170 pupils aged 9 to 16 with moderate learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, there has been a considerable change in the needs of the school population. Of the 163 pupils now on roll, 14 are hearing impaired and attend full time at St Luke's but are on the roll of Heathlands, the local school for deaf pupils and 16 have autistic spectrum disorder. There are also 11 pupils with psychiatric or psychological disorders, who attend Forest House, which is a centre attached to an adolescent psychiatric unit at the Harperbury hospital twelve miles from the school. Pupils at Forest House may be admitted for a few days or up to two years with an average length of stay of six months. Previously, the centre was a hospital school which was closed. Taking into account the pupils that join and leave Forest House, the overall number of pupils that join and leave the school other than at the usual time is fairly low. However, several pupils have joined the primary class, Years 5 and 6, during the year. Pupils are of largely white ethnicity reflecting the population of the area the school serves and no pupils speak English as an additional language. There are four travellers and seven pupils that are looked after by the local authority

The school has gained Investor in People and at Forest House, the Artsmark. Recently, the Healthy Schools Award has been successfully reaccredited. Through innovative work with information and communication technology, there is involvement in a Department for Education and Science project on video conferencing.

Although the school is in a rural area, the majority of pupils come from urban areas. The socio-economic context is very mixed and overall, slightly less favourable than average. Attainment on entry is low, and often, very low.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Lead inspector	Science Design and technology Music
9282	Clare Lorenz	Lay inspector	
17541	Fran Ashworth	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Personal, social, health and citizenship education Special educational needs
2866	Bob Battey	Team inspector	English Art and design Physical education
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	Geography History French Religious education English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Luke's is an effective school. The vision and sense of purpose of the headteacher ensure the school moves forward with a clear focus on raising the standards of the pupils so they achieve well and make good progress overall. Pupils attending Forest House make very good progress and achieve very well. The strengths in leadership have ensured that significant changes in the needs of the school population have been managed very well. As a result, pupils with additional special educational needs, who have joined the school over the last few years, are included successfully in the school and in the centre. Although there have been difficulties in recruiting suitably experienced staff in a few subject areas, good teaching and learning of a very well developed curriculum combined with the very high quality of care and links with parents result in the school giving **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Although, overall, pupils' progress and achievement are good, they make very good progress and achieve very well in a number of subjects. Progress is, however, satisfactory in English in Years 7 to 9 and information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 5 and 6.
- Provision at Forest House is very good.
- The leadership and the management of the school are very good and governance is very effective.
- The curriculum is broad and enriched through a range of interesting activities including expressive arts.
- Support and guidance provided for the pupils are excellent.
- In spite of good efforts by staff, there continue to be incidents of name calling.
- While links with parents are very good overall, the quality of information about pupils' progress in reports is inconsistent.

Improvement since the last inspection is good even though the school population has changed and there has been a focus on meeting the additional special educational needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, those with hearing impairment and the pupils with medical needs at Forest House. All the issues from the last inspection have been successfully tackled. Design and technology, ICT and physical education have greatly improved and performance management is now very effective. Collective worship takes place, attendance has improved and the statutory processes at annual review are effective. The best improvement has been in teaching and learning, reflecting the effect of the monitoring and training and also in the quality of care, welfare and guidance. In all other areas improvement has been good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The achievement and progress of pupils are good overall in all year groups. Pupils do particularly well in science, history, physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). They also make very good progress and achieve very well in ICT in Years 7 to 11. In English pupils achieve well overall, but make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' progress and achievement are good in mathematics. Overall, pupils achieve very good examination

results in expressive arts. **Pupils at Forest House make very good progress and achieve very well.**

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted very well. Their attitudes are very good. They are interested, willing to take responsibility and have very strong and positive relationships with the staff. **Behaviour is good. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. Teaching and learning are good overall, although in a substantial number of lessons, they are very good and, at times, excellent. Teaching and learning are very good in science, PSHCE, history and physical education and, in Years 7 to 11, in ICT. In English, while teaching and learning are good overall, they are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 where not all staff are subject specialists. The overall quality of teaching and learning at Forest House is very good. Exciting lessons that are well planned help pupils to concentrate well. Very effective use of support staff and varied and interesting resources ensure pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding and build their skill levels well.

The curriculum is very good and suitable for all pupils at the school. **Links with the community and colleges are very good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school and Forest House are very good. Leadership is very good by the headteacher and the senior management team and good by other key staff. **Management is very effective** with a clear focus on ensuring the needs of all pupils are met. Hindrances to learning, such as the difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff in a few subjects, have been dealt with as well as possible including supporting non-teaching staff to train successfully as teachers. **The work of the governing body is very good** and they ensure all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are, on the whole, very positive about the school which is confirmed by the inspection team. They are comfortable in talking about concerns and pleased with the very good range of activities and the effective induction procedures. They feel their children enjoy coming to school, but a few expressed concerns related to bullying and to the quality of information on their children's progress. The team found that there were incidents of name calling that persist despite very good work in PSHCE. They also agreed that information on reports about progress varies in quality.

Pupils are very satisfied with their school. They feel confident to talk with staff, do their best and behave well. Many pupils felt they worked well on computers. The team agreed with these comments.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' progress and achievement in ICT in Years 5 and 6 and English in Years 7 to 9.
- Continue to work towards eliminating the name calling by pupils.
- Ensure the information provided to parents in annual reports shows the progress made by pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well and make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At Forest House, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well.
- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in science, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), art and design, drama, history and physical education.
- In Years 7 to 11, pupils' progress and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good but in Years 5 and 6 they are satisfactory.
- Pupils' progress in English is good overall but satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Very good progress is made towards meeting targets on individual education plans.
- Pupils achieve a good number of awards in Year 11.

Commentary

1. The overall good progress and achievement of pupils are a good improvement since the last inspection. This reflects the very high quality of leadership and management in the school which has continued to focus on raising standards while ensuring pupils joining the school with additional special educational needs also do well. Careful planning and the use of appropriate teaching methods ensures that pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are clear about what is required in lessons and settle into routines. Their good progress is closely tracked by the autism provision manager so any problems are dealt with quickly. Pupils with hearing impairment also make good progress, ably assisted by their communicators and by the specialist teacher of the deaf. A very good system of monitoring pupils' progress on an individual, class, year group and subject basis ensures all pupils continue to make progress and are fully included. As a result, there are no measurable differences between the progress of girls and boys, pupils from different ethnic groups or children that are looked after. Pupils' very good progress and achievement at Forest House is due to very high quality of teaching, extremely supportive ethos and close working relationships with the medical staff.
2. Comparisons between the achievements of different year groups are difficult because they are not always similar. Last year, all pupils in Year 11 gained at least one award and many gained awards in at least ten subjects. It is notable that pupils gained grades at the Foundation Level in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination, particularly in expressive arts where almost all pupils gained grades. As can be seen from the chart below, pupils achieve a broad range of Entry Level awards and SMP mathematics. Additionally they work towards the Award Scheme and Development Network (ASDAN) Youth Award Scheme and 29 gained a bronze award.

Examination results 2003, 35 pupils in year group						
Subjects	GCSE		Entry Level			School Mathematics Project (SMP) B
	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA)	Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts	Edexcel	OCR	AQA	OCR

		(OCR)				
English			23		8	
Mathematics		10				34
Science	16		22			
Expressive Arts	32					
Design and technology			30			
French			31			
Geography					25	
History					25	
ICT				33		
Physical education				33		
Religious education					30	

3. This year, the number of opportunities for pupils to gain awards has increased. Unit Awards are included in the range of accreditation. Pupils have studied history, geography and modern languages leading to a European Studies Unit Award and 15 pupils have gained passes in the Hertfordshire Achievement in Music (AIM) examination.
4. Pupils are making very good progress working towards their targets. Broad targets are set at annual reviews and broken down into smaller, more manageable parts and amended as they are achieved. Appropriate expectations are being met well for the progress pupils are expected to make throughout the year in all subjects.
5. Pupils at St Luke's make very good progress in science and good progress in English and mathematics. In English, pupils in Years 7 to 9 make satisfactory progress, achieving less well than other pupils because the quality of teaching is not as effective. Overall, pupils' speaking and listening skills develop very well and they make good progress in their reading. Pupils' writing is improving and there are examples of good creative and descriptive work, but in Years 7 to 9, there are too many worksheets. Good progress and achievement are made in mathematics. Pupils become more accurate in their calculations and transfer their skills to other subjects well. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are very good. They build their scientific knowledge and understanding very effectively because they learn a great deal from very well taught lessons. They enjoy practical activities and are very clear about what constitutes a fair test.
6. Very good teaching and very effective planning lead to pupils making very good progress and achievement in PSHCE, art and design, drama, history and physical education. In ICT, while pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 11, in Years 5 and 6 pupils' progress is satisfactory due to less effective planning of work to manage the pupils that join the class during the year.
7. At Forest House, the standards of the art and design work are extremely high. Pupils' work shows they make very good progress overall in the subjects they study.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their behaviour is good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The level of attendance is good and punctuality to lessons is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are very keen to learn.
- The relationship between teachers and support staff and pupils is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour at Forest House are very good.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities and help others.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- There is name calling by a few pupils.

Commentary

8. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes, at very good, and their behaviour, at good, have remained the same. Spiritual moral and cultural development and attendance have improved well.
9. Behaviour at St Luke's is mostly good. Pupils play and talk contentedly in the playground and in the hall at lunchtime. They animatedly discuss the day while cheerfully making for the transport home. A minority of pupils report that there is name calling, particularly during break times, but they felt that staff resolved difficulties quickly. However, the problem persists and was of concern to a significant number of parents. Also many of the fixed term exclusions during the last school year relate to name calling. The school works hard to reduce the number of such incidents especially through the PSHCE lessons and individual guidance and support strategies. At Forest House, pupils are very considerate towards each other and as a result, their behaviour is of a very high standard.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	121	18	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	2	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	1	0
No ethnic group recorded	32	2	0

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

10. Pupils are involved in their lessons their concentration is very good. Most work well with one another and are keen to help each other. Many have enquiring minds and, for example, enjoy using the Internet to research a subject. During a physical education lesson, Year 8 pupils of all abilities and with a wide range of special needs, worked very hard and were fully involved in warm up activities and in improving the control of tennis balls with racquets. Pupils' keen attendance at the wide variety of lunchtime clubs illustrates their enthusiasm for school life. Pupils understand the school's systems for rewards and sanctions and are keen to receive praise and certificates for hard work and achievement. They decided what the prizes should be for the recently introduced bronze, silver and gold awards. Most popular is the right not to wear their uniform for a day. They can also be first in the dinner queue. At the silver level they may choose two non-uniform days and at gold a meal out was chosen by the first pupil to gain the award.

11. At Forest House, pupils work hard. They volunteer possible solutions to difficulties, for example, to get the right size and shape for the roof of the huts and listen very well to comments by others in the group. They modify their ideas in the light of what is said. Their work shows very good levels of application and they take a pride in presenting it well.
12. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, an improvement since the last inspection. The very good overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness has helped develop the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies and 'thought for the day' times, are well planned and mostly of a Christian nature. They develop self-awareness through discussions with their tutors and where appropriate, through sessions with the school counsellor and music therapist. Pupils at Forest House have regular times where they meet together as a community group which helps to develop positive self-images successfully. Both spiritual and moral development are enhanced through the wide range of extra- curricular activities such as choir, orchestra, visits to the local church and pupils' fund raising for charities which contribute positively to pupils' awareness of and respect for other people. The moral development of pupils is very good. Pupils, some of whom are strongly disaffected when they enter the school are helped by staff to develop a true sense of right and wrong through close guidance by adults on what is, or is not, acceptable behaviour. On the whole, the approach is firm, consistent and works very well. Pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on important moral issues such as slavery. At Forest House, one pupil explored the apartheid issue in South Africa looking at the effects of segregation by colour and race.
13. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils, in the main, are at ease with each other and with adults. At lunchtime pupils chat with staff or each other and are happy to talk to visitors about school life. Teachers encourage younger pupils to look after new entrants and older pupils to read with younger ones. There is a strong sense of belonging to a supportive community at Forest House. Pupils are encouraged to work together, for example, in groups to work on building their two African huts during arts week at Forest House. There are also a number of sports teams where pupils play other schools. St Luke's school council gives an opportunity for pupils to show responsibility towards the school community and to give suggestions about the running of the school. Pupils' cultural awareness is developed very well through subjects such as art, music and history, and through the wide choice of clubs which pupils are keen to attend. Pupils at Forest House visited a re-created African village and used it for the basis of their impressive arts week. St Luke's pupils have sung at the combined choirs festival at the Royal Albert Hall. They have exchanged views on portraits of Elizabeth 1 through video links with the National Portrait Gallery.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/4 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.0	School data	1.0
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

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

14. The school has worked hard and effectively to improve attendance since the last inspection, when it was reported as unsatisfactory, and attendance is now good. The level of unauthorised absence is below the average for similar schools. The school's systems for chasing up absence are thorough. There is a good working relationship with the new education welfare officer who follows up the few poor school attenders. Pupils' transport usually arrives on time but, occasionally, pupils dawdle between lessons thus losing teaching and learning time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. There are strengths in the curriculum, pupils' care, welfare, guidance and safety and links with the parents and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good at Forest House. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching and learning at St Luke's.
- At Forest House teaching is, at times excellent.
- On the whole, the quality of planning is very good.
- Very effective teaching methods are used.
- Support staff make a major contribution to ensuring the needs of all pupils are met.
- Homework is used very well to extend learning and involve parents.
- Self-assessment is used well in a few subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (6%)	28 (45 %)	20 (32 %)	9 (14 %)	1 (2 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The overall judgement of good teaching and learning takes into account the good quality in two of the main subjects, English and mathematics as well as information gained on teaching and learning from the scrutiny of pupils' work. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning. This is due to the effective monitoring by the headteacher, senior staff and heads of departments and the successful training given to help staff meet the needs of the changing school population. This has been particularly important at Forest House where teaching and learning are very good and staff have a broad range of subject expertise. They are also highly skilled in helping, often very vulnerable, pupils have the confidence to make progress.
16. Teaching and learning are very good in science, history, physical education and PSHCE. In these subjects, there is often a range of activities that change to keep the pace going and, as a result, capture and maintain pupils' interest throughout. Pupils are involved and doing things, for example, forming food chains accurately using pictures and arrows, in science and using different worksheets and a computer program with a game to establish the parts of teeth and the effect of tooth decay.
17. Teachers' planning takes into account the needs of all the pupils in the class. Staff plan very well for teaching more than one year group in a class at Forest House. There is also often a broad range of ability at Forest House and in many of the classes at St Luke's and work is organised so that all pupils are suitably challenged. Pupils rise to these challenges well. For example, as members of the 'anti-forgery squad' in science they had to use a test to discover whether the writing on a cheque had been changed taking samples of ink and seeing whether their profile was different. National Strategies are modified and used very effectively. The three part lesson suits pupils very well. The beginning session clues them in to what they will learn and often makes links to previous learning. The middle part is most effective when pupils have a practical activity, such as an experiment in science, silk painting in textiles or making

comparisons between portraits in history. They apply their knowledge and skills very well and often concentrate for long periods. The last part of lessons is used effectively by staff to go over what has been learned and, through skilful use of questioning, discover what pupils have understood. Where teaching and learning are less successful it is often the planning which is not as detailed, for example in a few English lessons in Years 7 to 9.

18. Teaching methods have developed very well. For example, staff use language carefully and teach new vocabulary effectively, for example, so key words are displayed and explained every lesson. This is particularly useful for the pupils with hearing impairment. In those classes where there are pupils with autistic spectrum disorders most staff ensure that instructions are kept as simple and as direct as possible. In a PSHCE lesson, appropriate prompting by staff helped pupils to make good suggestions for school rules and to also give examples to show they knew what they meant. Staff also establish very clear routines so these pupils, who often work more effectively when they have the security, for example, of working at the same desk and knowing what is expected by staff, are not anxious and settle quickly. In many lessons, ICT is used to great effect. At both St Luke's and Forest House pupils work well independently when researching further information. They enjoy using a computer game in geography finding their way around London. Resources are used very well. Simple ones, such as sunglasses, tea shirt and sun block in a PSHCE lesson to teach the dangers of sun exposure are as effective as the more complex. For example, a purpose made video recording of the experiences of staff who have been involved in earthquakes gave excellent first hand and graphic detail which pupils found engrossing and very believable. On the whole, staff insist on high standards of behaviour and use the agreed strategies very well. Very occasionally, teaching is unsatisfactory because appropriate procedures are not used and this distracts from the learning in the class slowing pupils' progress.
19. Support staff are used very effectively. Whether they are based in a subject area, with specific classes or with individuals they ensure progress is made. Communicators have a vital role as most teachers are not proficient in using British Sign Language. They are skilled in gaining pupils' attention and in questioning and explaining to ensure that there is clear understanding.
20. Homework is set regularly and it is used to prepare for forthcoming work, consolidate lessons and extend pupils' knowledge further. The quality is, on the whole, high. In the best instances, guided research work gives opportunities for pupils to work at higher levels, for example, finding out about different types of clocks in design and technology. However, there are a few examples of the same work being set at a fairly low level for all pupils in the class, which supports concerns expressed by a few parents about whether the homework was sufficiently difficult for their children.
21. Procedures for assessment are good overall and are continuing to develop well, particularly in subjects such as mathematics. There are good systems for recording the progress pupils make from one year to the next. Very good procedures are used for the pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to ensure they continue to do well. Pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work is much improved in those subjects where they are asked to self-assess their work, for example, at the end of a module in design and technology.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good. It provides a very good range of opportunities and activities during the school day. There are also very good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities. The quality of the accommodation is good and there are very good resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum covers a very good range of subjects and courses and is well developed and organised to meet pupils' learning needs. Pupils attending Forest House have a very good curriculum.

- The opportunities for enrichment are very good particularly with the organised curriculum days and activities week.
- Vocational education and careers advice help to prepare pupils very well for leaving school.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have opportunities to enter for a good range of external examinations.
- The school is well staffed with teaching and support staff including communicators for pupils with hearing impairment.
- There is a lack of disabled access to the upstairs in the main school building.

Commentary

22. The school provides a wide ranging and effective curriculum for all pupils. For example, in Years 10 and 11 pupils are offered a good balance of vocational and academic studies including qualifications in GCSE, Certificate of Educational Achievements, Unit awards, ASDAN and Entry Level awards. There are opportunities for many pupils to achieve these at Year 10. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. Areas identified as weak such as design and technology and ICT have greatly improved. Most subjects now include successfully the use of ICT in lessons. Recently the school received the local authority's 'Best Practice Award' for their ICT involvement in new innovations such as video conferencing and using video phones to encourage communication for all pupils and particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders.
23. Year 5 and 6 pupils are taught a very appropriate curriculum which combines the best of primary teaching, whereby pupils are taught by their class teacher, with the additional advantage of being taught by specialist teachers for a number of subjects. The national strategies have been adapted well to meet the needs of these pupils. Throughout the school, basic skills lessons are timetabled with form teachers and very well support the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills.
24. Pupils with hearing impairment have the same curriculum as other pupils but their statements of special educational need do not require them to study a modern foreign language. In this time and in their English lessons they are taught English by a specialist teacher of the deaf from their own school.
25. The curriculum at Forest House is very carefully planned and sufficiently flexible to meet the range of ability and ages of the pupils. Although, as a hospital unit, it is not required to teach the full National Curriculum, most areas and religious education are taught providing a very appropriate curriculum that supports pupils very well to return to their schools. Staff do not know how long pupils will remain at the centre, so much of the work is on a modular basis, such as in science. Where possible, information from the pupils' school is taken into account, or work is specifically targeted to individual pupils' requirements, as in history. This helps pupils to keep up with their studies very effectively and also eases their return to school.
26. A very comprehensive vocational education and training programme is established for pupils in Years 10 and 11. It is very well led, planned and managed by the head of careers and the teacher in charge of college and work experience, who tailor provision to meet pupils' individual needs. There are opportunities for college link courses and work experience in Year 11. Each year in May, Year 11 pupils take part in a 'Year 11 Courses Celebration Day'. This very successfully brings together parents and carers, representatives from colleges, training providers, the Connexion advisers and school governors. Year 9 pupils and their parents are also invited to enable them to make choices for the following year.
27. The programme to support pupils' personal and social development is wide-ranging and very successful. Planned class discussions, tutorial time, PSHCE lessons and the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme in Years 10 and 11 all make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

28. Teachers plan an extensive range of enrichment activities to interest and motivate pupils, including curriculum days when pupils are often taken on educational visits relating to their chosen subject such as a history trip to the Imperial War Museum and a religious studies trip to a local Hindu centre. In addition there is an activities week in the summer when day trips and residential visits occur. This year there are two residential visits planned: a French trip to Boulogne and an outdoor pursuits trip to the south coast. These visits enrich pupils' knowledge of a wide range of subjects as well as their personal development very well. Recently, a drama group visited the secondary part of the school to promote drugs awareness through music, drama and dance. In the school all pupils participate in the Christmas pantomime every December putting on very professional enjoyable productions which entertain themselves, parents, carers and the local community. There are many clubs at lunchtime, for example, boys and girls take part in football, yoga, chess, homework, basketball and video clubs. The school orchestra and choir are very active and there are very good opportunities for pupils to receive peripatetic lessons in piano, woodwind, violin, drums and guitars. A summer concert in celebrates their achievements each year. The school has very good sporting links with other special schools particularly for football and cricket.
29. The number of teaching and support staff is very good. The support provided for communicating with the pupils with hearing impairment within the classrooms is extremely good, therefore ensuring that these pupils are fully involved in lessons. The match to the curriculum is good in all areas except English.
30. The site of the school is spacious and offers good classroom accommodation. There are good specialist teaching areas, particularly the two science laboratories, although one, next to the music therapy room has inadequate sound proofing. The food technology room is a good size but in need of urgent refurbishment. Facilities for physical education and games are very good and include a separate gymnasium and extensive playing fields. However, there is no disabled access to the upper floor of the school, and the paved walk ways to the mobile classrooms are uneven and potentially a tripping hazard. Resources are very good. The audit, subject improvement plans and bidding system used in the school leads effectively to each subject having the learning resources required to meet the pupils' needs.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with excellent support, advice and guidance and involves them very well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- St Luke's and Forest House look after their pupils very well and ensure that they work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Staff are very effective in establishing very strong relationships with the pupils.
- Pupils have 'drop in' opportunities to talk with the school nurse and a counsellor.

Commentary

31. The school and Forest House are safe and secure places where very good attention to welfare, health and safety ensures that pupils are able to increase in confidence and concentrate on their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when care of pupils was good. Regular risk assessments and inspections of buildings and equipment are maintained and appropriate records maintained.
32. Parents feel that their children and teenagers are treated fairly and helped to overcome difficulties. Pupils like the school greatly and appreciate how the staff help them to take responsibility for themselves and others. The relationship between pupils and adults is very good. Pupils are confident that there is an adult they can trust to turn to if there is a problem.

Child protection procedures are good and members of staff are aware what to do if they have concerns about children in their care.

33. Subject teachers and form teachers know how their pupils develop very well. An effective end of day session for all staff gives opportunities for information about pupils to be exchanged. Pupils causing concern are discussed and strategies established or adjusted using collective expertise. Both at St Luke's and Forest House, staff monitor pupils' pastoral development very effectively and the tracking of pupils' progress across years is very thorough. Staff are ambitious for their pupils and the information they gather about pupils' academic achievements is used as a guide to entering pupils for nationally accredited examinations. Pupils, as a result of the excellent care, feel confident by Year 11 to enter examinations and most achieve well.
34. Individual targets, which are shared with parents and include both a literacy and numeracy target, are set for each pupil at the annual review. Good, more explicit academic targets are set in some, but not all, subjects. Teachers and support staff, including communicators for the deaf, vary in their use of targets in class, with some referring to them constantly while others use them less frequently. The additional help some pupils receive from therapists, such as the counsellor, speech and language specialists, school nurse, physiotherapist or speech and occupational therapists is well co-ordinated and helps pupils extremely well. Well-kept records of targets and progress for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, or with other additional special educational needs, provide the basis for very good extra help for these pupils in lessons. Pupils with hearing impairment from Heathlands School, who are fully integrated into classes at St Luke's, receive extremely good help from their communicators and their specialist teacher, which enables them to progress well and participate fully in school life. Vulnerable pupils at Forest House receive extremely well informed support, advice and guidance which enables them to become increasingly confident.
35. Pupils join St Luke's after a series of trial days. Those entering Year 7, which includes pupils from Heathlands, have a 'taster' day in the summer term. Arrivals into other years also have trial periods in which the staff assess pupils' needs. These visits may be at any time during the year. The school takes good care to obtain all details possible about pupils, whether from a previous school, parent or specialist. A few pupils stagger their entry until confident to attend full time.
36. Very good advice and guidance is given by the Connexions service. Information on careers and further study is given to pupils from Year 9 onwards. In Year 10 very thorough preparations are started for pupils to be ready for work experience in Year 11. A few pupils in Year 11 have taken full time college courses while most enhance their education at St Luke's by attending a college link course for one afternoon a week to study vocational courses. This enables pupils to increase their independence while still under the school's wing.
37. The school seeks pupils' views through an effective school council to which pupils from Years 7 to 11 are elected by their peers. Its deliberations have resulted in a recycling scheme for paper and plastic as well as an overhaul of the school's rewards system. Opinions are formally collected bi-annually through using a questionnaire on computers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good and contributes well to pupils' learning. Links with the community are very good as are links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good partnership with parents or carers based upon parents' confidence in the school.
- Their involvement makes a very good contribution to their children's learning and achievement.
- The links with local colleges are very good.

Commentary

38. Since the last inspection the partnership with parents or carers has improved and is now very good. They have a high regard for the school and feel that they and their children are welcome. The annual review and two consultation sessions are highly valued as times when targets can be discussed, work looked at and progress talked about with teachers and specialists. These sessions are beneficial because they help develop parental interest and a good understanding of their children's work. Very good home-school communication is maintained through regular use of home-school files. The school draws upon parents' expertise when it can. A few volunteers work in the classroom and the school friends' association is active and well supported.
39. The school communicates well with parents through a good range of information about the school and the curriculum. Parents are clear of the importance of homework and most ensure that it is done, thereby contributing very well to their children's learning. Parents gain information in discussions with staff about the progress their children are making but written information in annual written reports is of inconsistent quality. Reports do not always state what progress a pupil has made, which parents raised as a concern.
40. At Forest House, links with parents and with the medical staff are particularly good and ensure the well being and success of the pupils. Meetings with parents take place formally every six weeks and often informally when they visit and pupils' progress is monitored very closely. The daily hand over, when pupils move from the hospital to the school and weekly in depth meetings with the medical staff and with the care staff ensure information is exchanged and appropriate courses of action taken.
41. The school uses local resources very well to widen pupils' learning. For example, the gardening club, which is popular with pupils, has benefited greatly from the generosity of a national bank. The link with Heathlands School for the deaf is effective and Year 10 pupils attend a specialist technology college for part of their studies. The work with three local further education colleges has widened opportunities for Year 11 pupils to choose appropriate further education courses. The science department is a leading department and its expertise is used in many local schools. Staff at Forest House also use the community very well and have very good contacts with local firms and garden centres. They use the facilities of a local gym twice a week. Visits are well planned, for example, to a model African Village recently as part of the planning for their arts week.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership is very good and management is very good at St Luke's and Forest House. The school is governed very effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has excellent vision and aspirations for the school and its pupils.
- The governing body is very effective and supports and challenges the school in an excellent manner.
- There are very good systems in place for the school's self-evaluation and its use.
- There is a very effective performance management system supported by good induction procedures and a very good programme for staff training and development.
- Day- to- day financial management is very good and best value principles are very well applied.
- Very good school improvement planning and tight budgeting identify very well the main training and resource priorities of the school.

Commentary

42. The vision of the headteacher is shared and understood by all and developed with high levels of commitment and enthusiasm with the best needs of the pupils in mind. Staff in the school understand their roles well; they work very effectively as a team and have an excellent commitment to running an inclusive school that enables all pupils to achieve to the best of their abilities. The headteacher seeks solutions; for example, it became clear that many pupils had difficulties in transferring to college when they left school, so a local college has set up a successful interim facility on the school site. The overall management and staffing are provided by the college but there is day-to-day support from the headteacher of St Luke's. In order to ensure the environment is as positive as possible, facilities at Forest House have been radically improved and expanded even though the accommodation belongs to the Hospital Trust. The very good leadership at Forest House provides staff and pupils with an excellent role model. As a result, a very high quality of education is provided because the staff work together very effectively as a team. The capacity to be innovative, for example, in the arts week building two full size African huts, extends pupils' learning and brings out the best in the staff.
43. The governors work very well with the headteacher. A very good committee structure ensures that new initiatives and proposals are debated effectively and that the appropriate monitoring and review systems are always used. As a result, governors ensure that all statutory duties are met including those concerned with racial discrimination. Governors are linked with specific areas, for example, subjects, Forest House and special educational needs. They visit the school regularly, observe lessons and talk with staff and pupils. This first hand knowledge of the school ensures they are very aware of the strengths and the weaknesses.
44. There are very effective procedures that support the collection and analysis of the performance of the school. Information from the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the very good performance management procedures contribute to the very good school improvement plan. There is a very good record of staff development and the training undertaken very well matches the needs of teachers and support staff and the requirements of the school. As a result, the priorities for development are very relevant. A major focus in the period since the last inspection has been to ensure that the needs of the changing school population are met effectively, particularly for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, hearing impairment and, at Forest House, psychiatric or psychological difficulties. Any hindrances to pupils' progress are systematically tackled. For example, in order to recruit suitable teachers, resources have been successfully invested in helping support assistants to train to be teachers. However, although the school has taken steps to advertise on several occasions there is a shortfall in specialist English and design and technology teachers.
45. Although Forest House is some distance from St Luke's, the management is as effective as at the main school site. Weekly meetings between the assistant headteacher who runs Forest House and the headteacher ensure communication channels are clear.
46. The curriculum is very well led and managed overall. There is a good line of communication between pastoral, teaching and support staff. All heads of department and staff responsible for aspects of the school contribute to the school improvement plan. These arrangements ensure effective long term views of what developments are needed and are very well costed, indicating any further resource needs.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004 which include Forest House

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,820,639
Total expenditure	1,818,766
Expenditure per pupil	11,158

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,363
Balance carried forward to the next	69,236

47. The school achieves its educational objectives very well because it has a very good approach to financial management. Day-to-day finances are managed very well by the headteacher very ably assisted by a school manager who is on the senior management team of the school. The principles of best value are very well built into all spending decisions. These are very well tracked and monitored by the governors. The school handles its finances very well with a small surplus carried forward from year to year. The very effective way it budgets enables all spending areas to be very well resourced. Good improvement has been made in leadership and management since the last inspection.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are overall good but satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils improve their speaking and listening skills very well.
- Pupils' have very good relationships with staff, which is reflected in their hard work and their achievements.
- The subject is well led and managed, ensuring very effective planning as pupils move from one class to the next.
- The wide range of pupils' ability is dealt with effectively.
- Target setting shared with pupils informing them how they can improve is not yet sufficiently developed.

Commentary

48. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress in English. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are very well supported in class and make at least as good progress and achievement as their peers. Pupils at Forest House achieve well and make good progress. However, the achievement and progress of pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 at the school are satisfactory. This reflects the predominately satisfactory quality of teaching for these pupils. There are instances where, for example, teachers' planning is not sufficiently detailed to ensure the needs of all pupils are successfully met. A few lessons in these year groups are taught by the head of department and it is noticeable that pupils' progress improves in these sessions.
49. Very good progress and achievement are made overall by pupils in speaking and listening. Teachers make very good use of questioning and give clear explanations involving the pupils very well in discussion. Pupils listen very carefully and answer questions with good levels of interpretation and understanding. In basic skills lessons, pupils with hearing impairment are very well supported and use signing and what speech they have very effectively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used their speaking and listening skills very well. They effectively extracted and understood information from the books *Snakes Sore Head* and *The Boy Who Tried to Hide* and expressed well formed opinions concerning the ideas in the stories. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make satisfactory and at times, good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills, for example when considering why holiday choices are made or in response to questions about a story they had read.
50. Achievement in reading is good. All classrooms are well resourced with a range of reading materials, both fiction and non-fiction, matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. Further reading and research is supported with the provision of a very good, well organised and attractively presented library. As well as daily reading sessions for pupils during the first session in the morning, there are many opportunities for them to read. For example, pupils in Year 10 read the formal and informal letters they have written. A few have difficulties and need support from staff, but others are gaining in confidence. In another Year 10 class, pupils re-

read a story as a preliminary to writing their own version. Many in this group read competently. A good emphasis is given to the comprehension of what they read through questioning and asking them to analyse their texts.

51. Pupils' progress in writing is a focus for development. It is at least satisfactory and at times it is good. However, samples of work show an emphasis on using a wide range of worksheets mainly dealing with the grammatical structure of English. These are used well for homework but in a number of classes, notably in Years 7 to 9, teachers use them too frequently which does not encourage extended writing. All pupils have opportunities to write creatively and imaginatively. The best practice, where pupils have more opportunities to use their writing skills, illustrates a very good link between the pupils' speaking and listening skills, their analysis of given texts and the opportunities to write for informative and descriptive writing can be seen in Year 10 work and occasionally in Year 9. All pupils are encouraged to keep word books with frequently used spellings and many show a good use of dictionaries appropriately selected according to their individual competencies. A good range of opportunities is provided for pupils to use ICT to record and re-draft their work.
52. Overall, teaching and learning are good, although satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Elements of the National Strategies have been successfully incorporated in most lessons. Lessons are usually well planned and relevant to the pupils' age and interests and are supported by a good range and quality of resources. As a result, pupils try their best and display very good attitudes to their learning. Very good relationships and the very good use of support assistants enable the pupils to contribute well. There are good procedures for assessment. The school is starting to develop targets shared and recorded in their working files with individual pupils. However, this is not consistently applied and is still under-developed. The use of assessment informing pupils and their parents how they can improve is satisfactory and is still subject to further development. This is appropriately recognised by the school.
53. The head of department leads and manages the subject well showing a good awareness of developments needed in a very good subject improvement plan. At present she is monitoring and evaluating the work of the staff teaching in Years 7 to 9 to support them and help develop expertise. Planning of what is to be taught from year to year is well established and helps pupils to continue to make progress. Levels of finance and resources are good. The policy for inclusion is very well applied as older pupils who are competent readers support younger pupils with the development of reading. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Pupils speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are well promoted in many subjects. Teachers place great emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills in lessons other than English. For example in drama where many opportunities exist for pupils to role play and express their opinions clearly. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to use key subject vocabulary well in all subjects and good opportunities are given for them to use effectively their reading and writing skills. Pupils who cannot communicate well verbally are given excellent levels of support to communicate through signing and gesture and to use, whenever possible, their limited verbal skills. Pupils are also given a range of opportunities to read to themselves and to the class, for example reading out the school rules of conduct in a PSHCE lesson. Pupils write for a range of purposes, such as sentences to record answers, short descriptions to explain what they have done and longer passages for example, describing themselves in their records of achievement.

French

55. Two lessons were seen in French. It is taught to pupils from Year 5 to Year 11 and they all have regular opportunities to learn to speak French vocabulary and simple phrases. For example, Year 8 pupils were able to describe items of clothing and the garments' colours in

French while being videoed for their self-assessment file. Last year, all Year 11 pupils achieved Entry Level certificates in French.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and the level of support enables pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers use a good range of equipment and strategies to keep pupils interested and help them understand.
- ICT is underused by the department.

Commentary

56. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement, particularly in the achievement of pupils in Years 5 to 9. All pupils now make good progress and achieve well. They participate enthusiastically in lessons, do their homework and try hard. Pupils are particularly interested when they have objects to deal with such as different shapes or practical equipment to help them model their ideas physically. Games and competitive activities are very much enjoyed whether they win or not. They find thinking ahead to identify good moves in strategy games difficult but they do their best and sometimes succeed through sheer persistence. Particularly good progress is made with calculation and other number skills in the lively lessons using techniques from the Numeracy Strategy, where there are visual cues and lots of repetition in an encouraging atmosphere. The communicators and teaching assistants help the pupils with hearing impairment or autistic spectrum disorders to make good progress. Almost all pupils achieve an Entry Level qualification and many also achieve a Foundation Level GCSE.
57. Lessons are clearly planned and ensure that pupils know what they should achieve. Key words are displayed and used throughout the lessons. In the majority of lessons behaviour management is good and there are enough adults in the room to ensure that all pupils receive the support and help they need. A number of lessons use games, real-life examples or special equipment such as little whiteboards and geared clocks to keep the pupils interested. Less successful lessons rely on worksheets which have no connection with pupils' lives or interests. Good and very good teaching emphasises strategies rather than just the correct answer. Teachers also used pupils' incorrect answers so that pupils could see that their suggestions would not work and show how they could be adjusted. Homework is used well and the majority of pupils hand it in on time.
58. Mathematics is well led. The head of department has strong subject knowledge and leads a good team well. There is a good scheme of work covering all the areas of mathematics, grouped under themes such as shopping, travel and sport. The detailed recording system enables staff to keep a close track of pupil progress effectively. Pupils are involved informally in the classroom in assessing their own progress but do not use written self-assessment procedures to make their understanding clearer of what they need to do to improve. Despite the wide range of technology available in the school, ICT is used only occasionally and in limited ways and therefore does little to enhance the mathematics curriculum.
59. Mathematics is very well organised and taught at Forest House. A computer program is used effectively to help spot any gaps in learning. Pupils are given work that is suitable for their ability and staff are very supportive and encouraging. Many successfully take their GCSE examinations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Pupils use mathematics well in a variety of different subjects. There is a great deal of measurement in their practical subjects and they handle data in science and geography, for example, making tally sheets and graphs. They are taught how to set up databases and spreadsheet in ICT and, as they get older, learn how to choose the most suitable graph to display their results.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well because they are very well taught by teachers with high levels of subject expertise.
- Pupils learn to find things out for themselves.
- In Year 11, pupils achieve very well in GCSE and Entry Level examinations.
- Very good use is made of very good resources.
- Two very well equipped science laboratories help teachers to teach effectively but the level of sound proofing in the room adjacent to one laboratory is poor.

Commentary

61. Teachers use their expertise extremely well to plan interesting lessons that include exciting practical activities which are suitably difficult. Discussion at the beginning of each lesson ensures all pupils know exactly what they have to do. As a result, pupils are confident and develop very good skills in observing and finding out what happens using fair test techniques. They also enjoy what they do, as one pupil commented, "I love this lesson" and they achieve very well. During a Year 5 and 6 lesson, pupils' levels of concentration were high as they used lenses to watch closely what their snails were selecting to eat. They checked out whether their predictions were right and were amazed to discover that croutons of dried bread were a preferred choice. Staff use their expertise extremely well. For example, they take great care to ensure pupils understand dangers and follow health and safety procedures. They remind pupils how to turn their Bunsen burners on correctly, have clear routines, for example, for lighting the gas from the back of the room first, and are constantly vigilant. All pupils in a Year 9 class collected their own apparatus, set it up and tested foods for sugar and established clear results. Firm, well established routines help pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to achieve very well in science. The display of key vocabulary throughout the lessons helps all pupils with their literacy skills and also provides a visual reminder for the pupils with hearing impairment.
62. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make very good progress on their examination courses. Many achieve Foundation Level grades in the GCSE examination and almost all gain Entry Level awards. Records show, that apart from a slight dip last year, the number of awards is steadily rising. This is due to the very good leadership and management of the department, which is a leading science department and, as such, advises supports and models high quality practice for staff in other schools. Self- evaluation and planning for improvement are very well organised and the high quality accommodation is very well resourced. One of the rooms, however, is next door to a room used for music therapy. The sound travels through the wall and is distracting for pupils and difficult for staff. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.
63. Pupils at Forest House achieve very well in science and make very good progress. They study a series of modules which have been carefully selected to be suitable for the age range and the limited facilities available. Work is planned very well and pitched so that the more able are stretched. Pupils' work shows they have a good understanding of the digestive and respiratory systems and have explored electrons and chemical reactions. Good use is made of ICT for

example, to show the incidence of eye and hair colour. Pupils enjoy their work in the environment, such as cleaning the pond and tending the apple trees.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress from year to year and because of some innovative projects they have opportunities to use or experience some of the very latest technology.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work with enthusiasm. The lunchtime computer club is over-subscribed.
- Cross-curricular work in ICT is very strong.

Commentary

64. There has been very good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory but parts of the curriculum were not being taught.
65. In Years 5 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in early ICT skills ensuring they have a secure base for further work later on. This is partly because planning is not as well developed for these pupils as for the older pupils. Also, pupils join the class at different times throughout the year with widely varying levels of competence in ICT and this tends to slow the progress of others. Progress in Years 7 to 11 is very good. It is clear in their work how much they improve from year to year as they are asked to remember and use existing skills and then to add on new ones. In addition the school is part of several exciting projects and so pupils are making and editing their own films with digital video and communicating with pupils in other schools using video phones.
66. Pupils with additional needs are well catered for with screen filters, wrist supports, roller balls, bigger icons and extra adult support. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make similar progress to their peers. Almost all pupils achieve an Entry Level qualification.
67. Teachers are very confident in using the hardware and software and draw on a rich range of materials from the Internet and other sources. They have a good relationship with pupils, their high expectations and demand for accuracy being softened by the use of humour. Planning is very good, which results in clear explanations so that pupils know what they are going to do and what they should achieve. Within the context of the lesson, pupils are able to make a lot of their own choices, which makes the outcomes personally theirs and helps them to sustain their interest. Teachers often pretend to have forgotten how something works and asking the pupils to demonstrate or give instructions. This is a highly successful strategy which helps them to assess how well the pupils have understood and remembered previous work. Homework is emphasised and the majority of pupils hand it in on time. In a few lessons pupils spend too much time on paper-based tasks and not enough time on the computers.
68. Leadership is very good overall. The head of department has developed the subject and has clear ideas about what needs to be done next including the priority for establishing clear planning for Years 5 and 6. She is enthusiastic and has strong subject knowledge. The overall scheme of work covers all the areas thoroughly and allows pupils to improve their skills in each strand every year. There are some very well thought out sheets for recording pupils' targets, levels and achievement which encourage pupils to take some part in their own assessment. Management is good because the head of department has a good overview of developments. However, teaching by other staff needs to be monitored on a more regular basis to ensure pupils have sufficient time working on the computers. The use of the very good assessment procedures is inconsistent between classes.
69. The ICT suite is well laid out and very well equipped. Staff encourage pupils to use the interactive whiteboard and the use of video conferencing is developing well, for example, to introduce experts and artefacts into topics.

70. Pupils at Forest House have very good opportunities to use a range of computer programs and make very good progress. The planning and presentation of many subjects use ICT effectively. Equipment has been developed very well and now includes a good number of computers and an interactive whiteboard.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. ICT is very well used in most other subjects. The main exceptions are mathematics and religious education. The range of equipment and the extent to which it is used by staff to produce exciting materials and experiences are impressive. Pupils word-process their work and produce illustrated front covers for many subjects. They also use data-logging programs in science, search Internet sources to make iron-on designs for their cushion-covers in textiles, and make short animated films in the *Wallace and Gromit* style in art. They have used digital video cameras to make a range of films, among others, on anti-bullying in PSHCE, one about the local area in geography and another showing pupils using their vocabulary about clothes and colours in French.

HUMANITIES

72. Two lessons were seen in **geography** and one humanities lesson with a geography focus. There is clear evidence from the teacher's detailed planning that work in geography is varied and interesting. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils were learning to use development indicators to compare rich and poor countries. They used their red and green cards to show right and wrong answers. Pupils enjoyed their work because the teacher supplied a stimulating interactive computer presentation from the computer, comparing England with Kenya, as a rich nation with a poor one. Pupils learnt to appreciate what life is like for people living in Kenya; one pupil remarked, "the way to judge the wealth of a nation is to see how many hospitals, how many schools and how much food they have to eat." When pupils reach Year 11 they either achieve an AQA Entry Level certificate in geography or the school's own certificate in humanities. The subject also contributes to pupils' bronze award in ASDAN.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very enthusiastic head of humanities department, who teaches history, ensures that pupils' work is well planned and that it covers a full range of topics.
- Year 10 and 11 pupils have opportunities to enter for a range of awards.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- ICT is used well to help pupils research and present work.

Commentary

73. The achievement of pupils is very good overall, culminating in very good results at Year 11 when pupils enter for Unit Awards, Entry Level or GCSE examinations in history or humanities. Younger pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 following a combined geography and history programme.

74. ICT is used well in the very good teaching and this helps pupils with their written work. Pupils readily use the Internet when researching a topic such as the Celts, Elizabethans or the slave trade. During a Year 7 lesson, pupils used the Internet to find portraits of Elizabeth I painted at different times – when she was a young girl and when she was an old woman and discussed what they saw. More able pupils in a Year 9 lesson on slavery empathised and described the terrible conditions incurred by slaves on a ship bound for America. A video was used to enhance the lesson and all pupils were able to understand the problems incurred on board the ship.
75. Leadership and management of the subject are very good; the head of humanities has worked hard and improved the subject well since the last inspection. As well as improving ICT, he has addressed other areas of weakness such as ensuring that clear targets and objectives are shared with the pupils. He is working on the introduction of pupil self-assessment cards which help pupils appreciate their own improvements.
76. Resources are very good with an extensive DVD library which supports new topics such as *Women's role in the resistance* and *Bombers* for work on the Second World War. The local area of Redbourn and St Albans are used regularly for history trips when pupils can see the medieval cruck framed houses, the 18th century workhouse and the water mill. These activities improve the pupils' ability to empathise with people and events from the past as well as making a strong contribution to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
77. At Forest House, history is taught by a specialist teacher and the very high standard of pupils' work reflects the teacher's enthusiasm. Pupils learn about the events leading up to the Second World War, as one pupil pointed out, "All because of that stupid Treaty of Versailles!" Pupils achieve very well and display a high level of understanding of the events in history using the Internet to find out more information about the topics they are studying. Work is carefully planned and targets set for each pupil to achieve, based on what they would be learning in their school. Lessons are organised very well as often pupils may be studying different topics or aspects of topics.

Religious education

Provision in religious studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader makes very good use of resources to support learning.
- The head of department develops, plans, leads and manages the subject effectively.
- Years 10 and 11 pupils follow the AQA Entry Level certificate course in religious studies.
- There is not enough use of ICT.

Commentary

78. Religious studies is taught successfully, because the subject leader focuses well on the artefacts, ceremonies and traditions of world faiths and this is highly appropriate for the pupils' special educational needs. She creates lots of stimulating opportunities for pupils to be involved in lessons and special events. For example, during a Year 10 lesson on Christian marriage pupils had to spot the deliberate mistakes and accuracies during the video clips of an actual marriage ceremony, *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and an excerpt from *The Vicar of Dibley*. The fundamental rules were conveyed during this lesson with great humour and fun. All pupils respond very well to the many interesting methods used to help them learn all about world faiths. Years 10 and 11 pupils achieve Entry Level awards in religious studies.
79. Teaching is good overall. Pupils are challenged effectively into asking very pertinent questions for example, one Year 8 pupil asked, "How many levels are there in heaven?" However, very occasionally there is an overuse of work sheets which does not provide sufficiently varied

activities to interest pupils. Pupils are taught effectively about the cultural traditions of the major religions. Opportunities are made for them to wear authentic costumes, eat foods, handle artefacts and listen to music associated with these faiths. For example, during a lesson on the Hindu story of creation Year 8 pupils explored the concept of reincarnation, role playing a human being returning to this earth as a dog, cat or rat.

80. Leadership and management are good, the head of department is very innovative, and she is fully committed to her subject. She does recognise, however the need for a greater use of ICT to aid learning. The good provision at the last inspection has been maintained.
81. The pupils in Forest House are taught through a series of modules with a strong moral and philosophical theme. These are linked into their PSHCE lessons. Pupils are given clear opportunities to express their feelings and give their views. The course is very well suited to meet their individual needs. In the school and at Forest House, religious education makes a very strong contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' work in textiles is often outstanding, and is very good in food technology.
- The quality of teaching and learning varies from excellent in textiles to satisfactory and, at times, good in resistant materials.
- The food technology room needs refurbishment.
- Support for pupils in lessons is very effective.
- The curriculum is greatly improved since the last inspection.
- At Forest House pupils learn very good practical skills.

Commentary

82. Overall, pupils do well in design and technology but their progress and achievement varies from excellent in textiles to good, and at times very good, in food technology and satisfactory in resistant materials (for example, wood, metal and plastics). This reflects the quality of teaching and learning in these areas. However, in food technology, both the quality of the teaching and learning and pupils' achievements are restricted because there are not sufficient working areas within the main part of the classroom and work-top heights do not adjust to meet the needs of all the pupils. Although there are differences in pupils' achievement, the curriculum is well designed and there is a common approach used by all areas. For example, a module on health and safety is taught to all pupils. The improvement in the curriculum and in the achievement made by the pupils contributes to the overall excellent improvement that has been made since the last inspection.
83. Throughout all lessons the support staff, including volunteers are very effective. The communicators ensure the pupils with hearing impairment understand and encourage a response. A shrug of the shoulders and a signed "I don't know" was quickly probed further and an accurate description of technique followed. Staff expertise ensures pupils learn to use a broad range of techniques in textiles, creating highly coloured weaving with recycled materials, making appliqué and printed designs for cushions, tie-dyeing to make different effects and beautiful examples of silk screen painting. In food technology, pupils' understanding of nutrition improves and they investigate and design their own food wrappers. They prepare and evaluate a range of dishes such as rice, egg and tuna salad, scones and curried pasta salad

successfully. Weighing and measuring are carefully taught and through the constant vigilance of staff and effective risk assessments, all pupils work safely with sharp knives and hot cookers. In lessons using resistant materials, pupils research and design cases and faces for clock mechanisms, some quite complex, and assemble them successfully. They make a simple control mechanism using cams and a winding apparatus to make a moving toy. Pupils particularly enjoyed the example of an animal that stuck its tongue out when the wheel was turned. Homework sheets are particularly well designed. A series on clocks were very clear and set out for an adult helping the pupil exactly what was intended and why. Pupils in Year 10 enjoy working on computer assisted design at a local specialist technology college.

84. Both the leadership and the management of design and technology are very good. One result of the monitoring and evaluation is the increase in the number of pupils gaining examination success in Year 11. Last year, almost all pupils achieved an Entry Level award with 18 of the 30 at Level 3.
85. Pupils at Forest House make very good progress in food technology. The lesson seen and their work shows they improve their skills and understanding and, through the use of clear planning guidelines, prepare a broad range of dishes including lasagne, caramel custard and during the arts week, an African vegetable couscous. ICT is used very well to support learning, for example, to prepare an invitation to a meal.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

86. It is not possible to make an overall judgment on the provision for **art and design, drama and music** as too few lessons were observed to judge teaching and learning overall. Together, these subjects form an expressive arts course, which is very successfully taught to GCSE level.
87. In **art and design** the quality of pupils' work on display, an analysis of the subject leader's planning and organisation and their achievement in the two lessons observed, show that they achieve very well. In a Year 9 lesson, inspired by the work of Antonio Gaudi, pupils created very well their own fantasy buildings in clay. Very good planning supported their very good achievements. The teacher had prepared written instructions for them to follow regarding the use of the clay, which the pupils appropriately followed. Those who needed it, received further excellent levels of support from the teacher and support assistant. Pupils with communication difficulties were included in the lesson in an excellent manner. At Forest House, as part of the provision of an arts week, pupils' progress and achievement were excellent. Here, pupils supported by excellent cross-curricular links with mathematics, design and technology and the humanities in particular were in the process of making a life size model of an African village. They had developed this after a visit to an African Centre where they had met Africans involved in a real-life African village they had created. Teaching and learning were excellent with an extremely good team approach between the teachers, support staff and a visiting artist. Samples of work show the application of very well planned and developed work using a wide range of two and three dimensional materials and studies of the work of many artists applied to the pupils' work. Year 11 GCSE examination work as part of the expressive arts course, illustrates the very good progress and achievement of the pupils.
88. In **drama** just two lessons were observed and a video tape was viewed which illustrated the last Christmas pantomime Robin Hood. Discussion was also held with the head of the expressive arts department, who also teaches drama. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, excellent teaching led to the pupils achieving extremely well. Working in groups of three they very successfully developed and presented a small play about looking after a puppy that had gone missing in a local supermarket. The pupils, given excellent opportunities to work co-operatively and independently, very well developed their roles presenting them in an excellent manner with clear speech. The very well organised support for pupils with communication difficulties enabled them to play their full part. All showed excellent attitudes trying their hardest to give of their best. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils examined the respective roles of Romeo and Juliet. Very

good teaching and learning ensured the pupils gave an imaginative interpretation of the characters and made very good progress. Relationships and pupils' attitudes were excellent where they supported each other, clapping and encouraging those that were finding some difficulties.

89. Two lessons of **music** were seen during the inspection as well as a 'singing assembly' and rehearsals of choir and orchestra for a concert. Teachers' records, a tape of evidence and pupils' work show most pupils to be making good progress, particularly in learning to use notation, to compose and to perform. As part of the expressive arts course, pupils may opt to study music in Years 10 and 11. Last year, the two highest grades were achieved by pupils studying music. Additionally, awards are gained in the Hertfordshire Achievement in Music (AIM) course, ten of the fifteen pupils at the higher Level 3. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The teacher makes very good opportunities for pupils to work independently and also to perform together enhancing skills in co-operation very well. Pupils learn about and perform music from a broad range of countries and cultures. Good teaching methods, such as marking out the staves on the floor of the classroom so pupils can all see where notes are placed, work well. The teacher has high levels of expertise in teaching music and has adapted lesson planning very well to cater for the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. While rising to the challenge of teaching music to classes with pupils with hearing impairment through using specific instruments such as metalophones, not enough use is made of any residual hearing. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their bodies to experience music. However, good opportunities are taken to involve these pupils in singing sessions where words are displayed and communicators and hearing pupils also sign.
90. There are a good number of pupils receiving instrument tuition from peripatetic staff, including two pupils with hearing impairment who are learning to play the violin. Rehearsals for a concert demonstrated high levels of performing skills in keyboard, piano, woodwind and percussion as well as high quality singing with staff and pupils often participating together.
91. The school produces an annual pantomime, involving most of the pupils in the school. This combines the whole of the performing arts department where musician and singers play a role using very well the excellent stage with its own lighting effects. The scenery and the props are made by the art and design department. A video of the performance last Christmas showed approximately one hundred and twenty pupils, drawn from all classes, giving a very good presentation of a very high standard. This included older pupils playing the main roles with the narrator being a member of staff. Staff and pupils were in the orchestra and pupils who have difficulty in using the spoken work very well signed what was sung. Further videos illustrated the excellent inclusion of most of the pupils in the school and the very high standards and excellent range of presentation from year to year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in pupils achieving very well in a wide range of activities.
- At times, pupils attain average standards.
- There is a very good range of extra- curricular activities.
- The accommodation is very good.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to the subject and behave very well.
- The use of assessment and sharing of targets with pupils is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

92. Pupils at St Luke's and at Forest House achieve very well, making very good progress in the wide range of activities they are given. In a number of lessons, notably in Years 5 and 6, where they are taught very well, pupils learn very effectively and achieve average standards compared with the national expectation for all pupils. Pupils at Forest House made very good progress when using the trampoline and playing badminton.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good subject knowledge and lesson planning and effective use of support staff ensure pupils build on their learning very well. Pupils are very well supported and they quickly make progress and gain new skills. Teachers' expectation and the level of challenge are high and time is used very effectively. As a result, pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was a particular problem in physical education. Very good guidance is given to individual pupils regarding how they can improve and very good levels of support are given to pupils who have a limited means of communicating verbally. The recording of the progress and the development of future planning matched to the individual targets pupils need to further improve are not yet fully developed.
94. The leadership of the subject is very good and the new head of department has very quickly identified the further developments needed. A very good range of extra-curricular activities such as cricket, tennis, rounders and athletics in the summer and in the winter boys and girls football and dance and tag rugby enhances the range of the curriculum very well. Pupils attend these in large numbers. Competitive sports are very well encouraged. During the week of the inspection a Year 9 cricket team very successfully played in an all day cricket competition against six other special schools. The accommodation, which is very good, with a very good gymnasium and extensive well kept playing fields and the good quality and quantity of resources enables the range of activities and contributes to the very high levels of achievement.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

95. Year 11 pupils attend a series of vocational courses at two of three colleges according to their ability and needs. The courses include construction, landbased studies, catering and hair and beauty. These courses, careers education and PSHCE form study units which build on the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. Pupils begin in Year 10, where they take part in community studies, health and hygiene, sport and leisure and the environment. They also explore skills and personal qualities necessary for a range of roles.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and a very good role model.
- Teachers use a very wide range of interesting resources which help pupils to understand.
- Sensitive issues are dealt with tactfully but honestly.
- Citizenship is well planned and very well taught, but has insufficient teaching time for all aspects planned.

Commentary

96. Pupils make very good progress in all elements of this subject. They work hard, do their homework and bring their own ideas and interests to the lessons. They are willing to participate, listen and respond well, and enjoy the topics they are taught. Their increasing

understanding of the subject is obvious from the work. Progress can also be seen within lessons when they are presented with powerful images on video or told stories which catch their imagination. Communicators for the pupils with hearing impairment have a job keeping up with the rapid delivery of some of these lessons, but usually manage to keep these pupils fully informed and involved.

97. Lessons are stimulating and use many different learning styles and types of presentation. Role play and reflecting on behaviour and its consequences are areas which pupils with autistic spectrum disorders find difficult, but with support these pupils too are able to join in. Next year for the first time pupils will be taking an Entry Level qualification.
98. The very good teaching is characterised by a classroom atmosphere of respect for others, where sensitive questions are dealt with in an honest adult way and respect is shown for different backgrounds and experiences. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and also given time to respond, they are encouraged to participate but never forced. Teachers have a very good relationship with their classes and are able to keep them involved with humour and encouragement and rarely have to resort to formal behaviour management strategies.
99. Very good use is made of ICT. Teachers routinely use videos, tapes, computer programs and the Internet. Pupils have made and edited a variety of films to help them explore the different themes (one group filmed 'nice and unpleasant' areas in the local environment) or warning films to show to others (another group enacted a drama against bullying)
100. Leadership is very good and the department has maintained the high standards observed during the last inspection. There is a very good scheme of work for personal, social and health education and an extremely detailed assessment system which gives a very good picture of each pupil's progress. There is a very good programme of citizenship topics which are very well taught within the weekly lesson. Although this programme is well planned, there is not sufficient time to teach thoroughly all aspects within the time available. However, it does not take account of the contribution made by other subjects, to the pupils' knowledge of our society and their place in it. These are extensive and have not yet been listed.
101. Management of the subject is good. The head of department has a good overview of the curriculum; she manages resources well, is skilled at bidding for and receiving funding but does not monitor the teaching of other staff.
102. At Forest House, personal, social and health education and citizenship has a high priority: There are three separate lessons on citizenship as well as community meetings and the subject is sympathetically taught throughout the curriculum. Excellent opportunities are made for pupils to develop their social skills in working with others. Confidence and self-esteem are promoted effectively, for example, seeking and valuing pupils' opinions and encouraging them to make decisions about their work and their personal lives. As a result, pupils make very good progress and are particularly good at praising the efforts of each other. In a plenary session following a practical lesson where pupils had made and painted the posts for the hut they were assembling for arts week, they assessed their work and debated how to manage the next stage. Skilful questioning by the teacher helped pupils voice and explore ideas and select the best way forward.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The effectiveness of management	2
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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).

In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not against national standards.