

INSPECTION REPORT

IVY HOUSE SCHOOL

Derby

LEA area: Derby

Unique reference number: 113047

Headteacher: Mrs P Sillitoe

Lead inspector: Alan Tattersall

Dates of inspection: 7th-10th October 2003

Inspection number: 259810

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 -19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	76
School address:	249 Osmaston Road Derby
Postcode:	DE23 8LG
Telephone number:	(01332) 344694
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Jeffery
Date of previous inspection:	19/10/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ivy House is a school with 76 boys and girls aged from two to 19 who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A few pupils also have autism. Pupils come mainly from the inner city areas of Derby. Attainment on entry is very low as a consequence of pupils' special educational needs. Approximately half the pupils are white and the remainder are of mainly Asian background. Many of these are pupils for whom English is an additional language and who are at an early stage of language acquisition. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or are in the process of receiving one. The school received a Healthy School's Award and a Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20466	Alan Tattersall	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, French, design and technology
9052	Helen Barter	Lay inspector	
31914	Collette Gribble	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education and English as an additional language.
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science, citizenship, music and special educational needs.
23412	Alvin Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design and physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and effective school. Good leadership overall, with very good leadership from the headteacher, ensures that teaching and learning are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils to achieve well and make good progress.
- Staff guide pupils to behave very well, form very good relationships and develop a keen interest in learning. Pupils' personal, social, spiritual and moral development is very good.
- The poor school buildings prevent pupils achieving more in most subjects and in personal programmes such as mobility.
- Pupils receive a very high standard of care and support for their personal and learning needs but systems to check pupils' learning are not sufficiently well developed.
- Post-16 students follow accredited courses but pupils in Years 10 and 11 lack this opportunity.
- Pupils up to Year 2 and students at post-16 have good opportunities to work and socialise with their peers in schools and colleges, other pupils do not have this opportunity.

The school has responded well to the issues raised at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning have improved through measures the headteacher has introduced to make improvements to staff training, for example improving skills in information and communication technology (ICT). This together with the acquisition of good equipment has resulted in improved pupils' achievement. Governors manage finances effectively and are more involved in finding out about pupils' learning in all lessons. Although the school has worked hard to improve accommodation, the buildings continue to be poor and lack many important features such as specialist rooms for science, design and technology, art and physical education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

All pupils achieve well, regardless of their differing special educational needs and backgrounds in each stage of the school as show by the table below.

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

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

The very youngest children achieve well in the goals that they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, educated in this class, achieve similarly well. Boys and girls throughout the school achieve well in communication, reading, mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education (PE), personal, social, health (PHSE) and citizenship education. Achievement in writing and science are satisfactory. Insufficient lessons were available for observation in religious education, history, geography, design and technology, music and French and they were not part of the inspection foci to judge achievement in these subjects. Students at post-16 achieve well. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**

The school's measures are very successful in ensuring that pupils' **attitudes to work, their behaviour and relationships are very good.** No pupils have been excluded from school for many years. **Attendance is satisfactory and in line with that in similar schools.** As a consequence of effective support, pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), pupils who have (PMLD) and the few pupils who have autism make the same progress as others.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. A significant reason why **teaching and learning is good** for most subjects is because staff have a good knowledge of pupils' needs. Pupils are well supported and encouraged to apply themselves well in lessons. Senior management is aware that it needs to improve the way that it checks what pupils are learning in line with the successful systems introduced in the foundation class. **Pupils receive a satisfactory breadth of learning opportunities, enriched by a good range of activities and visits outside of lessons.** There are sufficient lessons in literacy, numeracy and ICT; other lessons often reinforce these skills well. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 lack the opportunities given to students at post-16 to follow accredited courses. Overall, the school creates effective opportunities for pupils to learn within inadequate buildings. However, the accommodation adversely affects what pupils learn and achieve in science, design and technology and art and design but lessons in PE make good use of community facilities. Narrow corridors and poor access to several rooms hamper opportunities for pupils to move around independently. Pupils up to the end of Year 2 are included in lessons in a local school and post-16 students attend college. Other pupils lack this opportunity to learn with other pupils or socialise with them and other adults. **The quality of care for pupils is very good.** The very good partnership with medical and therapy support benefits pupils. Parents have a good view of the school and agree the need to improve their current satisfactory involvement in the school by overcoming barriers such as difficulties in travel. Post-16 students express their views through a student council but this has not been extended to other pupils in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is good. The headteacher's very strong leadership and management are significant factors in the school's good improvement over several years, including improving pupils' achievement. Senior staff work well with her and lead a very committed staff team to promote pupils' learning. Governors manage the finances well and provide good support to the school in areas such as improving the quality of staff and relationships within the community. The school supports new teachers well and provides good training to teaching and classroom staff to improve their effectiveness and consequently pupils' progress.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers have a positive view of what the school does for them and their children. Pupils, who responded, are very clear that they like school and enjoy attending. They want to learn, and particularly value the opportunity to use ICT to help them with their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to ensure it improves upon the high standard of education for all pupils is to:

- Improve accommodation for learning in those areas where it is currently unsatisfactory or poor.
- Establish more effective ways of checking what pupils are learning and create opportunities for accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Develop opportunities for all pupils to work and socialise with pupils and adults from other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Boys and girls **achieve well**. This represents a good improvement in most subjects since the previous inspection when pupils' achievement was mostly satisfactory. Consequently, the standards judged against nationally recognised measurements of small steps of achievement show that standards are rising.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement throughout the school has improved since the last inspection. Achievement in lessons and in the targets set for pupils at annual reviews in English, mathematics and personal development are now good.
- Children who enter the foundation class settle quickly and get off to a good start, achieving well to make good progress towards the nationally recognised goals that are set for them in all areas of learning.
- Students at post-16 achieve well and make good progress towards accreditation in 'Key Skills'.
- Achievement in science is satisfactory and higher standards in this and physical education are hampered by the poor accommodation.

Commentary

1. The achievement of all pupils including those who have PMLD or have autism is good as a result of the way that the senior management have ensured that teachers plan effectively to meet their needs. Similarly, the large number of pupils for whom English is an additional language and who are at an early stage of language acquisition progress as well as other pupils. This is because the way that teachers plan for pupils to learn according to individual needs meets their requirements very well.
2. Pupils in the foundation class achieve well in the tasks they are working towards by the time they reach Year 1. The new systems introduced to check regularly what they are learning are demonstrating that standards are rising as a consequence of good teaching in all areas of learning. Those pupils in Years 1 and 2 who are educated alongside them in the same class continue to develop the skills to achieve well by the time they reach Year 2. In mathematics, English and PHSE, pupils' standards measured against PIVATs (performance indicators for value added target setting) demonstrate that standards are rising.
3. In literacy, pupils beyond Year 2 continue to make good progress in reading and communication. However their achievement in writing is less well developed and is satisfactory. This is because there is less emphasis placed upon promoting pupils' skills in writing than communication and reading in most lessons and throughout the day.
4. All classes represent a wide range of ability and many pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. However, all pupils in the school achieve equally well overall in English because staff know pupils' needs very well and match methods of communication to pupils for instance through signs and gestures or pictures and symbols. Staff use the 'picture exchange communication system', (PECs) to communicate effectively with the few pupils who have autism. Similarly, pupils whose first language is not English make the same progress as others because teachers plan for all pupils in class who are at an early stage of language acquisition. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. The regular lessons they receive promote their skills systematically. The way that teachers frequently plan to provide pupils with practical applications for using their skills, particularly in PE, music, science and in food technology makes a good contribution to deepening their understanding.

5. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good and has improved since the previous inspection. This is due particularly to the high priority that senior managers and governors have placed upon the introduction of new equipment and the guidance provided by those staff who have received effective training. Consequently, pupils show a good understanding of their own success, expressing a particular liking for the subject. Pupils make good progress in lessons in science. However, the range of tasks they follow is limited by the lack of facilities for teaching science and the provision of resources. Consequently, achievement in science is satisfactory overall.
6. Pupils throughout the school achieve consistently well in PHSE and citizenship. They have responded well to the way that staff promote their personal and social development throughout the school day and achieve their individual targets for personal development well.
7. Staff plan well to overcome many of the limitations of the building to ensure that pupils achieve well in physical education. Pupils of all ages make good progress in swimming at local pools and make effective use of sports facilities in the community to achieve well in a good range of sports and games. As with other subjects, pupils who have PMLD and the few autistic pupils achieve as well as others because effective planning enables them to participate in suitable activities and receive the support they require.
8. One religious education lesson for students at post-16 took place during the inspection week. The remainder of the school will have religious education lessons later in the year. Although it is not possible on the evidence to judge the achievement and progress of pupils in the main school, students at post-16 made very good progress in their lesson. A judgement of pupils' achievement in history, music, art and French was not made because timetable arrangements prevented the observation of sufficient lessons and the subjects were not chosen for detailed study during the inspection. Lessons in design and technology and geography do not take place this term.
9. The headteacher and senior management team have ensured that teachers follow better guidance for planning lessons and this has led to improvements in pupils' standards of achievements since the previous inspection. Pupils' consistent achievement of well chosen targets for learning in English, mathematics and PHSE show that they make good progress year on year. The initial results of nationally recognised small step measurements also confirm that standards are rising.
10. Pupils steadily achieve well as they move through the school and most progress to the continuing education class. Students in Years 12 and 13 achieve well and benefit from the recent introduction of new accredited work to promote their 'Key Skills', particularly in literacy and numeracy. They achieve well. This work is particularly beneficial for students. In mathematics for example, they systematically improve their skills in working out problems using practical examples. They will find this work useful to them outside the classroom. For instance, the teacher related the work in grouping £1 coins into £3 as the sum the student would need to take to college to pay for lunch in the cafeteria.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and relationships with staff and each other are **very good** and this is a strength of the school. There is a uniformly very good level of behaviour throughout the school. Pupils' progress **very well** in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has a significant impact on pupils' awareness of the world and their responsibilities to each other.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are polite and accepting of each other's beliefs, strengths and limitations.

- Staff act as very good role models and provide pupils with effective guidance. Consequently, they develop very good behaviour and relationships and exhibit positive attitudes to people and to the work they are expected to do. This contributes very well to pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The management team and staff are alert to any incidents and take action to ensure that the school is free from bullying and racial tension. This contributes positively to harmony within both the school and the community.

Commentary

11. Pupils' views of the school are very positive and they enjoy learning. Lessons are characterised by pupils being keen to learn and interested in the work they are given. This, together with the way pupils like to work together makes a very strong contribution to their good achievement. The very good relationships with staff ensure that pupils attend well to their tasks and make good progress in learning. Pupils' questionnaires confirm the high regard that they have for learning and interest in subjects such as ICT.
12. Pupils are polite when meeting and greeting visitors and when able, are pleased to talk about their work and what they have learned. Older pupils engage in conversation with adults in a mature way and will joke without any silliness. The governors and senior management team have worked hard to develop a very good behaviour policy underpinned by effective staff training. This has assisted in developing a consistent approach that has had a significant impact on ensuring very good behaviour. Pupils have responded well to the school's measures to ensure everyone gets on well with each other regardless of background. Parents agree that there is little incidence of bullying and that senior staff ensure that any incidents are dealt with rapidly and successfully.
13. Children at the foundation stage are guided very well and this contributes well to their confidence in the school, secure in what they are expected to do. In social settings, such as lunchtime or at a sports hall, pupils show common sense and a willingness to help each other. In class, they work well alone, in pairs and as a group. Pupils with complex difficulties understand the need for turn taking and, because their responses are valued, they contribute well. Outcomes are very good for pupils' attitudes, behaviour and values by the time they leave school after post-16. There have been no exclusions from school for many years.

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	35	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	23	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 – African	2	0	0

The table shows that no pupils were excluded.

14. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The highest value is placed on every individual and this encourages everyone to consider the needs

of others. The inspection team observed many occasions where pupils assisted each other or waited patiently while a friend worked through a problem. The imaginative nature of teaching in many lessons contributes very well to developing pupils' interest. This further assists in improving pupils' concentration, involvement and communication within lessons.

15. Children in the foundation class and students at post-16 have good opportunities to develop social skills in the community by learning in a local school and college and socialising with other children. However, pupils in the remainder of the school do not have similar opportunities. Nevertheless, by the time pupils reach the continuing education department all students show a balanced attitude to life. Although pupils' views are heard, the opportunity to discuss issues affecting the school is only fully provided by the student council after Year 11.
16. The school has been particularly active in ensuring that all faiths and cultures are respected and supported. Thus, work on major festivals is enriched by visits to a wide range of places of worship and by celebrations concerning individual families and faiths. Pupils receive a very good insight into the diversity of the world and learn more about how their friends and neighbours celebrate important events and festivals. This makes a major contribution to harmony in school where everyone works and plays together very well.
17. Pupils' attendance is 89.5 per cent. The national data for absence given below refers to schools for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. After taking account of the high proportion of pupils who are PMLD, then the school's figures for attendance are largely in line with similar schools and are therefore satisfactory.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	9.8	School data :	0.7
National data:	8.5	National data:	0.5

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

18. Although for many pupils attendance is affected by absences for illness or medical treatment, they come to school when they can. Punctuality is good because the transport is efficient and brings pupils to school in good time for the start of lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well to make learning interesting and ensure that pupils develop a very positive attitude to learning and enjoy lessons. Staff work very effectively as a team and implement the school's measures effectively to ensure that pupils behave very well in lessons and concentrate on their learning. The quality of the curriculum is only satisfactory overall mainly because of shortcomings in the accommodation. Pupils in Years 3 to 11 lack sufficient opportunities to mix with peers in mainstream and pupils in Years 10 and 11 lack access to accreditation. Pupils receive a very high standard of care and this promotes their learning and personal development very well. Parents have a good view of the school but could be more involved in its work.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school and for all pupils. Teachers' effective planning for individuals enables all pupils to make the same good progress and achieve well. The way that teachers check what pupils know, understand and can do is satisfactory and is an area the school has identified for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and pupils. This enables them to plan well to provide pupils with interesting lessons that meet their needs well. They ensure that boys and girls of all abilities, and those with additional special educational needs and backgrounds make equally good progress and achieve well.
- The measures teachers adopt to encourage pupils to learn, develop relationships and behave are very successful in guiding them to develop a very positive attitude to school and learning.
- Teachers work with classroom staff as a very effective team to promote pupils' learning.
- There is a need for a consistent means to check what pupils are learning on a more regular basis. This will aid planning for what pupils will learn next and ensure more progress.

Commentary

The quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved well since the last inspection. Teaching and learning is equally good in all parts of the school. An examination of pupils' completed work confirms the good quality of teaching observed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6 %)	6 (18%)	20 (61 %)	4 (12 %)	1 (3 %)	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 the percentages

19. Teaching and learning is good for all pupils because teachers plan well to meet each pupil's needs. Teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, personal, social, health education and citizenship. Only one lesson in religious education was observed and the quality of teaching and learning was very good. However, there is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning in the subject overall. The quality of teaching and learning at the foundation stage and in the continuing education class is good.
20. Teaching is good in physical education. The planning to use facilities beyond the school and the imaginative use of the poor school accommodation are significant factors in ensuring pupils' learning is good. This was evident in an excellent example of the teacher planning to overcome the limitations of the poor hall and create an effective learning environment for PMLD pupils in Years 10 to post-16. Through excellent staff teamwork to lead parts of the lesson, pupils made very good progress. They responded to the imaginative resources used to transform the hall into a fairground to move and stretch, making very good progress towards their personal targets.
21. The headteacher and senior staff have been particularly successful in raising the quality of teaching of ICT since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning is now good. There is an enthusiasm among staff for the use of ICT and pupils have responded to this by demonstrating a liking for the subject. Throughout the school, they know that they are making good progress because of teachers' encouragement. Pupils' comments confirm that it is a favourite subject and they are inspired to learn more.
22. A strength of teaching and a feature of most lessons is the very good guidance for pupils to behave and the encouragement to develop a very positive attitude to learning. Consequently, pupils consistently work hard in lessons to complete the tasks that are set for them. Staff work co-operatively and well together and learn from each other. The success that staff achieve in promoting very good standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning makes a significant contribution to ensuring that pupils learn and achieve well.

23. A major strength of teaching is the way that teachers plan lessons effectively for instance, to provide pupils with interesting resources. This was particularly evident in a very good English lesson for pupils in Years 9 to 11 employing a large range of resources including the dark room, water spray, hand made books and the interactive whiteboard. Staff assessed pupils' response well, and this enabled the teacher to conclude that pupils had achieved the objectives set for them to understand more about the story of 'Mr Anancy and Mr Dry Bone'. Occasionally there are insufficient resources provided for pupils in lessons. For instance, in a science lesson about sounds, for pupils in Years 4 and 5, the teacher only used one set of equipment and this reduced pupils' opportunities to participate and make more progress.
24. Teachers have a good informal knowledge of how pupils are learning and this enables them to plan suitable work so that they usually make good progress in lessons. This is aided by good examples of the use of PIVATs to measure their small steps in learning and determine pupils' progress year on year. However, the systems used are not yet applied consistently well. The reason why several lessons were not judged better than good was because of teachers' failure to use appropriate systems to measure what pupils know and understand. This was evident in a PHSE lesson for pupils in Years 7 and 8. The teacher did not have recordings of what pupils could do at the start of the lesson in order to assess how successfully lesson objectives had been achieved by the end. A more consistent approach to determine the stage pupils are at in their learning would enable teachers to collect and use this information. This, together with their good informal knowledge of pupils' needs, would help them to plan for pupils to learn more and so make progress. The school is already planning to introduce new systems to check pupils' learning that will be similar to the good system introduced into the foundation class to ensure effective ways of maintaining regular information of what pupils are learning.

The curriculum

The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils is **satisfactory overall**. However, it is good for students in the continuing education department. There is a good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning. The school is well staffed and resources are satisfactory. Poor buildings play a significant part in holding back achievement in those subjects requiring specialist accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality and range of learning opportunities for post-16 students is good.
- Despite considerable work by the headteacher and governors, the accommodation limits the curriculum provided in many ways and, thus, reduces the progress that pupils make.
- Targets in English, mathematics and personal and social development are well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- In contrast with students at post-16, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have few opportunities to make choices about the subjects they study, or follow externally accredited courses, or experience work in the community.
- There is a good range of activities outside of the classroom to widen the range of pupils' learning and lunchtime care plans make a valuable contribution to promoting pupils' personal development.

Commentary

25. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences for pupils. There is a suitable emphasis upon the important skills of English and mathematics. The implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy up to Year 11 has been beneficial in enhancing lessons for pupils effectively. Although there is a good emphasis upon promoting pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills during most lessons, more could be done to develop these skills in a consistent way, particularly pupils' writing.

26. Due to difficulties caused by most pupils needing to travel home by organised transport and the lack of space in school at lunchtime, activities outside of lessons are limited. However, there has been satisfactory success in running an after school cinema club. In spite of the difficulties, there is a good range of activities to enrich pupils' learning beyond lessons. Pupils' physical learning is enriched by participation in programmes such as MOVE (mobility opportunities via education). Musicians and singers visit school frequently on a voluntary basis to support work in drama. A significant factor in widening pupils' knowledge beyond the classroom is the visits to outdoor residential centres and trips abroad to develop cultural awareness. Special events, in swimming and athletics, for example, give pupils the opportunity to compete against pupils from other special schools. The programme of visits into the community is not as extensive as it could be, in science, for example.
27. The provision for students at post-16 in the continuing education class is good. Students participate in work experience, attend a college to extend their learning and they follow a course that provides them with accreditation in important skills to prepare them for life after school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 would benefit from similar opportunities.
28. Lunchtime care plans are carefully tailored to meet pupils' communication, social and physical needs. Pupils with autism, for example, communicate using PECs. Pupils may have targets to initiate conversations at lunchtime, to negotiate where they will sit, and to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils with motor difficulties have targets for instance, to learn to hold and use their spoons correctly.
29. The school is well staffed by teachers and classroom staff whose skills match well to the requirements of subjects and the needs of pupils in a school of this type. In spite of great efforts by the school and governing body to improve and keep the environment stimulating, adequate and safe, the accommodation for learning is poor. This affects pupils' achievement in science, design and technology, art and design, and in physical education. The accommodation for the youngest pupils is poor, especially the outdoor play facilities. The hall is too small, which means that dinnertime is extended to accommodate all pupils and this limits activities and pupils' achievement. Ball games are not possible on the school site. The hall structure will not support the expected equipment such as wall bars and the school must look elsewhere to fulfil the action plan to introduce trampolining since the hall is too low. The library is too small for class use and the cramped space means that pupils in wheelchairs do not have easy access.
30. The school places a strong emphasis upon encouraging pupils to be as mobile as possible. However, the corridors, classrooms and layout of the school create barriers to this. There is little space for all the wheelchairs and standing frames and this further hampers pupils in their movements. There is no suitable area where students can socialise in the post-16 department. Teaching resources for subjects are overall satisfactory. In mathematics and ICT they are good. Staff show tremendous ingenuity in adapting resources to provide exciting experiences.
31. The headteacher, supported by the senior management team and governors, has had a very significant impact upon improving the information that teachers use to plan lessons for all subjects since the previous inspection. For instance, each subject has information to enable teachers to plan for pupils to make small steps in learning. This is effective in ensuring that pupils who have EAL, PMLD and autism receive good consideration when teachers plan lessons. The amount of time that pupils spend learning has been improved well for pupils beyond Year 6, when previously the school day was too short. Pupils now have full access to all the required subjects and teachers have been provided with good information to plan lessons. The headteacher has ensured that the school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and these have been incorporated effectively into the way that lessons are planned for pupils up to Year 11.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that it provides **very well** for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. There are satisfactory arrangements for the school to seek and act upon pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very good awareness of health and safety requirements especially with regard to the needs of the pupils and the difficulties of accommodation.
- Very good quality care, including excellent medical provision, for all pupils by all staff in the school.
- Good induction arrangements for pupils new to the school.
- Good opportunities for students in the continuing education department to make decisions about their activities.
- Pupils' individual views are highly valued although there is no formal process for regularly gathering their views of the school, other than for students through the school council.

Commentary

32. This is a very caring school where pupils are happy and well looked after. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and understand their individual needs very well. There is good emphasis on using every method of communication possible so that pupils can be fully understood, are able to participate as much as possible in their learning and can express their wishes and choices. The very strong commitment to pupils' welfare has ensured that pupils are settled and secure in school and this has a positive impact upon the way that they learn and achieve. While there is no formal forum, such as a school council, for pupils to discuss school life and how improvements can be made, staff listen carefully at every opportunity to what individual pupils have to say to them. Staff take pupils' views seriously. This is evident in pupils' opportunity to make their views known at annual reviews. Pupils' effort is valued and celebrated though information about their small steps in learning and they are encouraged to express their likes and dislikes.
33. The headteacher places a high priority on promoting pupils' health and safety. Consequently, staff have a very good awareness of health and safety requirements and are particularly vigilant where the accommodation presents significant difficulties. For example, when pupils move through narrow doorways and corridors. All staff, including support assistants, administrative and lunchtime staff demonstrate very good care, concern and respect for pupils. They understand pupils' backgrounds and difficulties well and have good relationships with their parents and carers. This means that there is open dialogue between home and school and that any worries are dealt with straight away.
34. Staff follow the very good lead of the headteacher and senior management team and create the school's ethos of care and concern for the individual. This encourages pupils to develop trusting relationships with all adults in the school. This begins as children enter the foundation stage where children learn that they can rely upon staff support to develop strong relationships. Pupils receive this support as they move through the different stages in the school. Parents value the support and advice they receive from school about their children. They value the information about what pupils are learning and achieving since this gives them a good picture about progress in school.
35. Pupils benefit very well from the arrangements for therapists to have a working base in the school. There is excellent medical care for pupils from the nursing staff. They have very good relationships with pupils and parents and provide good support to induct children into school. This is important at a time when parents are naturally feeling anxious about their children starting school. The high standard of care is evident in class and contributes well to ensuring that all pupils regardless of their special educational needs make equally good progress in subjects and personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and carers are **satisfactory**. The school has satisfactory links with the community, other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good relationships with most parents and deals well with their individual concerns about their children.
- Not all parents are fully involved in their children's learning and school life and the school has identified this as an area for development.
- Some parents do want to be involved and would like more advice on how to help their children with activities at home.
- Satisfactory use is made of community links to enrich pupils' learning but there are insufficient opportunities for them to work and socialise with mainstream pupils.

Commentary

36. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents although the headteacher and governors acknowledge that this is an area which could be further developed so that more parents are regularly involved in its work and in children's learning. The strength in the partnership is the work undertaken by staff to develop positive relationships with parents at an individual level. Staff deal quickly and effectively with parents' concerns. Parents acknowledge the headteacher's very hard work to improve conditions in school and they value the personal support they receive from her for their children's needs. Although the school does not regularly seek parents' views in a formal way, such as through a questionnaire, it encourages parents to discuss their worries as soon as they arise. This leads to most parents having good views of the school and entrusting the care and education of their children to the school while not being actively involved themselves.
37. Parents value the reports they receive about their children's progress. However, whilst the school invites parents to regular reviews of pupils' progress, occasional workshops, celebration assemblies and performances, it has not yet found the key to engaging support and interest from all of the parents. Attendance at these events is often disappointing. Parents agree that attendance at events is important and valuable but the headteacher, senior staff and governors' many efforts have had limited success in improving parents' attendance at school events. There are good targets to improve parents' attendance at the annual reviews of pupils' progress.
38. Written information, such as the brochure and newsletters, is satisfactory and meets requirements. However, parents could be provided with more frequent and interesting information about what the school is doing and what children are learning so that parents have a better idea of the good work that is going on. Some parents are very supportive of the school and work hard to continue their children's education at home, for example by supporting behaviour management strategies used in school. Although the school provides 'homework' when parents request it, a small number of parents indicated in the questionnaire that they would like more help in supporting their children's learning and activities at home.
39. The school has formed a good relationship with the community, for instance for speakers to come in to school to talk to pupils and contribute to lessons. This makes a good contribution to deepening pupils' understanding and consequently achieving more. School staff work well with other schools by providing valuable training for their staff in 'manual handling' and behaviour management. There are good arrangements for the youngest pupils and for those at post-16 to learn in other schools and colleges. However, the remainder of the school do not have similar links with other schools to further develop their social skills or use improved facilities, particularly in those subjects where the school lacks specialist facilities such as design and technology.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school **are good**. The headteacher's very good leadership and management have been a significant factor in moving the school forward from a low base over several years. The assistant headteachers are growing into their roles to provide good support. Governors provide good backing to the school and show a growing awareness of their responsibilities to be involved more in the school particularly in terms of checking how changes and improvements make an impact on teaching and the progress pupils make.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has developed a good senior management team to share responsibilities.
- Governors have a good understanding of many of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have provided good support to the school to improve staffing, consolidate relationships with the community and ensure that financial management is good.
- The measures to improve teaching through guidance from senior managers and staff training have been successful.
- The school has identified important areas for development confirmed by the inspection team including; improving accommodation for learning, systems to check pupils' progress and has set targets to improve parents attendance at pupils' annual reviews.
- Financial planning is good and money is spent well on priorities. The priority to improve ICT was chosen well and has led to significant improvements in the subject.

Commentary

40. The headteacher's very effective leadership and management have provided the impetus for the school to make good improvements over several years. Although the accommodation for learning is poor, parents agree that her leadership has enabled the school to make improvements to the environment from an extremely low base for the benefit of children. This has enabled their children to learn more for instance when they use the small computer room. There is a recognised need to continue to find ways to overcome the barriers created by the poor accommodation.
41. The headteacher has led the senior management team very effectively to analyse priorities well and make improvements in important areas. For example, the quality of teaching has been improved well since the previous inspection as a result of the checking of teaching and the guidance provided by senior staff. This has impacted positively on the quality of education available to pupils. Pupils' learning and consequently, their achievement has improved significantly in most subjects. The school makes good arrangements for pupils in the foundation class and in the continuing education class to spend time with their peers in mainstream schools. However, it has been less successful in breaking down the barriers preventing pupils in the remainder of the school benefiting from similar opportunities.
42. The headteacher's leadership has created a good momentum shared by the governors and senior management team to make improvements year on year that engages staff in a common purpose. An important outcome is that the role of subject leaders has improved with a consequent improvement in their subjects and what pupils will be taught. An appropriate school priority is to develop the role of subject leaders further to enable them make a greater contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
43. Leadership ensures staff share a strong commitment to including all pupils equally in the work of the school. This is evident in the way that PMLD and autistic pupils are integrated and supported effectively in classes with their peers throughout the school. Similarly pupils for whom English is not the first language receive consistent support to make the same progress as others. There is an acknowledgement that the good practice of inclusion of pupils in other schools and colleges needs to be extended to all pupils.

44. Governors fulfil their role well. They have grown in strength since the last inspection and have been active in support of the school. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governors are enthusiastic about the improvements in ICT and understand the need to be more aware of what is happening in other subjects.
45. The governing body's finance committee receives regular and accurate information which assists them in planning and evaluating new developments. This has been evident in the successful developments such as ICT. Staff plan improvements well together to gain the best value in all purchases and developments. There are good financial procedures in place that ensure that grants and the current budget is used efficiently to meet the needs of all pupils and staff.

Financial Information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1051703
Total expenditure	1001817
Expenditure per pupil	13181

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	19148
Balance carried forward to the next	49896

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Sessions were observed in all the areas of learning.

The provision for children in the foundation stage to learn is **good in all the areas of learning**. One full time and seven part-time children of nursery and reception age share the foundation class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Although, there are too few children attending currently to make separate judgements about achievement in each area of learning, evidence shows that they all achieve well overall, because they receive support according to their individual needs. This represents good progress since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in teaching and the planning for what children would learn, and children's learning and progress were satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses across the areas of learning

- The high quality of teaching ensures that children get off to a good start in learning that prepares them well for moving on through the school.
- Children respond very well to the opportunities provided for them to learn and achieve well.
- Lessons are planned well to meet individual needs and this means that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds make equally good progress.
- Very good teamwork ensures that children can learn effectively whether they are working individually, in small or larger groups.
- Classroom accommodation and play areas are poor.

Commentary

46. Children's achievement in all areas of learning is good and this represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when achievement was largely satisfactory. This has been brought about by effective improvements in the planning for what each child will learn. The effectiveness of the senior management team's methods to improve the quality of teaching and learning is evident in lessons. Teaching and learning is consistently good.
47. The promotion of **communication, language and literacy** forms an important part of most lessons. Children respond to staff encouragement to communicate whenever possible through speech, sign and symbol. They are interested in stories such as 'Jasper' because of regular class reading and through the use of effective aids such as a model cat to reinforce actions. Teachers plan well for pupils to progress towards the early learning goals in each aspect of the subject. Children have good access to writing materials to develop pencil control such as making marks on paper. They are very responsive to adult example and during the week, one child copied the inspector's note taking, producing a 'written report'. There are many opportunities for **mathematical development**. Regular lessons introduce and reinforce concepts of number. For instance, in a cooking activity children add ingredients to make cakes, putting in 'more' flour. They follow staff directions to count how many times they stir.
48. Children respond well to the familiar routines in class and settle well. This is because there is good planning to promote children's **personal, social and emotional development**. They co-operate well at snack times and begin to make choices such as their preferred drink. Feeding programmes at lunchtimes develop their skills and social behaviour. In **creative development** they sing songs and understand that they can make a pattern of noises with a drum. Teachers plan well for children to achieve in different areas of learning in the same lesson. For instance, when pupils examine coloured spaghetti to make colour choices they also make decisions about materials and texture to develop their **knowledge and understanding of the world**.

49. Children have good access to computers and this provides a means to record their own choices. For instance, as they use a switch to select the correct shape or colour from a choice of three on the computer screen so that they can progress to the next task. Pupils who have difficulty using the usual range of switches have special switches designed for them. This ensures that they have the same opportunities as other children in the class. There are plans to improve the provision by the installation of an interactive whiteboard, following its success in other classes. The headteacher has been particularly successful in ensuring that pupils achieve more in physical development since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in this area of children's learning. The provision for children's **physical development is now a strength of the foundation department**. Children overcome the great barriers created by the unsuitable buildings to improve their movement around the school. They respond well to the therapists who join lessons or provide children with individual support to promote their personal physical development.
50. Teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned well to meet each child's needs and this enables them to learn well. Staff know children very well and match tasks carefully to individual needs, helping them to build upon what they have learnt before. The two teachers work effectively as a team to manage the department. This ensures that there is consistency in the way that lessons are characterised by efficient organisation so that the large number of classroom staff know exactly what they have to do. Consequently, staff are able to work with groups and individuals independently. This is particularly noticeable when the class moves through the school since most children need support with mobility. There are good records, including photographs, of pupils' achievements.
51. Senior managers have introduced a system of recording progress recently that will enable staff to check how much children are learning and guide them on what to plan next. Now that it has been judged successful, it will be extended to the main school. There are good arrangements for children from another school to join the class and for members of the class to visit a mainstream nursery school. This provides good opportunities for children to learn more.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 to 4 and students at Post-16.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Lessons in English were seen in each year group. No lessons were seen in a modern foreign language (French) and there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement of pupils' achievements, the subject was not part of the inspection focus.

Provision in English across the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and occasionally very good. Consequently, pupils learn well and achievement overall is good.
- Pupils of all abilities and special educational needs make similarly good progress.
- Pupils receive frequent opportunities to improve their skills in communication and reading.
- Writing skills are not practised as well as they might be.
- The National Literacy Strategy is taught well and is raising standards and helping pupils to achieve more.
- There is no accreditation for pupils at the end of Year 11.

Commentary

52. Pupils achieve well in English. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when achievement was mostly satisfactory. The way that the subject leaders and senior management

team have improved the written planning for what pupils will learn has ensured that pupils consistently progress in skills as they move through the school and build upon their learning systematically. Since there is a significant emphasis upon teachers providing for individual needs, pupils with PMLD, autism and those for whom English is not the first language achieve as well as other pupils in the school.

53. Pupils achieve well developing communication skills in class, around the school and in the community. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 greet each other clearly and make good use of signs and symbols. Teachers use good methods to motivate pupils. For instance, when pupils in Year 9 begin to re-tell the story of 'Mr Anancy and Mr Dry Bone', there is very good use made of drama as the story unfolds. Some pupils take on the characters' personalities as they respond to a range of stimulating questions. Pupils who have difficulty communicating operate switches that say the words for them. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy interacting with each other and adults, using speech, signs and facial expression well, to show their feelings and express needs.
54. Pupils enjoy reading and this interest is encouraged by the good resources teachers use to accompany books. A significant factor contributing to good teaching and in promoting good learning is the way lessons are planned and organised well. For instance, pupils in Year 6 show good levels of enthusiasm as they follow and react to the story of 'Tom's Painting'. The teacher plans well to use toys to represent each new sound. All pupils listen hard and are supported well as they concentrate. Staff are alert to ensure that when pupils find difficulty they are encouraged to try another way of communicating, such as using signs and symbols. When pupils read, they are encouraged to use good expression, and they often show great hilarity as they appreciate the humour in many of their books.
55. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to experience the written word through a range of big books. To make the words more accessible, these stories are projected onto the whiteboard screen and this allows all pupils to see the stories 'come alive'. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 show good reading skills as they follow the story of 'Meg and Mog' on the interactive screen, with staff manipulating puppets and music to help the story along. There is fun and laughter in this lesson as pupils are supported well to express their feelings, cuddling the toy fluffy cat in turn as they gaze at the words and most show they understand how a story progresses. Through these interesting methods, pupils become absorbed in the lesson, remembering stories and are keen to participate and learn more. This contributes well to pupils' learning and their consequent good achievement in English.
56. Pupils use suitable methods to record their work according to their needs. They develop early writing skills and higher attaining pupils can write several words. By the time they are in the continuing education class, higher attaining students can complete worksheets to answer questions about a video they have been watching. Students receive external accreditation of their work in English but it is a weakness that there is no formal accreditation of pupils' work at the end of Year 11. The school uses a good range of alternative ways for pupils to record their work, particularly if they have difficulty. Staff record answers or pupils choose symbols. Overall however, pupils communicate and read more than they record. Consequently, achievement in writing is satisfactory.
57. The leadership and management of English are good. The headteacher and senior management team have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning have improved through checking what takes place in lessons and guiding staff to improve. Teachers make good use of the new system for checking pupils' work and this is beginning to enable teachers to plan work to build upon what pupils have learnt before. However, the system has not been in place long enough to enable teachers to plan for pupils to make better progress. Resources are generally good, although library facilities are used insufficiently at present. The library is too small for classes and is not easy for pupils with complex physical needs to access. There is a need for more books with appropriate levels of interest to suit older pupils with lower reading ages. There are plans to remedy this in the near future.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Teachers plan well to guide pupils to develop their literacy skills in all subjects. Most lessons throughout the day provide pupils with good opportunities for using and developing their skills in speaking and listening and reading. A feature of many ICT, science and mathematics lessons is the explanation of important new words. Discussion is encouraged to enable pupils to understand the lesson topic. Pupils have opportunities to record their work during the day and those who have additional needs use a good range of resources, for instance through choosing symbols or pictures. However, as with English lessons, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to record their work during the day.

MATHEMATICS

Lessons were seen in mathematics in all year groups.

Provision in mathematics is good.

Teaching overall is good, often very good and occasionally exemplary. As a result, all pupils achieve well and enjoy mathematics at all stages of their school career. Pupils with complex learning difficulties progress well in mathematics and this is good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils progress well in number work, knowledge of shapes and in applying numeracy skills to everyday life.
- Classroom staff work as a very good team and ensure pupils behave very well.
- There is a lack of an accredited course in mathematics for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment varies in quality from teacher to teacher. Occasionally teachers do not link planning and assessment adequately and this reduces the progress that pupils make.
- Several subjects, such as PE, ICT, English, design and technology and science promote pupils' learning in mathematics on a regular basis; others do not and miss valuable opportunities for pupils to apply their skills.

Commentary

59. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 respond to objects and sounds, and higher attaining pupils join in stacking activities and show interest in counting and number songs. All make good progress in learning and by Year 6, are beginning to sort several colours and shapes and join in with number songs. Teachers plan effective support for all pupils to help them to achieve their targets for learning. Pupils with complex difficulties respond to encouragement for instance, to attend more consistently to objects, increasing their awareness of 'heavy' and 'light'. They are also beginning to understand the need to take turns. Teaching and support staff show a good understanding of the subject and the needs of individuals. They encourage pupils well to demonstrate what they have learnt. For instance, for pupils to beat rhythms in music or recognise sequences and patterns on the computer screen. Teachers' effective planning to meet individual needs is evident when higher achieving pupils count to ten, and can match circles, squares and triangles.
60. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good with some teachers demonstrating very good and excellent practice. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when the overall quality was satisfactory. The senior management's measures to improve pupils' learning by checking what takes place in class and guiding teachers accordingly have led to lessons being more successful. Lessons are characterised by good pace, the involvement of all pupils and the use of a wide range of attractive and stimulating resources. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons and want to learn. The good achievement of the youngest

pupils continues through the school. By Year 11, higher achieving pupils are working at the early levels of the National Curriculum. They discuss their mathematics work showing a basic knowledge of counting, two-dimensional shapes and comparisons. Those pupils with complex difficulties show significant achievement and are counting up to three objects, matching basic shapes and understand and discriminate between 'small' and 'large' objects. There are no externally accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and this is a missed opportunity for pupils to experience even more success.

61. Students in the continuing education class make good progress and achieve well following their accredited course. This provides them with the basic skills of number and handling money. Teachers plan well for students to put their skills into practice, for taking responsibility for their own money and to help to run the school tuck shop. Students who have PMLD follow tasks matched well to their needs such as turn-taking and developing sequences such as in personal care.
62. The two subject leaders manage and lead the subject well. They consult staff effectively and this has led to a good consensus of what pupils will learn and staff enthusiasm for what they will teach pupils. This has ensured that there is good planning for what pupils will learn throughout the school and their consequent good achievement.

Example of outstanding practice. A lesson in mathematics for pupils in Years 7 to 9 who have severe learning difficulties.

In an exemplary lesson, the teacher grabbed pupils' attention as they entered the room with very well prepared resources. This included the effective use of the 'Match of the Day' theme tune to set the scene for using football scores to make judgements about number values. Pupils quickly grasped the idea that they could pick numbers from a bag to predict possible scores in a local football match between Derby and Aston Villa. The results obtained 2-1, 3-2 and 2-4 provided the opportunity for the teacher to ask pertinent questions about 'largest'? Who has won? What is the difference? A classroom assistant worked effectively with two pupils to support their learning using ICT. Pupils quickly settled down to work more independently in groups selecting 'scores' from their own bags. The highly motivational nature of the football theme and the pace and humour of the teacher's commentary ensured that each group produced excellent work. The degree of pupil involvement was very high and stimulated by the total involvement of all adults in the class. Pupils achieved extremely well to understand winning scores.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Teachers plan good opportunities to promote pupils' skills in numeracy in several subjects. In PE, pupils develop a greater understanding of time to measure their 'personal best'. This also encouraged them to try hard. Although there are other good examples in other subjects where pupils apply their number skills there could be more systematic planning to promote these skills.

SCIENCE

Science lessons were seen in all year groups.

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are taught well and have very good relationships with staff. Consequently, they learn well.
- Although the quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good, pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory because the lack of specialist accommodation and resources restricts the range of work they experience.

- Occasionally pupils make less progress than they could because individual pupils can wait too long for a turn to participate because a) resources may be in short supply and b) the teacher may not plan enough opportunities for support assistants to lead groups.
- The annual recording of long term achievement levels is now well established, but day to day checking of the progress of individual pupils is less well managed.
- Teachers make lessons fun by providing interesting resources, but they are not making enough use of visits into the community to support learning in science.
- In annual reports to parents, there is a lack of distinction between the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils for the different parts of science they are required to study.

Commentary

64. Teachers are creative in finding ways to use resources that are fun and motivating. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 1 to 5, with severe, profound and complex learning difficulties, and autism. The teacher and assistants enthusiastically helped pupils to use a selection of fans, bellows, balloons, feathers, heavy and light weight balls, bubbles, and puffers to experience the force of the air around them, and its impact on different objects. There is much to do, observe, and feel in this lesson and the activities motivate all pupils to participate, including the boys and girls with autism. Pupils with profound learning difficulties learn cause and effect well by turning a fan on and off with a switch.
65. In an interesting lesson about sound, boys and girls in Years 5 and 6, enjoy making paintings using the splatter patterns caused when a vibrating tuning fork is placed in coloured water. However, they each have a long wait for their turn with the teacher because the learning assistants have not been deployed to lead small groups of pupils in this and other activities.
66. Resources for work on simple electrical circuits are modified effectively using magnetic contacts for pupils whose fine motor skills are not well developed, enabling them to succeed in making circuits. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 learn through investigation how to make a bulb or a buzzer work in a complete circuit. There is only one set of this equipment however, so pupils have to wait for their turn, which slows the pace of learning and consequently their achievements.
67. The two subject co-ordinators are a new partnership and have made a good start in leading and managing the subject. There is a timely and much needed review of the subject planned for later this term. This will provide teachers with guidance on planning for the wide range of learning needs, and on assessing progress in science on a day to day basis.
68. Improvement since the last inspection is generally satisfactory. The amount of teaching time has improved. A continuing weakness is the lack of specialist accommodation. This has an impact on achievement because it restricts the range of topics that pupils can investigate, because they do not have appropriate access to gas, water and electricity supplies.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Whilst only one lesson was seen for Information and Communication Technology, inspectors were able to look at its use in different subject lessons and scrutinise evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work.

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of ICT is very good and this has moved the subject on very well so that the quality of teaching and learning are good.
- The appointment of a specialist teaching assistant has been a very positive move which has contributed strongly to developments in this subject.

- The introduction of a small ICT suite and whiteboard technology has enhanced this subject considerably.
- Systems to check what pupils are learning and use the information to plan for pupils to learn more require improvement.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not checked and this prevents the co-ordinator and assistant from gathering information to improve the general level of teaching further.
- Although teachers plan to promote skills in ICT well in several subjects, it is not consistently good in all subjects.

Commentary

69. By Year 11, the majority of pupils are able to operate a mouse to choose items on the computer screen. Pupils with complex learning difficulties are adept at using switch systems, adapted specifically for them, to carry out the similar tasks. Pupils use technology for controlling toys and rapidly understand the cause and effect involved in this. All pupils are aware of the way in which a computer can impart and receive information. They do this in several ways, from using simple pad switches to produce a scribble picture on the screen to writing their name and address in a word processing programme.
70. As they move through the school up to Year 11, they begin to use ICT for a wider range of everyday tasks. Pupils use sequence programmes to tell stories. They respond to interactive opportunities such as the 'Grease Lightning' models in the foyer. They use the keyboard to list words that can be written in a 'Chicken' Run' song. By the time students reach post-16, they have a clear idea of the uses of aspects such as word processing and entertainment. They are also increasingly aware of the times that ICT is used within modern life, such as the use of video, digital photography and the Internet. This contributes to their self-confidence and independence.
71. Leadership in this subject has been impressive. The subject has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' achievement is now good throughout the school. There is now a well laid-out plan for what pupils will learn throughout the school. This has been adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils. This improved system of planning and in particular the introduction of whiteboard technology has contributed significantly to pupil progress. The appointment of a highly skilled ICT assistant has enhanced the subject considerably. The limited assessment needs to be improved to provide up-to-date information that will enable teachers to plan for pupils to move on even further. There is no monitoring of classroom teaching and this is a missed opportunity to make further improvements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. ICT is used well in several subjects. For instance, electronic keyboards and the word processor contribute significantly to the writing of songs. In literacy, the use of word processors has added to pupils' achievement in the subject. However, not all subjects make the most of the ICT available and, thus, miss opportunities to improve pupils' achievement.

HUMANITIES

Whilst only one history lesson was seen for pupils in Years 6 to 8 and no lessons were seen in geography, inspectors were able to look at records and evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work for both history and geography. One lesson was seen in religious education for students at post 16.

Timetable arrangements meant that too few lessons could be observed and so there is insufficient evidence available to make an overall judgement on pupils' achievement in humanities.

Religious education.

Provision for religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school follow a good series of lessons.
- Teaching for students in the continuing education department is very good.
- There is currently no uniform system to check what pupils are learning and to record progress.
- Recently appointed subject leaders are making positive changes to what pupils learn.
- Resources have improved and are now good.

Commentary

73. Evidence from work completed over the last year shows that pupils cover a good range of topics in religious education. There is a good balance in the work planned for pupils to learn about world faiths. For instance, pupils in Year 8 observe and participate in a re-enactment of a Hindu wedding. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to visit places of worship and for visitors representing different faiths to visit the school to talk to pupils. The recently appointed subject leaders are making good changes to improve what pupils are taught and address areas of weakness such as ensuring pupils make progress within their capabilities through using assessments more. This improvement in the range of topics has been supported well by the introduction of coherent whole school planning for what will be taught in each class to ensure that pupils progress in learning.
74. There are now suitable arrangements at post-16 for pupils to participate in religious education. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection when students did not have lessons and therefore statutory requirements were not met.
75. Only one lesson in religious education took place during the inspection week. This was for post-16 students. Achievement was very good in this lesson. Students listened avidly to a visitor from the local Mosque. Teachers prepared students well for the lesson by guiding them to find details and photographs of the Derby Mosque on the Internet. Planning was very good and was modelled on a project undertaken by another school. Teachers' planning was effective in promoting pupils' literacy skills as they read out prepared questions to the guest speaker. Students were keen to learn and were engrossed with the Islamic music played and traditions and rituals demonstrated by two Moslem pupils. This session showed how well students work, listen and appreciate world religions and cultures. The lesson made a very good contribution to promoting students' cultural and spiritual development through the appreciation of art and music, historical events and geographical details about their place in a changing world.

History

The provision is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is evidence of very good planning for older pupils.
- The written details of what pupils will learn takes into account the full range of individual needs of the pupils.
- Assessment of the subject is planned for but not implemented consistently enough.
- Leadership and management is satisfactory.

Commentary

76. Only one lesson of history was seen during the inspection. There is evidence to show that older pupils are learning about the Egyptians in an exciting and stimulating way, as they watch, listen and make artefacts to represent the relics of Tutankhamen. Pupils learned how to be an archaeologist, using the Internet to glean information about the discovery of the ancient king's tomb. Evidence of pupils' completed work, indicates pupils' satisfactory progress throughout the school. There are good links to other subjects. Music from 'Following Zippo rah' was played and

pupils read the story on the white screen, with work adapted for pupils with more complex needs. Younger pupils have been learning about the Vikings. They are making satisfactory progress in their lesson and some more able pupils sit in their own 'Viking boat'; a large cardboard box which they used their imagination to transform into the 'real thing'. They wore helmets they had made and after listening to the story, most pupils showed satisfactory sticking and designing skills as they decorated their shields.

77. Teaching was good in the one lesson observed. There are good links to other subjects for instance, to promote pupils' reading and communication skills. Assessment is not completed consistently on a regular basis. On occasions when it has been completed well, the information helps the teacher to plan future lessons to ensure that appropriate work is provided for individual pupils' needs.
78. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leadership team has developed interesting topics for each class to follow such as work based on a video of the 'Railway Children' or 'Stephenson's Rocket', and these are popular with pupils and staff. They are working hard to remedy the need for more resources, particularly artefacts for each topic. There are plans to address the lack of assessment opportunities to facilitate planning for pupils to make more progress. There is now better collaborative working between staff to support pupils' learning since the previous inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in art and design, none in design and technology, one in music and four in physical education. Inspectors were able to look at evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work.

Physical education was a focus for inspection to determine the effects of the poor accommodation on the provision. Although it was only possible to observe a few lessons in **art and design** and **music**, no lessons are scheduled to take place in **design and technology** this term. Pupils' work in the subjects was sampled to determine the range of learning opportunities and effects of the poor accommodation on pupils' learning.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of a dedicated art room places limitations on this subject and the progress that pupils can make and their ability to work independently.
- Art lessons contribute well to school theme days such as 'African Days'.
- Assessment, in the form of evaluated work, is just beginning but is not yet dated to make the most of the information.

Commentary

79. In the two lessons observed, pupils enjoyed the work and participated well. Pupils in Years 8 to 10 painted tennis balls and rolled them on to a cloth with staff help to make a picture. The lesson demonstrated how well pupils get on together and pupils' patience in waiting for their turn. The lesson was particularly successful in engaging PMLD pupils in adding their contribution to the final product, although it was only possible in the space to set out one task for all pupils rather than several. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 made satisfactory progress weaving strips of material into a pattern. Achievement in the lessons was satisfactory because of the limitations posed by the accommodation and the range of work that pupils can undertake. There is little space to store work in progress or to display exemplars of work. A significant shortcoming is the lack of a suitable specialist room to enable pupils the opportunity to select materials for themselves.

Pupils lack the opportunity to develop independence for instance, to have access to sinks to tidy up and change colours without the need for staff doing this for them.

Music

The quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music productions and school theme days make a good contribution to what pupils learn in music.
- The school receives good support from visiting musicians.
- There is not a suitable system to check what pupils are learning.

80. The school receives much support from visiting musicians, for example, to play the drums during a theme day on Africa. Students in the continuing education department learn well how to sing and perform using percussion instruments and an electronic keyboard. They are motivated well and enjoy participating because lessons are fun, appropriate for their age, and led effectively by a specialist musician who works regularly with the students on a voluntary basis. He has developed an excellent rapport with the students. Music in the continuing education department links very well to the students' work in English, design and technology and information technology and leads to the production of animated musical cartoons such as 'Scooby Doo' and 'Chicken Run'.

81. Video evidence highlights how music plays a very important part in pupils' learning. There are annual musical productions, most recently 'The Singing Drum', 'Noah' and a performance of songs from the past six decades. These productions link to work in English, religious education, and history. Each year pupils perform a musical of the Christmas Nativity. Musical events generate a high level of participation by pupils from across the range of learning needs, and they clearly enjoy taking part. Music plays a large part in learning in several other subjects. For instance, in physical education and personal and social education. Pupils are very keen to take their turn singing grace before lunch in the dining hall.

82. Leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinators have been reviewing what the whole school system of planning for what pupils will learn and introducing good improvements to include interesting and fun activities. This includes opportunities for pupils to perform, compose, dance and sing. However, this is not yet in place. The subject leaders are aware of the lack of a suitable system to check what pupils are learning so that teachers can plan to build upon what pupils know.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in this subject as the result of the very good planning and the close link between pupils' physiotherapy needs and lesson activities.
- There is very good leadership in this subject. Imaginative use has been made of a wide range of community facilities.
- The emphasis on ensuring that all pupils take part in a good range of sports, games and PE is a strength and contributes well to the good progress in the physical development of all pupils.
- The lack of suitable accommodation prevents the provision and pupils' achievement from being very good and much time is taken up using facilities that are not on site.

Commentary

83. The school is poorly equipped for physical education. The hall is unsuitable for fixed equipment such as wall bars. It does not allow ball games or its effective use by higher attaining pupils. The grounds are very confined, limiting opportunities for most activities. Through effective leadership, the subject leader has ensured that pupils are able to utilise facilities outside the school. She has done this in a very impressive way and the good leadership and management of the subject have ensured that pupils receive a good range of PE lessons and achieve well. Most pupils have access to a pool and swimming is an area of good achievement for them. Although a very time consuming activity, pupils of all ages who are able to use the public pool are making good progress in swimming. The local sports hall allows pupils to use good facilities and achieve well. The opportunity to go out into the community also encourages pupils to improve social skills and confidence and the development of life skills, such as using cafes.
84. The quality of teaching and learning in PE is usually good, often very good, and sometimes excellent. This is largely the same as at the time of the previous inspection. There is a good, relevant scheme of work. Lessons are delivered with pace and imagination. All staff work as very good teams, making sure that every pupil is challenged and enjoys the experience. Pupils respond to the challenges well and gain great satisfaction from success. In particular, the school promotes the MOVE programme as a complement to PE in a way that benefits pupils' learning. This, and the effective planning of lessons ensures that all pupils, including those with PMLD and who have difficulty in moving make the same good progress as other pupils.

Example of outstanding practice. An excellent lesson incorporating a simulated 'fairground' providing the highest quality PE and physiotherapy support for older pupils with the most complex difficulties. All pupils used wheelchairs.

At the start of the lesson a loud banging of drums and shouting by staff heralded a video projected on to the hall wall showing a fairground with all the activities. Musical accompaniment and songs such as 'I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts' provided the stimulating backdrop to the whole lesson, maintaining excitement and pupil involvement throughout. The first activity was a wheelchair maypole dance. Although all pupils were pushed, they received every opportunity to respond and choose. The 'Ghost Train' followed. Here, a beautifully contrived tunnel, using hoops, muslin and shapes, provided a fun experience mimicking the real thing. Pupils were out of their wheelchairs and engaged in a range of rolling ('Big Wheel'), pulling and pushing activities. Everyone had a physiotherapy programme that was an integral part of the lesson. One pupil required tube feeding and this was carried out discretely by the nurse without the pupil losing any of the stimulus. Every pupil experienced an appropriate development of PE skills, careful attention to physical needs and the enjoyment and involvement everyone gets from a fairground. There was marked achievement for all pupils, especially in their ability to respond to stimuli and challenge themselves, by pushing giant footballs or waving rattles.

Design and technology

Overall, the provision for design and technology is satisfactory.

This is because teachers use their ingenuity to provide suitable activities in the poor accommodation such as making greetings cards rather than larger scale projects. There is a good link with art and design for instance, for pupils to further their work in learning more about the textiles that they use for weaving. Since lessons were not taking place this term, there is therefore insufficient evidence to judge teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. However, pupils' completed work was sampled as part of the inspection focus of the effects of accommodation upon pupils' opportunities for learning. This demonstrated that pupils followed a satisfactory range of topics throughout the school. Since the school lacks adequate facilities for food technology or for pupils beyond Year 6 to work with resistant materials then the programme of work is narrower in range than it could be. There is a need for the school to find ways to improve facilities for the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Five lessons were seen in Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship. Inspectors were able to look at evidence in planning records and samples of pupils' work

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils achieve well in lessons and in meeting targets in their individual education plans, including their lunchtime care plans.
- Although targets in individual education plans are well established, day to day checking of pupils' progress in PHSE and citizenship education lessons is less well developed.
- Subject leaders could check what pupils are learning throughout the many opportunities pupils receive to promote their learning.

Commentary

85. The statutory programme for citizenship has recently been incorporated into the planning for what pupils throughout the school will be taught in the personal, social and health education programme. This takes good account of the needs of all pupils including those with PMLD and autism and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons well to promote pupils' learning in all aspects of the subject. In a well planned and assessed lesson for pupils with PMLD in Years 7 and 8, good team work, high levels of care, and good preparation of resources enable pupils to communicate their approval or otherwise of new sensory experiences. In this lesson, the theme was 'peppermint'. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with severe and profound learning difficulties and autism, relationships were very good and the staff very caring, as pupils learned how to bathe a baby doll. Staff ensured that the methods and resources used such as PECs enabled all pupils to understand and communicate effectively.
86. There is rigorous and frequent review of pupils' targets in their individual education plans. Pupils make good progress towards achieving them. The lunchtime programme is well planned to develop pupils' social, communication and fine motor skills. It is very well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils learn to negotiate with whom they would like to sit. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although pupils achieve well, there is a need for the subject leaders to check what pupils are learning on the many occasions around the school such as breaks, when pupils are learning skills in PHSE.
87. There are good links with the Connexions service to support post-16 students in their preparation for leaving school. Younger pupils in Years 9 to 11 have more limited access to careers education and guidance. Higher attaining students, post-16, enjoy work experience, learning, for example, to select independently the appropriate clothes to wear for factory or office work. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 would benefit from similar experiences.
88. Good opportunities are provided for post-16 students in the continuing education department to learn essential skills that lead to an entry-level external accreditation. The programme is well matched to learning needs. Students learn daily living skills well such as meal preparation, personal care, and confidence to participate in leisure activities in the community. Higher attaining pupils attend college to extend their vocational, personal and social skills. For example, a student with a flair for Asian cooking has the opportunity each week this term to extend these skills. With support, he shops, then prepares an excellent curry, with accompaniments, for his peers.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	7
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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