

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW CROFT HIGH SCHOOL

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 106010

Headteacher: June Redhead

Lead inspector: Katharine Halifax

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th November 2003

Inspection number: 260360

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	71
School address:	Seedley Road Salford
Postcode:	M6 5NQ
Telephone number:	0161 736615
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Bower
Date of previous inspection:	16/11/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 19 years. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school can take up to 80 pupils. With 71 on roll, it is smaller than most special schools. All pupils have special educational needs ranging from severe to profound and multiple needs. Attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected of pupils of this age. The school population is changing with an increase in the number of pupils who are non-ambulatory and those who have more complex needs. Almost all pupils are of white European origin, and all speak English as their main language. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Four pupils are in the care of the local authority. Most pupils spend the whole of their secondary education in the school with very few starting or leaving the school other than at the usual time. The school is part of four initiatives, Excellence in Cities, the Changing Workforce Programme, Creative Partnership Schools and was the first special school in Salford and Trafford to achieve the Healthy School's Award. The school is due to move to new, purpose built premises in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Music Religious education
14066	Gill Hoggard	Lay inspector	
16198	Carol Etherington	Team inspector	English
32874	John Raho	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school. Good teaching and the effective learning opportunities have resulted in good achievement for all pupils. Links with parents, carers and the community contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Leadership and management are good. Managers and staff now have a shared vision and a commitment and passion to succeed. Though the cost of educating each pupil is relatively high for a school of this type, value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The vision and commitment of the head teacher, deputy, senior managers and governors contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the school.
- Achievement in the arts is very good because of specialist teaching and imaginative activities.
- Good teaching is reflected in good achievement.
- Very good relationships and effective teamwork between staff, parents, carers, and other professionals enable pupils and students of all ages and level of need to take full advantage of learning opportunities.
- Teachers do not provide enough planned opportunities for pupils to improve their writing and skills in using new technology in other subjects.
- Further improvement is needed in the way some subject managers monitor what is happening in classrooms.
- Very good provision for pupils' and students' personal development is reflected in their attitudes and behaviour, creating a very good climate for learning.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work alongside their peers in mainstream schools.

Despite numerous difficulties with staffing, including the long-term absence of key members of staff, improvement since the last inspection is very good. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have resulted in improved achievement. The issues, such as provision for pupils with more profound needs and improved resources, identified in the previous report have been addressed. In addition, staff and pupils are very well prepared for the move to new premises. The rate of improvement has increased over the last year because of the appointment of a skilled permanent headteacher and deputy, and stability in the senior management team.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Students' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
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.

Achievement is good in all age groups. All pupils achieve very well in art and design and dance. Achievement in swimming is equally very good. Achievement by Years 9 and 11 is good in English, mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology, music and personal, social and health education. In history and geography achievement is satisfactory. Similarly, achievement in writing and information and communication technology is satisfactory. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop these skills in other subjects. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory in French because the subject is not taught regularly. Students in the further education department continue to achieve well overall. They achieve very well in personal and social education, citizenship and careers education and guidance and in acquiring the skills that prepare them for life after school.

Pupils' **personal development is very good** because of very good provision for their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils of all ages and capabilities have very positive attitudes to school and are very well behaved. Attendance is very good despite many pupils having complex medical conditions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Staff are imaginative in the way they teach. They endeavour to include all pupils in all activities so pupils learn at a good rate. Most have a very good knowledge of their pupils' special needs, but managers recognise the practice of one or two needs refining, especially in the use of signing to support communication. Despite poor accommodation the curriculum is good. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in exciting opportunities that enrich learning. The programme for students in the further education department prepares them very well for life after school. Managers recognise improvement is needed in the programme for information and communication technology and in ensuring pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught a modern foreign language. Pupils receive very good care and support. Though very effective links have been established with parents, carers and the community, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work alongside those of the same age in mainstream education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The work of the head teacher is very good. She values and inspires staff. The senior management team is an effective group and developing its role well. Though subject managers have clear plans for how their subject will improve, some have not had the opportunity to observe what is happening in classrooms. Governance is good. The governors have worked hard to maintain stability during staffing difficulties. In addition, they have managed the budget and plans for the new building well. Having been led to believe arrangements for the teaching of a modern language are satisfactory, they now recognise the school does not fully meet requirements and have improvements planned for the near future.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers think highly of the school. They particularly like the friendly atmosphere and the dedication of the staff. Pupils and students really enjoy school life. They report their teachers are fun, that they have the chance to try lots of new things. They especially like art, games and the after school club.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to improve their writing and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.
- Further develop the role of subject managers, especially in monitoring what is happening in classrooms.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to work alongside mainstream peers

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure pupils in Years 7 to 9 have the opportunity to study all elements of a modern foreign language at the appropriate level.

All the above have been identified in the school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

All pupils have severe, profound or complex learning needs. As such their attainment is very low when compared to national averages. Nevertheless, taking account of pupils' and students' previous learning and their special educational needs, the achievement for all ages and capabilities, including the few minority ethnic pupils, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the arts is very good for all age groups.
- Achievement is good for all ages and capabilities in most other subjects.
- Although satisfactory, achievement in information and communication technology and writing is limited by the lack of opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in other subjects.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 in French is unsatisfactory because of the subject is not taught regularly.

Commentary

1. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievement since the last inspection when progress was judged to be satisfactory overall. It was unsatisfactory for pupils with profound and multiple needs and for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in some subjects. New staff and a review of what is taught, and how it is taught, have resulted in achievement for these pupils now being good. Though there are some classes with, for example, only one girl, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls because staff plan tasks that match the capabilities of each pupil and ensure all questions and activities are directed equally to boys and girls. All pupils are achieving appropriately because they are set challenging targets each term in their individual education plans for all subjects. In addition, teachers are very aware of additional needs and ensure all pupils achieve equally well. Where the accommodation is a problem, for example, in information and communication technology and in design and technology, teachers ensure pupils have access to the same learning opportunities as their peers but in a suitable area so the achievement of these pupils is not compromised. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are set according to need for English and mathematics. This is contributing to their rate of progress.

2. Achievement in the arts is very good because of enthusiastic and visionary teaching. This has inspired and enabled all pupils to make very good gains in the skills they acquire. This has been achieved through imaginative activities, by consulting with teachers at other schools who are part of Creative Partnerships, and the innovative use of visiting professionals such as dance groups.

3. Achievement in English is good overall by Years 9 and 11. Students in the further education department achieve equally well. In communication, achievement has improved because staff expect pupils to vocalise and use symbols. They give more opportunities for pupils to listen and make their views known in discussions and reviews. In some classes, achievement is very good because adults use signs to support what is said and expect pupils to do so in return. While there has been a focus on writing this aspect of English is not as strong as other areas of the subject because staff do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to make marks and record their work in other subjects. Furthermore, higher attaining pupils do not have enough occasions to write imaginatively. The good achievement in mathematics and personal and social education identified by the previous inspection for all age groups has been maintained. Similarly, achievement in physical education is good overall. Dance and swimming continues to be very good. This is because activities are matched to pupils' capabilities so that pupils with even the greatest physical and

complex needs gain confidence and increase their range of movements because of skilled teaching. Achievement in French is unsatisfactory because, although pupils have very good experiences of French culture for one week each year, the subject is not taught at any other time and there is no suitable planned programme to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.

4. The last inspection judged achievement in aspects of information and communication technology, some elements of music, religious education in all age groups and science in Years 7 to 9 to be unsatisfactory. Good improvement has been made in all these subjects through new appointments and staff training so achievement in religious education and science is now good for all age groups. Similarly, achievement in music is equally good. The decision to use professional musicians has increased pupils' enjoyment and led to a balanced programme. While achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory, progress is limited because too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use their knowledge and develop their skills in other subjects, for example for research, for handling data in mathematics or recording their findings in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance are all very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is now very good, with a particular strength in promoting personal independence.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have very good attitudes and are very well behaved in and around school, and out in the community.
- Attendance is very good, as is punctuality for lessons.
- Very good provision for pupils' social development is demonstrated in increased maturity and independence.
- Personal development is promoted very well, especially in the further education department.

6. Pupils of all ages show remarkably positive attitudes to learning and school life, and with odd exceptions their behaviour in and around school is very good. Despite limited outdoor play areas, break and lunchtimes are calm, social occasions where pupils get on well, enjoying the many opportunities to work with others during the leisure and recreation activities available after their meal. Behaviour is equally good out of school when visiting leisure centres and, for example, a local garden to look at shapes and features. There have been no exclusions for a number of years. Pupils are sensible, cheerful and regularly help each other. As pupils grow older, they mature because of the activities provided, especially to improve their social skills and in links with the community. By the time students reach the further education department, they are mature and confident clearly relishing the chance to make choices and decisions. Tasks for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme bring increased responsibility and improved self esteem and, for example, make them think about how to use their free time. Students are justifiably proud of their work in business enterprise running a weekly tuck shop. Given the fragility of some of the pupils and their medical needs, attendance is very good, with no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual for lessons, demonstrating their interest and enjoyment in learning.

7. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall with moral and social development being stronger aspects. Religious education now makes a good contribution to personal development. For example, an awareness of the major world faiths enables pupils to develop a respect for the beliefs of others. Similarly, acts of worship make a useful contribution, though one observed lacked atmosphere and opportunities to allow a pause for reflection or a response to music were missed. An awareness of the world, of each other and of themselves is strongly fostered in all age groups. Through the good examples of adults, pupils form friendships and support each other. In one lesson, for example, a pupil appeared tired and rather unwell so another gently stroked her hair and spoke encouragingly to her. Sometimes moments of understanding illuminate lessons, as when a pupil with profound needs showed delight as she activated a switch, turning on a light for the first time.

8. Moral and social values are very strongly promoted and lie at the heart of everything the school does. Pupils clearly understand the code of conduct, knowing what is and is not acceptable. An awareness of the needs of others is successfully fostered through a great number of campaigns for charity. For example, the Christmas 'Love in a Box' appeal for children in Romania. An awareness of other cultures is successfully encouraged through subjects such as English, art, music and dance. Pupils have, for example, tried Egyptian belly dancing, created Aboriginal style art and experienced French culture for a week following a residential visit to France.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0
National data	9.1*	National data	0.6

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

*figures for pupils from similar schools.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
68	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

9. **The quality of education provided is good.** Good teaching and a good curriculum result in effective learning. The accommodation is poor and restricts some activities especially for students in the further education department who use wheelchairs.

Teaching and learning

10. Teaching and learning are good, as is the way teachers assess and record pupils' achievements. Good and very good teaching and learning were seen in all age groups. Teachers plan well for the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire so all learn at a good rate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, support staff and health professionals work closely together this contributes well to pupils' learning.
- Staff are imaginative in the way they teach so all pupils are interested and want to learn.
- Most staff have a very good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs, but some aspects of the practice of a few need improving.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their writing and computer skills in other subjects.
- Good improvements in the way teachers assess and record pupils' work have had a positive effect on learning.

Commentary

11. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory in almost one fifth of lessons. This resulted in unsatisfactory learning and achievement, particularly in Years 7 and 8. On this occasion, there was no unsatisfactory teaching in this age group. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in another department. Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of good and very good teaching. Where teaching is very good, this is often because lessons are taught by subject specialists.

12. Improvement is the result of:
- A good training programme that has increased staff confidence.
 - Good appointments of new staff.
 - The adoption of the national strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
 - An increase in specialist teaching.

13. Teachers recognise that pupils learn in different ways and plan their lessons to appeal to all senses. They give pupils the opportunity to handle real objects, sounds and smells to make learning meaningful. Where teaching is very good, staff use a rich blend of sounds, pictures and symbols to interest pupils. Most staff use signs and symbols to support the spoken word thus contributing to improved communication for pupils with more severe needs and those who do not vocalise. However, some staff have not adopted this practice. This limits the rate at which such pupils extend their vocabulary. A focus on writing has resulted in more pupils recording their work, especially in English, but pupils have too few opportunities to make marks, write or use computers in other subjects. This is especially so for higher attaining pupils who are not given sufficient opportunities to write independently.

14. Effective staff teams have been established. Teachers, support staff and health professionals plan and work together, which aids pupils' concentration, contributes to their independence and helps the more vulnerable. To deal with the wide spread of abilities, support staff are mostly used successfully for small group and individual work so pupils get more attention thus increasing their rate of learning. Most staff have an extensive knowledge of their pupils' needs. Staff ensure each pupil is correctly positioned and comfortable to gain maximum benefit from learning. Those with visual and hearing impairment are seated where they can best see and hear the teacher. Where appropriate, personal care takes place in the classroom so pupils lose minimum learning time.

15. Staff endeavour to include all pupils in all activities and this is mostly successful so all pupils, whatever their special educational needs learn at the same rate. However, though staff have had training in teaching pupils with complex behaviour, on a couple of occasions they did not provide work that was sufficiently challenging so these pupils became frustrated and this reduced their rate of learning. Though most staff treat pupils with respect and dignity, a few examples were seen of staff moving pupils with profound needs and those in wheelchairs without explaining what was happening. Whilst the intention was to cause minimum disruption, this practice is unnerving for pupils.

16. Good improvement in assessment procedures has led to improved learning. Teachers now have an accurate picture of pupils' achievements and use this information effectively when planning lessons and when setting new targets in individual education plans.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14 (25%)	25 (46%)	15 (27%)	0	0	1 (2%)

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

The curriculum

17. Despite poor accommodation, the curriculum is good, with good provision for extra-curricular activities. Learning opportunities are very good for students in the further education department. Pupils and students enjoy the range of activities on offer.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Setting pupils by ability for lessons in English and mathematics is contributing to achievement.
- The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship, and the curriculum for students in the further education department prepares pupils very well for life after school.
- Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good.
- Innovative developments enrich pupils' learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in exciting activities out of lessons.
- The poor accommodation continues to limit provision for wheelchair users.

Commentary

18. The national strategy has been adopted well for pupils in Years 7 to 9. This, alongside the decision to teach pupils in ability groups has had a significant impact on what is taught and on achievement in English and mathematics. Equally, very careful thought has been given to the programme for citizenship and personal, social and health education. The planned activities are relevant to pupils' needs and matched to their level of understanding. Students in the further education department take part in a number of purposeful activities. In addition to continuing to improve basic literacy and numeracy, they learn how to make best use of their leisure time, skills for independent living and how to run a small business. The activities of these students are accredited through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and other recognised national awards. Innovative work in all subjects, but particularly careers education and guidance, music, art and dance provided through Creative Partnerships has significantly increased the confidence of teachers, support staff and health professionals thus contributing considerably to achievement.

19. All staff are aware of pupils who have additional special educational needs such as visual or hearing impairment. The provision identified in Statements of Need is met through teachers' planning and very good support from health professionals. To improve the provision for the increasing number of pupils on the autistic spectrum, governors sensibly appointed a deputy headteacher with expertise in this area. Her training for staff is beginning to pay dividends in meeting pupils' needs. The number of wheelchair users has increased significantly since the last inspection. While staff endeavour to include all pupils in all activities, students in the further education department are not taught alongside others in their age group because the sloping ramp is too steep for their chairs. However, plans are well advanced for the inclusion of these students following the move to new premises. Staff work exceptionally hard to make the premises safe and attractive but the accommodation was not built as a school so some of the classrooms rooms are very cramped. Furthermore, parts of the exterior and grounds have been deemed unsafe so pupils have limited facilities for outdoor play.

20. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of activities out of lessons. They are animated when reporting experiences in the after school club such as Egyptian belly dancing, and talk with excitement about visits to theatres and museums. Many classrooms are a hive of activity at lunchtime with pupils producing artwork, using computers and sharing books. A residential visit to France contributes well to the cultural experience of older pupils. However, this is not available to all pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in this age group have a little experience of the language for example, learning a French carol and taking part in a French breakfast, but this is not sufficient to meet statutory requirements.

21. Good improvement has been made to the curriculum since the last inspection.
- Pupils with profound and multiple needs now have a suitable programme which reflects the National Curriculum while taking account of their complex needs.
 - The programme for religious education has been improved and staff are now more confident. This has resulted in good achievement in the subject.
 - The employment of professional musicians had contributed to achievement in music.
 - Suitable schemes of work are in place for most subjects
 - Resources have improved and are generally satisfactory for all subjects. Staff have been careful when buying resources, ensuring that new equipment will transfer to the new premises.

Care, guidance and support

22. Provision for pupils' care, is very strong. Staff know their pupils very well and provide good support, advice and guidance so pupils are able to take full advantage of learning opportunities. Good systems are in place to seek pupils' views. Staff make great efforts to involve pupils, whatever their special educational needs, in making choices and decisions that will lead to greater independence.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systems to ensure the health and welfare of pupils are very good.
- Transition into and out of school is managed very well.
- Staff work very well as a team and have an in-depth knowledge of each pupil.
- The appointment of education health workers strengthens the links between education and health, and between the school and home.

Commentary

23. Despite the limitations imposed by the building, staff do their best to make sure the environment is clean, safe and welcoming with routine maintenance being of a high standard. Since the last inspection care has been taken to organise proper assessments of potential risks for all activities and for individual pupils where necessary. Daily routines, including personal hygiene, are efficient, unobtrusive and preserve pupils' dignity. Pupils and students report they feel valued and very well supported.

24. Child protection procedures are very good and all staff very well aware of the need for total care of their pupils. An impressive range of help and support services enables pupils to be comfortable and receptive to learning. A very good knowledge of all pupils including those who are in the care of the local authority, those who are fragile and those who have regressive medical conditions ensures all receive very good levels of care and support. Pupils trust the adults who work with them and those who represent their views. Visiting professionals such as speech and language, music and art therapists contribute significantly to pupils well being.

25. The practice of therapists working alongside teachers in lessons is working very well .It contributes well to the all round knowledge of pupils' learning. For example, the occupational therapist working with pupils in design and technology was able to compile individual programmes to enable pupils increase their hand movements when working with small tools. The education health workers are doing a worthwhile job in liaising with other specialist health workers and finding new and innovative ways to improve the care of pupils. Their support for families during lengthy illness through home and hospital visits is encouraging to parents and maintains the continuity in pupils' education. Most staff treat pupils with respect and consideration, encouraging them to be as independent as possible. Staff work very well together, almost instinctively on occasions, being quick to see if a pupil is upset, tired or behaving inappropriately.

26. Strategies for managing pupils' behaviour have been well thought out and are effective. Where necessary, individual behaviour plans have been drawn up with the teacher with overall responsibility for managing pupils' behaviour and mostly applied consistently. The quality of daily registration is variable, in some cases pupils do little that is purposeful in the time and registers are simply marked rather than called, missing opportunities to welcome pupils and encouraging them to communicate.

27. The arrangements for transition into the school from the primary feeder school are very good and thorough, taking place over a number of months to give pupils and their carers and parents time to adjust to change. A number of agencies plan together to organise a suitable route for those leaving school. Again the process is detailed and thorough, ensuring both students and their parents are able to consider all the options available.

28. There is a strong focus on communication throughout the school, and staff are insistent on responses to greetings, for example, or apologies for inappropriate behaviour. Pupils' views are often sought individually and through the class forum. Where possible they are given choices, to which they respond very well. This is particularly evident in the further education department. Many students have been at the school for a good number of years and are in the main cheerful, co-operative and confident as a result of the high level of sensitive care and affection they have received. They are encouraged to choose and their views taken into account - for example, in planning where to go to eat out together.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

29. Links with parents, carers and the local community are very good. The school provides parents with very good information about the school and their child's progress. Satisfactory links have been established with other school and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide range of helpful information is offered to parents and carers.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and help in a number of practical ways.
- The school has very good links with the local community.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to work alongside their peers in mainstream education.

Commentary

30. Parents and carers are provided with a tremendous amount of useful information. Written material such as the prospectus, reports and newsletters provide helpful guidance and keep them informed about the daily life of the school. Home to school books are unusually detailed and particularly helpful for parents of children who are unable to speak about their day. However, parents and carers are less consistent about informing the school of what pupils have done at home. The Friends of New Croft High Association meets regularly and is instrumental in fundraising and social events. The family support group helps parents and carers in a variety of ways, for example in behaviour management, or by providing an opportunity to meet other parents.

31. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning through homework. Most spend time working with their child on targets in individual education plans. In addition, regular tasks are set for all capabilities, thus contributing to progress. Parents and carers report they feel involved and consulted through annual reviews, meetings and informally by telephone. They report their sons and daughters are very happy at the school. Although two or three parents expressed the view that homework and speech and language therapy were not effective, the inspection found no evidence to support this.

32. Links with the local community are very good and are already establishing the school as a force for change. The Creative Partnerships initiative with local and national arts organisations has been especially fruitful. Though new, the pilot project devised by the school alongside the National Health Service to get education health workers into the classroom is already paying dividends. Close liaison between the headteacher, the contractor for the new building and the local authority is effective in ensuring the new premises will meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers make very good use of the locality by, for example, using nearby stores as part of independence training or a local enclosed garden to work on number and shapes. Pupils report they particularly appreciate the close links with Manchester United football team.

33. Staff have good links with their feeder primary school. However, apart from a couple of successful links for individual pupils with local high schools, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to mix with their peers in mainstream education. Managers recognise this needs to be rapidly developed. To address this for students in the further education department, the headteacher has worked extremely hard, securing a place for the school as an associate of the local college in order to improve the provision for all special schools in the local education authority. As a result, a number of college courses have recently been set up.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

34. The leadership and management of the school are both good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She manages the school very well and has been effective in bringing about many improvements in the quality of education. The governance of the school is now good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a very good leader and manager.
- The deputy headteacher has brought many skills to the senior management team.
- Though in post for a short time, both the headteacher and deputy have made a considerable impact school improvement.
- The work of governors has improved. They have supported the school through difficult times including changes in key staff.
- Subject management is good, but many co-ordinators have not monitored the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observation.
- Office staff provide valuable financial management and administrative support.

Commentary

35. The headteacher is very hardworking and is committed to providing a high quality education for all pupils. She inspires staff to follow her example. She has successfully steered the school through very difficult changes resulting in many new appointments at senior level. She has worked closely with governors to create effective teams for each age group and to establish a stable management team. The recent appointment of a skilled deputy headteacher is already having a positive effect on the provision for pupils with autism and in opportunities for pupils to work alongside their peers in mainstream schools.

36. At the time of the last inspection, governors were not fulfilling their role as managers. Though supportive, they did not challenge senior staff and had insufficient knowledge of the workings of the school. Through appointing education, health and business professionals and with the election of active parent governors, they are now much more knowledgeable and effective. Governors challenge and support senior managers and have a clearer vision for how the school should develop. They have sensibly prioritised their work to address staffing and financial issues and have planned and budgeted well for the new building. They have been very supportive of key staff whose roles have changed significantly. Most are aware they need to be more evaluative about the work of the school. In addition, they recognise they need to be more active in curriculum development, particularly in

ensuring the legal requirements for teaching a modern foreign language are fully met. All other legal requirements are in place including the policy for Race Equality.

37. Departmental managers are establishing their roles well and leading initiatives that are already improving the quality of education. For example, more effective target setting based on better assessment is contributing to improved teaching and learning. The implementation of national strategies for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is improving the curriculum for these pupils. Plans to introduce nationally recognised awards for students in the further education department are well advanced and will be extended to include in Years 10 and 11. Managers with whole-school responsibilities for behaviour management and health and care needs of pupils have ensured high quality care, support and guidance for all pupils. Subject leaders vary in experience but most have developed suitable action plans showing how they intend to improve provision and manage the move to new premises. To date, few have had sufficient opportunities to base these on accurate monitoring of what is happening in classrooms through observing lessons.

38. Since the last inspection, the roles of learning support assistants have been clarified, improving efficiency of deployment. A review of office work has been successful in streamlining administrative and financial procedures. The office staff are pleasant, welcoming and very efficient. They work extremely well together and have established useful systems to help the school run smoothly saving the headteacher, governors and staff from tedious day-to-day tasks thus allowing them to get on with their work.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,305,870	Balance from previous year	44,870
Total expenditure	1,360,702	Balance carried forward to the next	74,801*
Expenditure per pupil	19,167,183*		

*Expenditure per pupil is high as are reserves because of funds reserved for equipment in the new premises.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

39. Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning has improved, especially for pupils with more profound and complex needs.
- In all age groups, pupils' achievement in communication and in reading is now good.
- Signing is used effectively by many staff to aid pupils' understanding and improve communication.
- There are opportunities for pupils to share a good range of suitable literature.
- The national strategy has been adopted well and is contributing to pupils' achievements.

Commentary

40. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is now good for all age groups and for pupils of all capabilities as a result of good teaching. The good improvement in teaching has eliminated the unsatisfactory learning found by the last inspection. At that time, pupils with profound needs sat passively to listen to stories. A significant improvement was seen with such pupils participating enthusiastically in the story of *Orinoco and the Black Umbrella*. The spirited reading and role-play captivated pupils' imaginations and inspired many to vocalise. The sensory approach where support staff helped all pupils to experience the breeze, feel the texture of the fur, listen to the crunch of dry leaves and track the swirling of the umbrella led to increased understanding and pure enjoyment.

41. Achievement in communication is good for all pupils because staff place a high priority on developing pupils' skills at all times. Pupils of all levels of need listen carefully to adults and try to follow their good example. Lower attaining pupils vocalise and are helped to understand and communicate by the use of signs and symbols. However, though many staff sign, the use of signing is inconsistent. In some classes support staff sign only to individual pupils, so opportunities are missed to increase communication between peers. Higher attaining pupils are expected to take an active part in discussions and to speak clearly. Programmes compiled in conjunction with speech and language therapists are effective in ensuring pupils with more complex needs make progress in communicating and in understanding language.

42. Pupils make good progress in reading because teachers choose a good range of age-appropriate literature including high quality modern and classic fiction, poetry, myths and legends and non-fiction. Pupils understand these often difficult texts because teachers use signs, symbols, props, and role-play to aid their understanding. Higher attaining pupils read simple texts independently, whilst others need symbols to help with their reading. Students in the further education department continue to develop their literacy in English lessons and during visits out of school.

43. Achievement in writing is satisfactory. Where teachers give good opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of styles and for different purposes, they achieve well, learning to write sentences and short paragraphs, with some using conventional script and others making symbolic sentences. However, this is not yet a consistent in all classes. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' ability to make marks or form letters. Similarly, with higher attaining pupils, staff write sentences for these pupils to copy when some are capable of writing simple sentences independently, creatively and at length.

44. Subject leadership and management are good. The recent initiative to improve writing is starting to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement, but there has been insufficient monitoring to ensure that the best practice is shared and applied consistently in all classes. The co-ordinator and other senior managers have worked together effectively to improve the curriculum by introducing appropriate elements of national strategy in all age groups and setting pupils in Years 7 to 9 according to ability. This is improving teaching and learning thereby resulting in higher achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Staff place a high priority on developing pupils' communication skills in all subjects. All pupils are expected to listen. Those who can are encouraged to discuss and explain their work in, for example, science and religious education and to extend their vocabulary by using correct terminology in mathematics and food studies. In all subjects teachers provide simple texts and worksheets for pupils to improve their understanding of reading. The whole-school focus on writing has started to have an impact on the way pupils record their work in some subjects, but there are still insufficient opportunities to write in a range of styles or to write independently in some classes.

French

46. Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory
- There is no weekly allocation for French, so pupils do not have the opportunity to build on their learning.
- A residential visit to France for some pupils and a series of lunchtime activities extend the provision.

Commentary

47. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make insufficient progress in learning French because of the way the programme is planned. Following the criticism of the last inspection, governors sought advice and were assured the way the subject is taught meets legal requirements. However, this is not so as French is only taught in the summer term and only focuses on speaking and listening. As a result, though pupils have knowledge of a few basic phrases, these are forgotten over time and opportunities to read, for example, signs are few.

48. The school continues to hold annual theme weeks where all pupils in Years 7 to 11 have the opportunity to study France and aspects of French culture. During this time, pupils learn and use simple words and phrases. Furthermore, this makes a positive contribution to their personal development, particularly their cultural awareness. Some pupils have the opportunity to visit France for a week, prior to which they spend time during the lunch break learning a basic vocabulary. However, many pupils in Years 7 to 9, the age group to which the language should be taught, are unable to take part because of a shortage of places. Although photographic evidence shows that pupils really enjoy the experience, and benefit from sharing, and learning about the geography of France and French food, music, customs and art, there is little recorded work to demonstrate their progress. There is no system of assessment in place, and their progress is not recognised by including relevant evidence in their Records of Achievement.

49. The planned programme guidance demonstrates low expectations for what pupils can achieve in this subject, especially the higher attaining pupils and limits coverage to speaking and responding in French. It has not been revised to take account of the recent whole-school focus on writing and recording in all subjects, and underestimates the support that pupils' understanding of signs and symbols can give in the learning of another language.

50. Following the retirement of the previous co-ordinator, the headteacher has taken over subject management. Understandably, she has had many other urgent priorities to address. The subject has had low priority because of staffing changes and other developments. Nevertheless, she is very aware of the need to develop the subject further and has secured a place on a project that aims to develop and share good practice in the teaching and learning of spoken French in special schools, in order to develop her own subject expertise.

MATHEMATICS

51. Provision in mathematics is **good**. The good progress identified by the last inspection has been maintained. A better programme and improved teaching for pupils with profound and complex needs has resulted in good achievement for all ages and capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages and capabilities achieve well because of good teaching.
- The national strategy had been adopted well and has increased pupils' confidence.
- The use of new technology is under-developed.
- There is insufficient emphasis in some classes on problem solving.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by the subject manager is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

52. The good progress identified by the last inspection has been maintained. A better programme and improved teaching for pupils with profound and complex needs has resulted in good achievement for all ages and capabilities. The adoption of the national strategy and the setting of pupils by ability are contributing to the good achievement. In all year groups, pupils make good progress in using number and in shapes and measures. Some teachers plan opportunities for pupils to solve problems mentally and by using real objects, but overall this aspect is not as strong as other elements of the subject. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils rarely make use of computers to practise or support numeracy. A limited range of software reduces the use pupils some pupils can make of the technology. Students in the further education department continue to make good progress in lessons and in applying their knowledge, for example when visiting leisure centres or when running the tuck shop as part of their business enterprise.

53. Teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, being good overall. Teachers and support staff work well together for the benefit of all pupils. All teachers are clear about what pupils will learn in each lesson, making sure that new learning builds on previous understanding. Most lessons are lively, with colourful resources used well to capture pupils' interest, leading to increased concentration. Pupils improve their understanding and their speaking and listening because good emphasis is placed on using mathematical vocabulary. Support staff are mostly used well to encourage pupils to feel secure and to reduce the risk of failure so enabling all pupils to achieve equally well. In the lessons where teaching was very good, support staff were very well briefed and effectively led groups. Though most staff mark pupils' work regularly, there are few comments to indicate the level of support or what is needed for each pupil to improve. Assessment is now linked to the National Curriculum and other national guidelines and is used well when planning further lessons.

54. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is well organised and has a detailed plan for improvement. The curriculum is managed well. Though there has been some team teaching and a check on what is being taught, a regular pattern of monitoring to identify and share good practice is not established. The strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy has played a key part in how the subject has developed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Teachers plan well for pupils to use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects. Consequently, they develop an appreciation of the many practical uses for their skills. For example, during religious education pupils counted how many brothers Joseph had, and how many were left when Benjamin was imprisoned. In food studies, art and design and technology, pupils estimate, measure and make comparisons between amounts, shapes and sizes. While pupils have some opportunities to improve their mathematical understanding in science, these occasions tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning.

SCIENCE

56. Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement since the last inspection has resulted in good teaching and good achievement by Years 9 and 11.
- The subject manager has worked hard to improve what is taught and how it is taught, making learning relevant to pupils of all capabilities.
- Good opportunities for pupils to experiment and predict the outcome of their investigations contribute significantly to learning.
- Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to improve their writing, numeracy and use new technology.
- The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor what is happening in the classrooms.

Commentary

57. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and encouraged to investigate and ask questions. All capabilities are making good gains in their knowledge and understanding of living and non-living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Teachers plan well for pupils to predict what might happen in their investigations. This successfully holds pupils' attention and, on occasions, has them leaning forward in anticipation. However, higher attaining pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to consider why, or why not, their test might be fair.

58. Teaching and learning are good because teachers are now more confident in their subject knowledge and ask challenging questions thus extending pupils' understanding. Learning is made interesting by the use of imaginative resources and a balance of activities which hold pupils' attention. Staff provide very good opportunities for pupils to experiment using familiar and exciting equipment. Regardless of ability, all are expected to consider the outcome of their investigation and to consider how change affect their results so pupils are interested in the outcome. Pupils enjoy science, especially the practical element. Teachers are skilled at building on previous learning so pupils link earlier work to the current topic. Staff make sure all pupils are included in discussions and activities. Pupils are helped to improve their communication and reading through numerous planned activities but, though they record their findings in different ways, overall they have too few opportunities to make marks or write independently. Similarly, opportunities are missed to help pupils improve their mathematical knowledge. While computers are used for research and for producing symbolic records, too little use is made of new technology to support the subject. Good improvements in the way staff record pupils' achievements and use the information when planning further work contribute well to learning.

59. Subject leadership and management is good. Following the criticisms of last report when provision and standards were unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and for pupils with profound and complex needs, the co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the programme for all pupils, ensuring what is taught meets the wide range of needs. Very good support from the headteacher has enabled her to link with special schools in five local authorities observing good practice, sharing ideas and

providing challenge for all capabilities. In addition, she has improved staff confidence, resources and provided a programme that is suitable for all capabilities. Though she has looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning, she has not observed how what is taught in classrooms is influencing pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

60. Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in teaching have improved learning and achievement.
- Additional resources and training have improved staff confidence in teaching the subject.
- Insufficient use is made of new technology to support work in other subjects.
- The building affects who can be taught in which rooms.
- Digital cameras are used well to record progress and provide material for displays.

Commentary

61. Since the last inspection most staff have taken part in national training which has increased their knowledge and how they teach the subject. The appointment of a technician to ensure computers and software are in good working order has improved staff skill and is further contributing to staff confidence. Alongside an increase in the number of computers and the provision of two suites, these factors contribute well to improved achievement. However, on occasions, the accommodation and room size limits where pupils are taught. For example, students in Years 12 to 14 who use wheelchairs are unable to use the computer suite in the further education department. Similarly, the computer suite in the main building cannot accommodate more than one wheelchair user when computers are in use. While staff work hard to compensate for this by using computers in classrooms, difficulties with the accommodation mean, in some year groups, pupils cannot be taught a new skill as a whole class. This makes additional work for teachers who provide additional experiences in classrooms that are accessible by wheelchair.

62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In most lessons seen, teachers' subject knowledge was used well to give clear, succinct explanations and demonstrations, for example by using an interactive whiteboard. Furthermore, skilful questioning and encouraging support by non-teaching staff ensured all pupils were involved and made progress in the knowledge and skills they acquired. On occasion however, progress would have been greater had additional devices such as more sophisticated switches and touch screens been available. Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show that good use is made of the Internet to gather information, and new technology is now beginning to be used well for recording and presenting text. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and clearly enjoy their lessons.

63. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has overseen the setting up of the two suites and manages the work of the technician. In addition, he has detailed plans for the move new premises and has been careful to make sure that any equipment purchased is easily transferable to the new building. He recognises the planned programme of study is in need of review, but is reluctant to proceed until clear what hardware and software are available in the new building. Nevertheless, most teachers have adopted a nationally recognised programme that is being used well in most classes. The co-ordinator has not spent time in classrooms checking that the best use is made of resources or how what is taught contributes to learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Good use is made of new technology to provide symbols for pupils who have communication difficulties. In addition, digital cameras are used well to record individual achievement and in producing displays to support learning and celebrate achievement. In art and design and in design

and technology, pupils of all ages and capabilities have made a good start to computer assisted design. Though some use is made of new technology for research and in the presentation of work, pupils have too few opportunities to improve their skills in other lessons. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects, for example, presenting data in mathematics and science because of limited software.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

65. The provision for history and geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Less time has been spent on history and geography than on other subjects this has limited pupils' progress.
- Real objects and relevant experiences are used well to gain pupils' interest.
- Themes such as the Africa project extend pupils' awareness of other cultures.
- Though pupils record their work on occasions, they have too few opportunities to write.

Commentary

66. Both subjects are taught as units and were only sampled as they were not a focus for this inspection. Achievement is satisfactory in both subjects by Year 9. In **history**, pupils make satisfactory progress in well-chosen topics that capture their interest. In most classes, teachers start the day by sequencing the activities that will take place, so pupils become aware of the passage of time. This is reinforced on pupils' birthdays and at times of national importance, for example bonfire night and the Golden Jubilee. Pupils develop an understanding of 'old' and 'new' by examining objects such as household equipment from the past and comparing them to those of modern times. More able pupils understand that they can find out about the past from different sources such as books, photographs and video

67. In **geography**, pupils use the school and the locality to develop skills in map reading. As they travel around the area, they identify features such as churches, the canal and bridges. Pupils are fascinated when comparing the features of their teacher's home town in South Africa with those of Salford. Using electronic mail, they correspond with South African pupils finding out more about their way of life. During the inspection, older pupils drew on their geographical skills well when using photographs to navigate their way around a country park in physical education. A knowledge of simple plans and maps is put to good use by students in the further education department when undertaking their adventurous walk as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

68. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were satisfactory. Support staff were used well so pupils of all capabilities were included. Though pupils were presented with some opportunities to read and write, an analysis of work shows they do not have sufficient opportunities to write for different purposes or to write imaginatively.

69. From limited evidence, subject management is at least satisfactory. The emphasis on major subjects such as English and mathematics has limited the amount of time available to history and geography. Nevertheless, a suitable programme is in place that reflects pupils' needs and capabilities. Both subjects make a very good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through a greater awareness of their own heritage and that of other cultures.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is reflected in good learning and good achievement.
- The co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject so teachers are more enthusiastic.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to record their work.
- Improvement is needed in the way teachers record pupils' achievement.
- Weekly assemblies support teaching and learning.

71. Since the last inspection, staff have become more comfortable teaching religious education. This has been helped by the acquisition of additional resources and the improved provision for pupils with profound and complex needs. The programme is now carefully matched to the needs of all pupils and meets the requirements of the Salford Locally Agreed Syllabus. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when progress and teaching were judged to be unsatisfactory. As a result, by Years 9 and 11, pupils of all capabilities achieve well and are gaining an awareness of the beliefs and practices of, for example, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and Jews. Weekly assemblies are used well to introduce new topics and reinforce learning. Themes such as 'forgiveness' and 'caring' help pupils to learn from religion. During the inspection, for example, pupils increased their awareness of religion in action through hearing of the plight of children in Romania and the school's contribution by providing 'Love in a Box'.

72. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan activities matched to pupils' needs, using real objects and role-play to make the lessons meaningful. For example, to increase understanding of the story of Joseph, pupils have designed and made a multi-coloured coat and have acted out different parts of the story, thinking particularly how each of the brothers was feeling at the time. Most staff develop pupils' communication well by using symbols and signing and support staff are used effectively to ensure those with more profound and complex needs understand. As a result all concentrate well and take an interest in their work. However, teachers provide too few occasions for pupils to record information thus limiting opportunities for them to improve their literacy.

73. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides good support for her colleagues and has forged useful links with the community to support teaching, such as the Jewish Museum and the services of a parent for painting Mendhi patterns. All pupils have targets for the subject. However, the recording of pupils' achievements denotes only the activities that they have taken part in rather than the knowledge and skills that have been acquired. No monitoring of teachers' planning or classroom practice has taken place. Nevertheless, the teaching of religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

74. Provision in design and technology, including food studies, is **good** in all age groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in good achievement.
- Skills gained prepare pupils and students well for life after school.
- Staff know their pupils very well and ensure they are all included by providing opportunities for pupils to use all their senses.
- Good attention is paid to the health and welfare of pupils.

Commentary

75. This is good improvement since the last inspection when progress in food studies was satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on other aspects of the subject. Only one lesson was observed in food studies. Nevertheless, photographs, pupil records, an analysis of work and discussions show that this aspect is good. Pupils and students are well aware of the need for safety in the kitchen. They are aware of the need to keep healthy following routines to establish good living, diet and lifestyles. Through a planned programme they made good progress reading simple recipes, planning what they will make and saying what they like or dislike about what they have produced. With adult help, all make good gains in using utensils, for example to peel, chop or roll out pastry.

76. When using resistant materials, pupils design, choose suitable materials and make, for example, bags for Christmas gifts decorating them with transfers produced using a computer and scanner, then deciding on any necessary improvements before embarking on the next batch. Those with more profound needs experience working with different textures of wood with each pupil having the opportunity to handle materials and then letting staff know which they prefer. Pupils use a suitable range of hand tools and build on their skills from year to year.

77. Students in the further education department plan menus for snacks and simple meals. Some of the higher attaining shop for the ingredients unaccompanied, using skills acquired in mathematics when paying and receiving change. Though the majority need adult help, all capabilities make choices between products. As part of their charity work, students have produced attractive gifts using a range of materials then checking the quality of the finished work.

78. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from good to very good, being good overall. This is good improvement since the last inspection when some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching and learning have improved because teachers have higher expectations and the programme now plans for progression in the skills to be acquired. Activities are clearly explained by teachers and support staff so everyone has a clear picture of the skills and knowledge to be acquired. Support staff are carefully briefed and individual needs of pupils are considered before each activity starts. For example, when working with wood, staff made provision for pupils with breathing difficulties. Close liaison with the occupational therapist allows staff to provide activities that are challenging yet realistic. In addition, lessons are planned to develop pupils understanding of literacy and mathematics. For example, pupils 'read' instructions and compare shape and size in both aspects of the subject. Furthermore, opportunities are provided for pupils to count and measure with adult help. Good use is made of computers when designing new objects. Resources are chosen carefully to make lessons interesting and exciting as well as to improve pupils' fine motor control and co-ordination. The health and safety of all pupils is considered in plans and in the assessment of potential risks.

79. The subjects are well led and managed. The planned programmes now allow for progression in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire. The chosen modules are continuously revised to ensure all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the subject regardless of need and despite problems with the accommodation which, for example, limit the number of wheelchair users in the rooms at any one time.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

80. Provision in **art and design** is **very good** and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in art is very good because of enthusiastic and imaginative teaching.
- A very good knowledge of each pupil enables all to make very good progress in the skills they acquire.
- Very good links with professional artists contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

- Provision for the arts makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- More use could be made of sketch-books as a way of assessing pupils' achievement.

Commentary

81. As at the time of the last inspection pupils' achievements continue to be very good. Pupil records, displays, photographs and CD recordings show that pupils have very good opportunities to take part in a very wide range of activities. High achievement has been maintained because of skilled teaching and the enthusiasm and vision of the teacher. She has enabled pupils of all capabilities to make very good gains in the skills they acquire through imaginative activities, through consulting with teachers at other schools who are part of Creative Partnerships, and the use of visiting professionals such as artists and dance groups.

82. Teaching and learning are very good. The subject is taught to all pupils by a specialist teacher. Her enthusiasm is infectious. With imagination and flair, she motivates and inspires pupils to have confidence in themselves. Her knowledge of pupils and close liaison with other professionals such as the occupational therapist, means in addition to high levels of challenge, pupils are helped to improve their co-ordination and extend their range of movements. This enables all pupils, whatever their special educational needs or abilities, to make very good progress. In addition to planning for pupils to acquire new skills in art, she provides opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy. New technology is used effectively in this subject for pupils to design and explore various commercially produced programmes and for research about well known artists. Pupils' achievements are carefully recorded and used when planning further work. Attractive displays celebrate achievement and support learning. Though good use is made of sketchbooks for pupils to try out new techniques and for homework, more use could be made of these in assessing pupils' progress.

83. Subject management is very good. The co-ordinator is innovative, investigating all possible avenues to enrich learning opportunities. She is fully aware of the strengths of the subject and has clear ideas how it will be developed. Work in the arts makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in their appreciation of art from beyond Europe. Art activities in the after school club contribute well to pupils' learning.

Music

84. Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The employment of professional musicians has led to a balanced programme, provided good teaching and resulting in good achievement.
- Pupils of all capabilities derive great pleasure from their lessons
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

85. At the time of the last inspection, though pupils enjoyed performing, aspects of the subject were missing and there was no planned programme. In order to address the lack of expertise on the staff professional musicians were appointed with the skills and resources to provide for all the required elements of music. This includes an appreciation of music from beyond the western world and a chance to play instruments from Africa, Asia and Australia, which contributes very well to cultural development.

86. Teaching and learning are good and this results in good achievement by pupils. Planning includes activities to cover all elements of the subject. As a result, pupils make good gains in

listening, composing and performing. Pupils improve their concentration and listen carefully through the expectation that they will listen for particular sounds in a song or in a well-known piece of music. Resources are adapted well so all capabilities are included in all activities. Similarly, support staff are generally used effectively to prompt pupils so all benefit. Pupils enjoy their music lessons, showing great delight when, for example, they sing using the microphone or produce a sound from an unfamiliar instrument. While achievement is recorded, opportunities are missed to review what pupils have learned at the end of each lesson.

87. Subject management is satisfactory. In addition to music, the co-ordinator is responsible for two major subjects. Nevertheless, she monitors planning and ensures the visiting staff are familiar with pupil's individual needs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in dance and swimming is very good.
- Pupils achieve well because they have been set challenging targets based on their physical needs.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of physical activities on offer.
- Education and health professionals work closely together for the benefit of all pupils.
- Very good use is made of the community.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory posing challenges for staff.

Commentary

89. Progress has been maintained since the last inspection with continued very good achievement in swimming and dance. Pupils achieve well in physical education through a range of exciting and challenging activities. Their performance is good. Pupils learn, for instance, to throw and catch balls, to take part in several different games, to swim, and to run, jump and balance when moving over apparatus. More able pupils understand the need to warm up prior to exercise. Pupils of all capabilities take part in outdoor and adventurous activities such as orienteering, with more able understanding, for example, how to use clues to navigate the course. In swimming, achievement is very good and ranges from experiencing the freedom of the water and extending the range of movements of pupils with the most profound needs to students who, for example, swim up to 14 lengths using a variety of strokes. The physical development of many pupils, particularly those with greater physical needs, is improved by advice and support from physiotherapists.

90. Achievement in dance is very good for all ages and abilities. Mobile and higher attaining pupils respond well to music moving in different directions, varying their speed. Despite having difficulty with rhythm, they clap and skip with increasing expertise chuckling when, for example, they dance a salsa. During one lesson, pupils with more profound and complex needs made very good progress when working with professional dancers through the Creative Partnerships. Through skilled teaching and with the support of physiotherapists and classroom staff, pupils persevered, focusing their eyes on, for example, feather boas and Indian bells as they endeavoured to move parts of their body in response to the music. At all times pupils demonstrated intense concentration and by the end of the lesson all were visibly tired but contented.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some examples of very good teaching observed. Teachers provide activities that are successful in raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence thus contributing to their personal development. Pupils enjoy the activities because teachers plan very effectively to ensure that tasks are interesting and exciting while being matched to physical needs. Careful assessments are made of potential risks and resources adapted, for example canoes, so all can be included. High levels of challenge are built into all lessons, especially

projects leading to the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Records of pupils' achievements are maintained well and used as a basis for further work.

92. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator is a physical education specialist and provides good support for his colleagues. The wide range of activities is very well organised with sufficient flexibility to allow all pupils to be included. Activities in the after school club make a positive contribution to pupils' physical development. Very good co-operation between teaching staff and health professionals ensures activities are suitable and challenging. Individual physical targets are set by therapists and teachers together and are carefully monitored. The use of off-site provision is very well managed. This enables pupils to take part in, for example, orienteering, football and basketball. Staff have worked hard to modify the programme and overcome difficulties posed by the accommodation. They cope well with unsatisfactory changing facilities and the disruption to lessons caused by the hall being a thoroughfare. Plans are well advanced for the move to the new premises.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. The provision is **very good** for both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good by Years 9 and 11.
- Teaching and learning are very good when taught by subject specialist, especially in the further education department.
- The taught programme for both subjects is very well supported by other subjects and through daily routines.
- Programmes are carefully matched to pupils' needs and capabilities.

Commentary

94. Pupils and students in all age groups make good progress and achieve well because they are taught well and expected to do their best in both subjects. These subjects contribute significantly to the school ethos and result in pupils who are very well behaved, and who are making very good gains in their social skills. In **personal social and health education**, pupils with the most profound and complex needs become more aware of their bodies, how to choose what they want, and how to communicate with others. Other pupils learn how to wash and care for themselves, dress themselves, and how to get along together. Pupils of all ages are aware of healthy eating with most making sensible choices at lunchtime. Higher attaining pupils understand the danger of overeating and use their knowledge well to plan lunch for a child. Older pupils and students plan, shop, prepare and eat the food they have bought. Pupils gain a suitable awareness of, for example, drugs misuse and sex education through the taught programme and from visiting speakers. Learning how to behave in public, or with friends, is a major focus of learning, as is learning to speak up for themselves, and expressing their opinions clearly and politely.

95. Achievement in careers education and guidance is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the further education department. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when the programme was judged to be unsatisfactory. In addition to meetings with the Connexions officer, pupils and students have useful opportunities to experience the world of work through lessons, visits and business enterprise. Even those with the most profound needs are given an awareness of, for example, a building site through handling equipment such as safety helmets and materials, and with adult help constructing a wall. The initiative through Creative Partnerships for students in their final year is of a high quality. Working with a theatre company, students gained an awareness of self and a sense of place using a wide range of media as they tracked and planned their 'Journey of Life'.

96. Achievement in **citizenship** is good in Years 7 to 11 and very good in the further education department because of very good teaching by a subject specialist. The subject has developed well

since the last inspection. In many classes, pupils have a growing awareness of democracy through Class Forum. Having elected a chairperson and secretary, pupils and students have the opportunity to make suggestions and raise concerns about school life. Older pupils and students have an increased awareness of locality and the amenities available to them. As a homework task, they found out who is the Mayor of Salford and something of the work of the council. During a humorous debate, pupils exchanged views on how Salford can be improved, especially for young people. A good understanding of how to be a good citizen is successfully fostered through practical aid. After considering the difficulties encountered by children in war zones and discussing the morality of war, students in the further education unit are assembling gift boxes for children in Romania. The task has been set up in as a production line with, for example, the more able writing letters, some producing colourful labels using a computer, with others decorating and filling the boxes.

97. While teaching and learning are good overall, teaching in citizenship is mostly very good in the further education department. However, teaching and learning were very poor in one lesson because there was no opportunity for pupils to learn and inappropriate remarks about individual needs were made in front of them. Most teachers plan well ensuring activities are relevant to pupils' needs. A range of stimulating resources, including the use of interactive boards and computers, maintain pupils' interest. Pupils pay close attention so learning is quickly established. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Most adults present good examples of how to behave appropriately. Lessons are conducted with good humour and a useful exchange of ideas. Teachers pay great attention to pupils' personal development. They want them to do well so pupils respond really well, growing in confidence and self-esteem as they progress through the school. Many staff use signs and symbols to support learning, but this is not so in all classes. Similarly, though some staff provide good opportunities for pupils to record their work, overall, this is an area for improvement.

98. Subject leadership and management are good. As subjects are closely interwoven and are incorporated in other aspects of the curriculum, the co-ordinators communicate well with other staff. They keep a close eye on what is happening in school, overseeing the wide range of activities in and out of school. Targets in individual education plans for personal for personal development are challenging for all capabilities and are the focus all lessons and daily routines thus contributing to progress.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	7
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	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).