

INSPECTION REPORT

Hazel Court School

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114694

Headteacher: Mr Peter Gordon

Lead inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 261874

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 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	95
School address:	Hazel Court School Larkspur Drive Eastbourne BN23 8EJ Hazel Court Further Education Department Kings Drive Eastbourne BN21 2XF
Telephone number:	01323 465720
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Geoff Miller
Date of previous inspection	1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hazel Court School is a special school for pupils and students with severe learning difficulties between the ages of 11 and 19 years. It is organised into two distinct phases; Hazel Court Secondary School and Hazel Court School Further Education (FE) department. Hazel Court School has new and purpose built accommodation within the same building as a mainstream secondary school. Together, they make the first purpose built co-located schools in the country (two schools under one roof). The Hazel Court School FE department was opened in 2000 and is situated on the same site as a nearby FE College. This provision is also the country's first purpose built co-located FE department for students with severe learning difficulties. Pupils have wide ranging special educational needs, including severe, profound, multiple and autistic spectrum disorder. This means that their attainment on entry is very low. The vast majority of pupils are from a white British background and none has English as an additional language. A relatively high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. More than one third of the pupils from Hazel Court join the secondary school on the same site for some classes during the week, and the vast majority are included at some point, such as lunchtimes, and other informal occasions. Students at the FE College also take part in relevant courses at different times of the year. The school has been transformed since the previous inspection from an all age 2 – 19 school for pupils with severe learning difficulties to its present provision. There is an additional class run by the school and established by the LEA, on the site of the nearby primary special school. It is an LEA resource class for secondary pupils, designed to prevent pupils with extremely challenging behaviour and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) from requiring placements at residential schools further from home than their families would wish.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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18498	Denise Morris	Team inspector	English, music, religious education
30071	John Pearson	Team inspector	Science, art and design, physical education (PE), special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hazel Court School and FE department provides pupils and students with a **very good** education and gives **very good** value for money. The headteacher's excellent leadership means that the school has been transformed into provision that is at the forefront of special educational needs in terms of facilities and opportunities for including pupils and students with their mainstream peers. Teaching and learning is very good overall and students achieve very well by the time they leave.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's excellent leadership, together with a very strong senior management team and highly effective governors have transformed the school into its current high quality provision.
- The school's excellent facilities and co-location has created huge possibilities for pupils and students; there is scope to develop further these opportunities.
- The provision for pupils and students with additional special educational needs is excellent and enables them to make significant progress over time.
- Very good teaching overall, and rigorous assessment enables students to achieve very well by the time they leave; students in the FE department are prepared very well for the next stage of their lives.
- The excellent care and welfare of the pupils and students enables them to learn more readily; excellent relationships between pupils and adults mean that their needs are understood fully.
- Accommodation in the specialist class for pupils with ASD is poor and unfit for its purpose.
- The curriculum is very good overall and builds systematically on the pupils' and students' learning; the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- The partnership between the school and parents is very effective in identifying priorities and supporting families; communication between home and school is excellent.

Improvements since the previous inspection have been very good, and all areas of weakness have been addressed. Monitoring is now well established and subject leaders are fully involved in the process. Behaviour management strategies are identified where appropriate, and the school is moving from strength to strength.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is **very good** overall. Pupils and students with additional special educational needs achieve exceptionally well as a result of the strong teaching. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, or pupils from different backgrounds. Pupils achieve well overall in English and mathematics, and very well in science, physical education and art and design, and in their personal and social education. Students in the FE department achieve very well and gain many nationally recognised awards as well as growing in confidence in their personal and social development. Pupils in Years 7 – 11 achieve satisfactorily in ICT, though could achieve more if ICT was developed more systematically across other subjects of the curriculum. The pupils' and students' very good attitudes and behaviour mean they are ready to learn and try their best. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps prepare them more fully for life beyond school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching and learning is very good overall. The very good and often excellent teaching for pupils and students with additional special educational needs ensures they make rapid progress. The excellent teaching for pupils with the most challenging behaviour, including ASD, enables those pupils to have very relevant activities within a highly structured and appropriate framework designed to support and modify their behaviour.

The curriculum is very good and relevant for pupils and there is a genuine sense of growing up and maturing as they move to the college FE facilities at 16 to become students. The curriculum is very well matched to students' needs and prepares them very effectively for the next stage of life. There are good activities outside lessons, though this aspect is limited due to transport restrictions. There is excellent care, guidance and support for pupils and students that help them learn more readily at school. The very good partnership with parents means that pupils and students are supported very effectively at home and school and the excellent information provided by the school helps keep parents fully informed about their child's progress and education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and has been the driving force behind the school's visionary and pioneering developments. The deputy headteacher makes a very strong contribution, and together with senior managers have complementary skills. Management strategies are very effective and there is a clear and realistic understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses, and high aspirations for continued improvement. The governing body provides very effective governance, and is involved strategically in school life. The co-location of the school and FE department has huge potential that could be further developed. The co-located partner school and college have undergone significant changes in personnel and timetables, and both currently face huge challenges in recruitment and retention of staff. This, in turn, has adversely affected the opportunities for Hazel Court pupils and students. The leadership of Hazel Court is keen to pursue more options for pupils and students as a matter of urgency.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express a high degree of satisfaction about the school and its work. The school is held in high regard by parents. Parents appreciate the high quality information they receive and value the school's support. Some would like their children to have more opportunities to be included with their mainstream peers. Pupils and students say they like school and enjoy everything about it. Inspectors agree with the parents' very positive views, and consider that there is scope for more opportunities to include pupils and students in the secondary school and college where pupils and students are co-located.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Establish the systematic use of ICT across the curriculum in order to develop the pupils' ICT skills more consistently, and implement the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy more fully.
- In conjunction with the Local Education Authority, improve accommodation and facilities for pupils with ASD in the specialist class
- Extend the educational and social activities with the school and college where Hazel Court pupils and students are co-located, in order to maximise more fully, the opportunities for inclusion.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good** overall. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls or pupils from different backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Students achieve very well in gaining a wide range of nationally recognised courses by the time they leave.
- Pupils and students achieve very well in their personal and social skills; they gain a growing confidence and maturity as they move through the school.
- Pupils achieve well overall in English and mathematics; pupils' achievements in literacy in Years 7 – 9 are satisfactory, but could be better with the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy.
- Pupils' achievements in ICT in Years 7 – 11 are satisfactory, though the use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Pupils achieve very well in science, physical education, and art and design and reach standards well beyond those usually seen for their level of special educational needs.
- Pupils with additional special needs, including those with exceptionally challenging behaviour and ASD make rapid gains in their learning due to the excellent provision which is matched meticulously to their individual needs.

Commentary

1. The school has a sharp focus on raising standards, and there is meticulous evaluation of pupils' and students' achievements as they move through the school. The rigorous assessment procedures demonstrate clearly the pupils' rate of progress. Students achieve very well in gaining a wide range of courses by the time they leave the FE department. Many students gain between seven and fourteen certificates through the ASDAN (Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Awards) and their files show a very good range of skills that have been developed over time.
2. The school and FE department and its co-location assists greatly in helping pupils and students to learn in an atmosphere that is appropriate for their age and maturity. Pupils at the secondary school learn in surroundings that are similar to those of their mainstream peers, with appropriate modifications, and there is an obvious distinction between school and the FE department that creates a strong sense of moving on and growing up. The FE department has a clear and distinct adult atmosphere for learning, where students are given increasing responsibilities where appropriate. They have lunch in the FE college canteen and in some instances, meet other students for courses. The courses are relevant and helpful in developing the students' life skills and enable them to be more fully prepared for adult life as a result.
3. Pupils achieve well overall in English, and students in FE achieve very well. They achieve particularly well in their speaking, listening and communications skills and activities are well matched to their individual needs. There is very effective use of drama to promote further those skills. Pupils' achievements in English in Years 7 – 9 could be even higher with more attention given to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy for Literacy. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT, though opportunities for its use across other subjects of the curriculum are not always developed fully. This means there are missed opportunities to practice their ICT skills and develop them more widely.

4. Pupils achieve very well in science, physical education and art and design because of the high quality teaching and very effective opportunities to develop skills in those areas. The strong focus on fitness and keeping as healthy as possible throughout the school and FE department has a direct impact on pupils' and students capacity to concentrate and make the most of their learning during the day. The high expectations in science ensure that pupils learn a range of scientific principles which are relevant and realistic to their needs. Achievement in art and design is greatly enhanced by a visiting artist, who has worked to achieve impressive self portraits with the pupils. The high quality of their efforts is displayed for everyone to enjoy, and creates a "gallery like" atmosphere for visitors.
5. Pupils and students with additional special needs have a meticulous programme tailored specifically, and matched precisely for them. They make rapid progress due to the high quality teaching and structured programme for managing their behaviour, and helping them to learn as effectively as possible. Even the most challenging pupils make obvious gains in their learning during lessons and over time. Resources are matched very well and staff take great care to ensure that pupils are helped to concentrate on an activity for increasing lengths of time over the week and term. The school makes considerable efforts, through its curriculum and the expertise of its staff, to pursue challenging, individual learning targets for these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the school and the students in the FE department are **very good**. Attendance is satisfactory, as is punctuality. Students' moral and social development is very good, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher sets exceptionally high expectations of how pupils and students will behave and all staff work as an excellent team to meet those aspirations.
- The school has a very carefully considered and practical pupils' charter that underpins the way that pupils and students are treated, thus making a considerable impact on attitudes and behaviour.
- All staff are highly professional in the way they relate to the pupils and students , who, in consequence, feel valued and respond positively in return. Exceptionally good relationships are at the heart of the school.
- Staff plan very effectively to meet the needs of pupils and students, and to cover eventualities; they are thus able to limit serious problems by nipping them in the bud.
- The school is continually working to develop pupils' and students' self confidence and to provide opportunities for them to take as much responsibility as possible in their lives.

Commentary

6. The headteacher and his staff care passionately about what they are doing for the pupils and students in their care; this commitment is reflected formally in the Hazel Court School Pupils' Charter. This is a one page document that encapsulates what the school is about. It is written from the pupils' point of view and, unlike many such "mission statements", it is a living text that underpins the school's work. It reflects respect for all the pupils and students as individuals and sets out high expectations. Staff model their response and actions on its principles, for example, being very aware not to talk about pupils in their presence and giving them opportunities to make their own choices. In this way, pupils are given the fullest encouragement to see themselves as part of this community and to behave in line with its expectations. The school works closely with parents to set individual targets for personal development, which underpin the staff's work in this area. The very little bullying is handled well by the school, and there have been no recent exclusions. The staff manage the sometimes challenging behaviour of pupils and students very well.

7. All staff are active in building excellent relationships with the pupils and students. Teachers and Teaching Assistants work seamlessly as teams, enabling them all to understand the needs of the young people and to respond to them in a consistent manner. Pupils know what to expect from adults in the school and this helps many of them to respond in appropriate ways. Staff know the pupils and students very well. This means that they can often encourage good behaviour by being aware of the potential for problems and re-directing pupils before difficulties arise. For example, during a class visit to a supermarket, the teacher knew one pupil might become agitated at going into the store and so had a backup plan ready, preventing disruptive behaviour and ensuring that the learning objectives of the trip were met for all.

8. Pupils trust the adults who work with them and feel secure and confident throughout the school. They are interested in the life of the school and participate as fully as they can in activities. They are proud of their work displayed around the school and are prepared to do appropriate jobs, such as taking attendance registers to the office. They can be trusted, at their level of working, with school resources and staff are adept at providing the right level of support to help them develop their own skills and confidence. For example, in a food technology lesson, staff tailored their support so that pupils did the maximum to measure, mix and heat their food. The pupils have high quality relationships with each other, being aware of the needs and limitations of others. For example, when one pupil goes from the room for personal reasons, others in the class are aware they have gone and are concerned about their return. They are tolerant when others demand staff attention, or adversely affect their own work. When given the opportunity, many of the pupils relate well with others outside the school. For example, two boys in a PE lesson with the mainstream secondary school pupils were happy to work alongside them, and one, in particular, was confident in engaging in conversation with the others in the class. Opportunities for inclusion both with the co-located school and FE College contribute very significantly to the personal development of the pupils and students involved. Students in the school's FE department are given more responsibilities in line with their capabilities and maturity and they respond very well to them.

9. The school helps its pupils to develop their curiosity and imagination. For example, when students were designing personal logos, staff encouraged them to think about what they themselves stood for and to then adapt the model logos from the Internet to their own ideas and values. The school provides a useful session each day when pupils are encouraged to consider spiritual values and they are encouraged to consider different celebrations and beliefs, such as the Chinese New Year. Teachers plan lessons to provide pupils with purposeful experiences from a range of cultures, including the preparation and eating of foods, hearing and participating in their music and studying and copying their art. This work extends across a range of topics studied by pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. The school journey to Spain, shared with mainstream pupils from the Causeway School, is a particularly good opportunity for pupils to learn about another culture and to develop socially. In Years 10 and 11, the ASDAN "Transition Challenge" curriculum covers 5 modules - independent living skills, self advocacy, positive self image, personal development and personal autonomy – that prepare pupils well for the challenges they will face in later life.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.6%
National data	9.1%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7%
National data	0.6%

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

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	90	1	1
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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

The school provides a **very good** quality education for pupils and students.

The leadership and management of the headteacher ensures there is a very clear focus on raising standards further.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **very good** overall and as a result, pupils and students learn very effectively, and achieve very well over time.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good teaching in the FE department enables students to gain a wide range of nationally recognised courses.
- Very good assessment procedures and excellent use of assessment information ensures teachers' planning is tailored carefully for pupils' individual needs.
- Very good teaching in science, physical education and art and design ensures that pupils reach standards well beyond those usually seen for their level of special needs.
- Teaching for pupils with additional special educational needs, including those with ASD is exemplary and enables very challenging behaviour to be managed most effectively.
- Teaching Assistants make a strong and very positive contribution to the pupils' learning; the strong teamwork with teachers enables pupils to learn more readily.
- The excellent relationships between pupils, students and adults ensures their needs are understood swiftly, and any barriers to learning removed where possible.

Commentary

10. Staff in the FE department have wide ranging expertise that is utilised fully for the overall benefit of the students. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and enable students to follow a diverse range of courses. Teaching is creative and sets an adult atmosphere for learning where students are encouraged to become more mature in their outlook and behaviour. Students have wide ranging files that demonstrate their learning and show how teachers have marked, and recorded the students' learning and achievements carefully over time.

Example of outstanding practice

All students and staff in the FE department join in regular sessions of keep fit, and exercise together for the first 35 minutes, three times a week. Students, whatever their abilities and limitations are helped to move more easily, and those with the greatest mobility are challenged to become fitter and more healthy in the process. Those students with more limited mobility are given individual support and enabled to gain further movement. The structure of the lesson is lively and dynamic, and matched closely to students' wide ranging needs. Students and staff have an excellent start whereby students are more alert and ready to learn having exercised their bodies. The expertise of the PE specialist, and the overall enthusiasm for the subject, is infectious and ensures that everyone has a healthy start to their school day on a regular basis.

11. There are wide ranging and very effective assessment procedures, and relevant information is gathered to set precise and individual targets for all pupils and students. Targets address all areas of learning, and include appropriately communications and personal qualities. Assessment strategies are very clear and ensure that the targets are being addressed consistently during the course of any given lesson. The teachers and teaching assistants record progress meticulously, and the information is used systematically for the next steps of learning. Assessment arrangements for pupils with additional special needs is a particularly strong feature where staff continually check, observe and note pupils' verbal, non verbal and facial responses in order to adjust their pace, type of activity or teaching method.
12. Teaching in science, physical education and art and design sets high expectations of what the pupils could realistically achieve and learn overall. Activities in science, for example, are very well matched to the pupils' needs and resources are used very effectively to enhance the lessons. The high quality art and design work is a tribute to pupils and adults alike, who have worked for example, to produce very realistic self portraits, which in turn, are recognisable and realistic for pupils to discuss and keep for life.
13. Teaching and learning for pupils with additional special needs has many excellent features. Lessons are highly structured and every team member knows precisely their role. Staff work seamlessly in response to the pupils' changing moods, emotions and behaviour. All actions are deliberate, carefully chosen and designed to maximise the pupils' learning, well being and safety. Staff maintain a very positive atmosphere for learning, and follow a carefully organised plan, whilst maintaining extensive flexibility to meet the changing demands of individual pupils.

Example of outstanding practice

Teaching in the special class for pupils with severely challenging behaviour is excellent. All aspects of teaching are characterised by a very strong determination that all pupils will achieve. Teaching is based upon very clear, well thought out approaches. For pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, teachers plan learning activities in very fine detail, making very good use of their knowledge of each pupil. They successfully support their teaching with very good resources, such as light, sound and tactile equipment in sensory rooms that seek to promote learning through stimulating the pupils' senses. For pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, activities are planned in similarly very fine detail. Teachers are very skilled at encouraging pupils to learn in an environment with limited distractions, where information is imparted in a carefully structured way so that it can be understood by pupils who, for example, have great difficulty processing complex verbal communication. These teachers and teaching assistants teach very successfully by using restricted language supported by visual prompts. In particular, staff are highly skilled in managing extremely challenging behaviour, mostly anticipating likely situations, but using very well prepared strategies to deal effectively with any behaviour that occurs, so that pupils can continue with learning as soon as possible.

14. Teaching Assistants are very skilled and knowledgeable in their own right. They understand clearly their areas of responsibility and show much initiative throughout lessons, thus helping pupils and students learn more readily. They make a strong contribution to the pupils' care and well being that in turn helps pupils and students to be more at ease and comfortable to learn. They contribute regularly to the assessment of pupils and students and have valuable insights and observations that are added to the overall picture of pupils' achievements.

15. Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with pupils and students, which ensure their needs are known, understood and responded to swiftly. The relationships contribute directly to the pupils' learning as they are more confident and at ease in lessons and secure in their surroundings.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (8 %)	20 (38%)	18 (34%)	11 (20%)	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum provision across the school is **very good**. Opportunities for enrichment are good. The accommodation is excellent in the secondary school and FE department. Resources for learning are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The very good curriculum is a major strength and meets pupils' and students' needs very well.
- Provision to meet additional special educational needs is excellent and enables those pupils to make rapid gains in their learning.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good; pupils and students grow in confidence and maturity as a result.
- The programme for pupils and students aged 14 -19 years is very good, leading to high quality nationally recognised awards.
- The curriculum for English for pupils in Years 7-9 could be more effective with greater use of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy.
- The accommodation at the school and FE department is excellent, although provision for the specialist secondary class for pupils with ASD is poor.
- Resources for learning are very good and contribute very well to pupils' learning; there are currently missed opportunities to use ICT across other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

16. Staff have worked very hard to put a very effective curriculum in place this year. Since it is very relevant to the needs and abilities of pupils, it enables them to learn very well through many practical activities. Consequently, pupils' achievement is very good. Tasks are planned carefully for pupils' wide ranging needs. of different abilities. This approach is successful in helping all pupils and students to be fully included in school life.
17. Enrichment of the curriculum through clubs, visits, visitors and other experiences, such as the residential opportunities, is good. Transport arrangements create limitations to the provision for after-school clubs. However, the school has worked hard to provide lunchtime clubs for all pupils so that they can pursue their interests. A good range is offered and clubs are well attended. Additional enrichment is offered through the annual residential visit to Spain by Year 7 pupils in conjunction with the co-located mainstream school, which leads to some very good links and personal friendships that last well beyond the visit.
18. Provision to meet the additional special educational needs of pupils is excellent. The programme for pupils and students between the ages of 14 and 19 is a major strength. Very good efforts have been made to provide a suitable progression for pupils and students as they move through Years 10 to 14. This has led to a coherent programme that builds systematically on pupils' previous learning, and fully meets the needs of all the pupils and students, enabling very good nationally recognised awards to be gained by the time they leave. The very relevant

range of activities and the high quality support provided for each individual pupil and student means that they stay engaged in learning and very much enjoy the vocational and leisure experiences offered.

19. The English curriculum for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, whilst satisfactory overall, has scope for further development with the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy. This would, in turn, have the potential to strengthen the pupils' literacy skills and enhance their learning in the subject further.
20. The excellent provision for pupils who have additional special educational needs consists of a highly effective range of strategies that enable these pupils to access the school's curriculum. For the majority of these pupils, the curriculum is very effectively modified by teaching them in separate classes. This very successfully enables the use of specialist strategies, such as an emphasis on low stimulus, highly structured environments for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, or a high stimulus, sensory environment for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. A very high level of clarity about the curriculum aims for these pupils is achieved by dividing learning targets into those that are essential to learn and those that are more appropriately experienced. The curriculum planning is very well supported by advice and guidance from other professionals, such as the school-based physiotherapists, and the speech and language therapist provided by the local health trust. The curriculum for pupils, who have additional special educational needs, is greatly enhanced by the provision of extra activities, such as the recent art and design project using a local art group.
21. The accommodation for the vast majority of pupils and students who have additional special educational needs is excellent and pupils are helped to take part in activities by a very good range of supportive resources and apparatus such as lifting devices, communication aids and sensory equipment. The staff of class 6 makes very good use of poor accommodation.
22. The accommodation at the school and FE department is excellent. The shared site with the secondary school has brought very many benefits for both sets of pupils. Opportunities for integration into the mainstream site are good. Some joint practices between the two schools include a Year 7 visit to Spain each year. The benefits of this activity are still evident several months later as pupils talk about their greater understanding of each other. Mainstream pupils talked about their own feelings in supporting Hazel Court pupils in Spain and how real friendships had developed. Shared provision of some specialist rooms, such as for design and technology and the library, also bring many benefits and enhanced provision for both schools. The spacious rooms and specialist facilities are of very high quality, giving pupils a pride in their environment and ensuring they stay involved in their learning.
23. The accommodation for the specialist class for secondary pupils with ASD is poor. It is not fit for its purpose and impacts on pupils' opportunities to a broad and balanced curriculum. The rooms are cramped and the quality of the building is in a poor state of repair. The accommodation is in stark contrast to that elsewhere in the school and college. Staff make the best of the facilities and try to compensate for the weaknesses as far as possible.
24. Resources for learning are very good and highly relevant. The very good range of artefacts, games and books in subjects such as religious education, personal social and health education, humanities and the arts, contributes very well to pupils' achievements. Resources are used well to support learning, although during the inspection computers and ICT resources were rarely used. This impacted on pupils' achievement in ICT.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements to ensure students' care, welfare, health and safety are excellent. The school provides students with excellent support, advice and guidance and it involves them very well through seeking and acting upon their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are excellent relationships between staff and the young people, ensuring that each pupil has a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- Teachers and other staff know the pupils and students in great depth; they understand the needs of the individuals and respond swiftly to them.
- The school provides a very safe environment for pupils. Health and safety arrangements and child protection procedures are very good.
- The school seeks pupils' views on their own progress and activities as much as is feasible, whilst at the same time providing them and their parents with excellent, well-informed advice and guidance.
- There are good pupil and student councils that involve the students in the working of the school.

Commentary

25. Relationships between staff and pupils at all levels are a key strength of the school's provision. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well as individuals at a number of different levels, and this helps them to work with them in ways that will help them progress. For one pupil, for example, they know that singing is the best way to distract from self-harming tendencies. The way in which teachers and teaching assistants work together so well is to the considerable benefit of pupils. The highly professional approach of staff means that the school's aim, for an informal atmosphere but also a challenging learning environment, is achieved; there is a relaxed productive environment without tensions. There is an obvious rapport and mutual respect between the young people and the staff. The vast majority of parents believe that the staff do encourage pupils to become mature and independent and that a positive ethos permeates the school.
26. The school's detailed and well-structured individual education plans provide highly relevant information about the pupils' individual needs and targets, information that is not locked away but referred to and used by adults on a daily basis. This means that staff have the knowledge to tailor the activities to the individual. For example, in a hydrotherapy session, the teaching assistant referred to the pupils' notes in order to structure the session to exercise particular muscles. Each pupil has an entirely individual set of educational and personal aims, drawn up by the class teacher but involving parents, teaching assistants, school management and any specialists supporting the individual. These targets are highly relevant and enable the staff to provide the well-informed support that pupils need. Staff are highly effective in meeting the varied needs of pupils, including the management of the very high level of medical needs presented by some of them. The staff of class 6 manage the complex needs of their pupils exceptionally well and provide excellent support for them.
27. Pupils and students are encouraged to take as much responsibility as possible for their own lives. For example, in the dining hall pupils, who can, are encouraged to collect their food independently. Lessons are punctuated with choices for pupils to make, even when communication is difficult. This is accentuated for the students in the FE department, where the very move to a different environment on a college campus emphasises that these students move on in the same way as their peers in mainstream education. The school provides very good support and guidance for students as they make the move to the college site. Once in the FE department, guidance is even more directed than in the main school towards helping them cope in the wider world that they will soon enter. The school is active in helping parents and students decide on future provision when the time comes to leave fulltime education. The school councils are active and their deliberations are valued and acted upon by the school management team where possible.
28. The school provides a very safe environment. A full health and safety audit was carried out last year by a specialist consultant; the few areas identified for improvement, mainly paperwork,

have been largely addressed. The headteacher has received comprehensive training in health and safety and the school has a good system of risk assessments in place. There are policies in place to guide staff on procedures in necessary areas, including specialist areas such as lifting pupils. Child protection procedures are fully in place; staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and there is appropriate liaison with local social services departments.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** links with parents and very good partnerships with the local community. There are very good partnerships with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The co-location of the school's two phases with the Causeway School and Sussex Downs College respectfully is a huge advantage for its students and their integration with mainstream education.
- The school places considerable emphasis on its partnership with parents and makes great efforts to involve them in their child's education.
- The school has excellent communication with its parents. The information provided to parents is wide ranging and comprehensive and gives them a detailed understanding of what is being taught and how their children are achieving.
- The school makes considerable use of its local community to enrich the learning experiences of its pupils and students.
- Parents are very satisfied and supportive of the school.

Commentary

29. Hazel Court has an active policy of including its pupils with other schools or the wider community whenever possible. The co-location of the school's two main sites with mainstream education providers is an exciting development that opens up enormous possibilities. The close integration of the main school into the buildings of Causeway School means that Hazel Court pupils are able to access the specialist facilities offered by the secondary school, such as design technology rooms and computer suites. This is enhanced by the chance to share educational experiences with Causeway pupils. These opportunities range from a shared sports day, going with Year 7 Causeway pupils on their school visit to Spain, to individual pupils integrating with specific lessons in the Causeway school. A member of Hazel court staff has recently taken on the responsibility of organising and developing such links, which can be enormously productive. For example, two Hazel Court boys joined Causeway boys in a PE lesson; attempting to throw the discus is an experience they would not normally get, as well as giving them the opportunity to socialise with a whole new group of people. At present, there are opportunities for more than one third of the pupils to be included in lessons with their mainstream peers, covering a wide range of subjects. The experience is not all one way; all Causeway pupils get a tour of the Hazel Court School and working alongside pupils of the school must change their attitudes towards disability and difference. Similar considerations apply to the college site. Although a great deal has been done, the sheer extent of the possibilities means that the potential to do more remains very exciting.
30. The school works very hard to involve parents in their children's education, a task made more difficult by the fact that many live at a considerable distance and almost all rely on school transport to bring their offspring to the school. Parents benefit from the school's open door policy, whereby they can come in and see their child being taught at any time. Telephones in each classroom mean that teachers can usually talk to parents even during the school day, whilst home school diaries are used well to let parents know how the day at school has gone for their child. Parents are actively involved in annual reviews and the setting of targets, where those relating to behaviour or personal development often incorporate areas suggested by parents to improve life at home.

31. The annual reports to parents, called school advice, are thorough and comprehensive documents which give parents a clear and very personal picture of each child. They provide a detailed overview about the curriculum covered and targets for the future, as well as providing attainment against national curriculum levels or progress ("P") scales. More general information about the school is provided by a well-designed and up-to-date web site. There are also regular interesting newsletters, and a comprehensive annual report from the governors. The prospectus gives a good picture of the school.
32. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school and the quality of care and education their children are receiving. They appreciate the quality of the school's management and the way that good teaching is helping their children learn and develop. There is an active Friends of Hazel Court School Association who organise social and fundraising events; they were extremely successful in contributing towards the cost of a new hydrotherapy pool for pupils.
33. The school has very good links with the wider community, with the school minibuses used extensively to take pupils out of the school into the real world. Examples include going to the supermarket to buy food for a meal, helping at coffee mornings at homes for the elderly and helping at play groups. Links with mainstream and other special schools provide sports competitions, musical activities, theatrical and social events. Pupils from local secondary schools and students from local colleges come into the school on community and vocational placements. The FE department, in addition to helping its students access courses in the main college, also arranges work experience placements with the cooperation of local schools and businesses – 14 students currently participate in these schemes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is **very effective**. The headteacher's excellent leadership and the very good management, underpinned by a very strong senior management team has a sharp focus on helping pupils to achieve as well as possible.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher has brought about visionary and pioneering facilities and provision for pupils and students.
- Governors are very ably led, and very effective in holding the school accountable for its work.
- Staff teams are exceptionally strong, and although spread across three sites, maintain a clear sense of unity, cohesion and common purpose.
- The senior management team, including the deputy headteacher have complementary skills and make a very strong contribution to the school's continuing development.
- The subject leadership of English and mathematics is currently only temporary and not sustainable under present arrangements.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and his vision and inspiration has transformed the school from a small all age special school to its current position. Hazel Court School and FE department's facilities and provision are at the forefront of special educational needs, and pioneering in terms of including pupils and students with their mainstream peers. The co-located facilities have been driven forward by the headteacher and pursued with tenacity and determination through many stages of planning, consultation, building and re location. There is no complacency as plans are already in place to develop further provision for students between 19 and 25 years on the college site.
35. The very able leadership of the chair and vice chair of governors have added much stability and continuity through the school's transition and transformation. They achieve an appropriate balance of support and challenge to the school's work, and bring a wide range of relevant

expertise in their own right. Governors have a sharp and comprehensive overview of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. There is a very useful overlap of governance with the mainstream secondary school as the vice chair is on the governing body of both schools. Governors take a keen and active interest in school life and visit regularly. They are informed and aware of current issues and gain first hand information that enables them to probe independently the areas of school life they wish to pursue. Finances are tracked meticulously and there is an in depth understanding of the use and allocation of resources.

36. The very effective management of the school across three separate and distinct sites means that staff convey a genuine sense of unity and shared purpose. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are rigorous in their planning and use of time, and ensure that all sites have some management time allocated to them over the period of a week. In addition, staff have useful opportunities over the course of a year to see and experience provision on other sites. This adds further to their understanding of the bigger school and FE provision, and helps them see beyond their own immediate area of responsibility.
37. The senior management, including the deputy headteacher and senior teachers of the secondary school, and FE departments have strong and complementary skills. They all have a comprehensive overview of the school and college and liaise regularly. There are rigorous lines of accountability and a climate where professional practice is discussed, ideas shared, and new strategies adopted for the overall benefit of the pupils. There is systematic monitoring of the school's progress and a regular cycle of evaluation whereby the school reviews the impact of its actions on the pupils and students. Leaders provide excellent role models in their own practice, setting high expectations for continued improvement.
38. Currently the subject leadership for English and mathematics is being held temporarily by the deputy headteacher. This is not a sustainable position for two core areas of work. Although the deputy headteacher is doing a good job under the circumstances, these arrangements cannot ensure the required time is given to developing the subjects in the longer term.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,719,398	Balance from previous year	8,631
Total expenditure	1,724,398	Balance carried forward to the next	nil
Expenditure per pupil	17,244*		

*It should be noted that the overall income reflects some unique factors. The county resource for pupils with challenging behaviour is included in the overall budget. This also includes students who could not be placed in residential schools, and require significant additional staffing in order to be placed at Hazel Court School. The expenditure per pupil, for the vast majority of pupils at Hazel Court is therefore much less than that identified above**

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

What is the effectiveness of the Further Education Department?

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The Further Education department prepares students very well for the next stage of their lives.
- The excellent facilities and adult learning environment helps students to grow towards greater maturity and independence.
- The co location of the FE department has some good links with the college on the same site, though the opportunities are currently underdeveloped.
- The very good teaching and learning enables students to achieve very well; students achieve a wide range of nationally recognised certificates for their course work.

- The very strong team work between teachers and special support assistants enables students to access their learning more readily.

Commentary

39. Students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education because the curriculum is very relevant to their individual needs. There is a strong emphasis upon developing the students' skills for life, as well as enabling them to gain a wide range of nationally recognised courses.
40. The excellent facilities and appropriate adult environment gives students an exceptionally high quality atmosphere for learning. They arrive to an adult campus surrounded by other young people of their own age and move around the site for various activities, including lunch time routines. This gives them a realistic and genuine sense of learning as students, and moving away from school life since the college is some distance away from the school.
41. There are huge opportunities for students to be involved more fully with the college. Currently, the college is undergoing significant changes in personnel and senior management. The established links have changed and Hazel Court FE opportunities have reduced as a result. There is scope for identifying new professional relationships and more courses for students.
42. The very good teaching is characterised by high expectations and very clear understanding of students' individual needs. The teaching for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties is exemplary in its quality of care for their needs and in helping students overcome barriers to learning. The FE team work is very effective and all staff work seamlessly for the overall benefit of the students. They know their roles and the complex and changing needs of the students. All adults make a significant contribution, for example the premises manager takes the time and effort to support students in work experience based in college, and builds strong relationships in the process.

Inclusion

43. The school has unique facilities for pupils and students that is pioneering in terms of co-located provision for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex needs. The accommodation, that has been designed by the school staff, and tailored specifically to include pupils on the same site as their mainstream peers creates a secondary school environment, with the appropriate skills and resources for pupils. Pupils from the mainstream school are able to gain appropriate support if required and, in some instances, come to Hazel Court for specific sessions. This is a good example of including pupils from the mainstream into specialist support in a straightforward and efficient manner.

Example of outstanding practice

Pupils attending the partner mainstream secondary school gain much valuable insight into the issues of disability and special educational needs that often has a profound impact on their own outlook and understanding of inclusion. Mainstream pupils starting secondary school in Year 7 have a programme of induction which explains the Hazel Court School provision and gives them a tour of the school, and insight into the specialist provision. They learn from a young age the importance of respect and consideration for people with disability, and many show tolerance and understanding of disability issues beyond their years because of the school's co-location. Some pupils, for example, in the mainstream school have designed resources as part of their design and technology courses that assist pupils at Hazel Court. The co-location at Hazel Court School and FE department is doing much to raise awareness of disability and, in turn, educate young people to respect and include one another regardless of individual differences or disabilities. This model is a powerful tool for such education to take place.

44. The inclusion opportunities are managed very efficiently, and pupils are supported very effectively as they learn alongside their mainstream peers. The staffing shortage and changes at the mainstream secondary school, and the restructuring of senior staff at the college has

meant that established links have changed, and opportunities for inclusion between the mainstream school and college, given the facilities, are more limited at present, than could be expected.

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

Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements are made in relation to the provision for each subject. Within this context, provision refers to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the curriculum, the resources and accommodation and any other significant aspects.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH

Inspectors were able to see lessons in all Year groups as well as looking at pupils' and students' work.

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' achievements in speaking, listening and communicating are very good, due to the very good provision. Students achieve very well in English by the time they leave the FE department.
- Teaching is good overall, and very good for students in FE; there is a thorough understanding of each pupil and student's individual needs.
- Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and are very relevant to their needs; this enables pupils and students with additional special needs to learn very effectively.
- The National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 3 has not been fully implemented and this has an impact on pupils' achievement in literacy in that stage.
- Leadership is satisfactory, though currently only temporary and not sustainable in the longer term.
- The accommodation and resources are high quality and support the pupils' learning very effectively.

Commentary

45. Pupils and students across the school achieve very well in speaking, listening and communicating in almost all lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The high quality focus placed on communication, including some very good individual targets, help pupils to make very good gains in this area of learning. Pupils enjoy talking about their own experiences and are encouraged by some good questioning and very good use of praise so that they grow in confidence as they move through the school. Some exciting drama activities promote very good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their speaking skills. Very effective use of symbols and other aids to communication ensure that pupils with additional special needs also make very good progress and achieve very well.
46. Achievement in literacy is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9. The English curriculum is good and very relevant to the abilities of the pupils and there are many opportunities for them to share a broad range of texts. They study aspects of classic text, such as 'Macbeth' by Shakespeare, as well as stories by authors such as Roald Dahl. Their writing is often linked to their study of text. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 have written good first-person accounts of their imagined lives as a wife of Henry VIII or as the executioner. They have used simple print, ICT or symbols to express their views and describe their feelings well. During some lessons the youngest pupils do not always have sufficient time to write about their experiences. Sometimes, there is too little focus on improving writing and recording skills and this inhibits the amount of reading and recording that takes place. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 write for a range of purposes and use books well to find information for themselves.
47. Achievement in literacy is good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils benefit from the good transition challenges that are set for them so that they are constantly recording their ideas and improving

their skills. They use their literacy skills well in many other subjects as they search for information and record their ideas. For example, they have recorded useful information about the many visits that they undertake, using photographs, symbols and writing to answer questions. They discuss aspects of different texts well focusing on characters and suggesting features that might represent a feeling of 'anger', 'joy' or 'fear'. Some good use of vocabulary was evident in one lesson where pupils listened to some very good story reading and suggested different words that might describe the character. They found humour and enjoyment in the text and made predictions about what might happen next.

48. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11, and very good in the FE department. Teaching in communication skills, speaking and listening is very good in all year groups and leads to very good learning. The very good communication targets that teachers set are a major strength enabling systematic improvements over time. Teaching Assistants are used very effectively and make their own sharp observations of pupils' achievements that contribute to the overall assessment of learning. Teaching in literacy in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Teachers mainly focus on whole-class lessons and too little attention is paid to enabling pupils to work individually or in groups and find things out for themselves. Some good practice was observed where pupils were encouraged to work individually on their own tasks and then share their findings with others. In this lesson, they improved their reading and writing skills and achieved well. Teaching in literacy in Years 10 and 11 is good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and make effective use of a wide range of literature to encourage enjoyment and understanding of text. Consequently, pupils are keen to work and achieve well. Teaching in FE is very good and highly relevant to students. They learn to use their literacy skills in a variety of practical contexts and record their work carefully. All students have extensive portfolios with many examples of their literacy skills developed very effectively over time.
49. Pupils' achievement is closely linked to the good curriculum that ensures activities are appropriate to abilities and interests. Clear individual targets for communication and literacy help pupils to make effective gains in learning the next steps. Activities are relevant and seek to extend pupils' knowledge of literature and of social communication.
50. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy for Literacy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 has not been fully implemented. Not enough training has been given to ensure that staff are aware of the teaching and learning implications to raise achievement further. Because of this, achievement in these year groups is not as good as it is in Years 10 and 11, where the approach is very relevant, and where staff expertise is secure. In some lessons in Years 7 to 9, this means that the pupils' skills in literacy are not developed as well as they are in Years 10 and 11.
51. Leadership of English is satisfactory. There is no overall subject leader in the secondary school, although plans are in place to improve this situation. English has recently been maintained well by the deputy headteacher as acting subject leader, but there has been insufficient focus on raising achievement in literacy in Years 7 - 9. The leadership role is not sustainable in the longer term with current arrangements.
52. The high quality accommodation and resources for English play an important role in the subject's success, as the pupils' and students' learning is helped by appropriate objects, books and equipment that support their understanding of the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Literacy skills are well used in other subjects of the curriculum. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils have used symbols to write about the life of the artist Vincent van Gogh and to design posters about safety in design and technology. They have written up their science experiments, using print and symbols, giving instructions on "how to melt jelly", for example. There is limited evidence of the use of ICT to support writing or present findings in all areas of the school. In Years 10 and 11, literacy skills are well used in all aspects of the ASDAN "Transition Challenge" curriculum to record work.

MATHEMATICS

Inspectors were able to see lessons in all Year groups as well as looking at pupils' and students' work.

Pupils' achievement in mathematics is **good** overall; students in the FE department achieve very well by the time they leave.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' planning is effective and ensures that pupils learn well; pupils with additional special needs and students in FE achieve very well.
- The relationships between staff teams and pupils are excellent and enable good learning; teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to this subject. Their behaviour is very good and assists their learning.
- The use of ICT to develop learning is not well developed.
- The subject is well managed, but the subject leader lacks time to sustain this responsibility and develop further the Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- Students in the FE department achieve very well in mathematics; their skills are developed very effectively and used in a range of practical situations that prepare them for life.

Commentary

54. All pupils and students are interested in their number work, follow directions carefully and persevere with their tasks. The younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 use number cards effectively to show their answers to mental arithmetic questions. They demonstrate the speed at which they can work out the order of numbers and take pride in their success. By the end of Year 9 they are able to use their basic skills in money to budget how much to spend on drink and biscuits from a weekly allowance of fifty pence. This practical application of number knowledge, including many aspects of mathematics such as addition, subtraction and division into one activity is an important contributory factor to the good progress made by pupils. By the end of Year 11 pupils achieve well in relation to their capability. They respond with confidence to questions on time and can position hands on a clock accurately. More able pupils understand the different ways time is expressed, for example, 9.20 or 20 past 9 and can identify key times of the school day such as break and home time and their coursework contributes towards the ASDAN accreditation. Pupils with the most complex needs achieve very well. They feel, hear and track the movement of objects presented, enabling them to develop an awareness of their physical properties. Most can grasp and release their grip of a rubber ball and a few learn to anticipate their turn and recognise a photograph of themselves on the side of a dice.
55. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 – 11, and on occasions very good in Year 11 where there is a fast pace and effective level of challenge. Teaching in the FE department is very good and closely and carefully matched to the students' needs. Activities are adapted very appropriately to ensure students use their mathematical skills in many practical situations and thus prepare them more fully for life. Teachers target the work very well to the stage the pupil is at with the result that learning is good and most pupils move on at an appropriate rate in their understanding. Teachers and special support assistants plan and work very effectively together in skilled teaching teams. This includes a strong team approach to assessment and observations of pupils' achievements. As a consequence, there are smooth flowing lessons and a consistency of approach. Lesson plans are detailed with clear objectives and assessment criteria so that each member of the teaching team can support the pupils, who then focus on their tasks. Relationships in class are excellent. Pupils respect and trust their teachers and special support assistants, and know they are valued and the work they produce is appreciated. The appropriate focus on communication skills in signing, concrete objects, pictures and photographs make certain that all pupils are included in the lessons, and can participate. Some

pupils have used their computers to record data but ICT is not sufficiently developed in mathematics. Where teaching was no more than satisfactory, whilst the work was matched to the pupils' level, the pace of lessons and the challenge were limited and lesson time was not set aside for the teacher to sum up and pupils to reflect on what they had learnt and celebrate achievements.

56. The responsibility for subject leadership is good but includes management of another core subject and whole school areas of responsibility and is not sustainable in the longer term in order to develop mathematics further and use of ICT. The assessment system is very good. As a result, pupils' and students' performance is closely tracked and individual targets precisely set. There is full coverage of the National Curriculum and the provision of mathematics has improved well since the last inspection.
57. Students in the FE department have very wide ranging opportunities to develop further their mathematical skills in practical everyday situations. They are encouraged to be aware of the time, organise themselves into groups where possible and measure, weigh and count when preparing food. An excellent example of this was displayed during the weekly lunch activity, where students prepare jacket potatoes with a range of fillings to sell, where they have to make a list, decide quantities of food, budget, and allocate sufficient time to prepare and cook in time for a restaurant style lunch for others. They have to use money and provide correct change as well as ensure there is limited waste in order to maximise their profits. This activity has many benefits and prepares students for a range of real life circumstances.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. The opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are good, and these have been identified in curriculum plans. Teachers encourage pupils to use their numeracy skills and understanding, for example, to weigh and measure ingredients when preparing food, and when drawing designs during a project within the design and technology department in the attached mainstream school. Opportunities are well used in classes to ask pupils to sequence the order of activities for the day and to sequence numbers in practical situations, for example, to tell the time.

SCIENCE

Three science lessons were seen during the inspection. Additional evidence was obtained from planning documents, classroom records and samples of pupils' work.

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective leadership ensures that all pupils benefit from a well planned programme of topics that encompass all aspects of scientific learning.
- Teachers' high expectations and detailed lesson planning enable all pupils to achieve well.
- Highly specialised teaching enables pupils and students with additional special educational needs to achieve exceptionally well.

Commentary

59. Very good subject leadership ensures that the science curriculum is adapted successfully, so that it is accessible to pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. The result is a very good programme of school-produced topics for pupils in Years 7 - 9. In order to meet the different learning needs of pupils and students aged 14 to 19, a further, good quality range of practical science topics is available, that is appropriate for the age range of pupils and students. These form part of a nationally published programme leading to a recognised award. All topics are supported by a very good range of centrally held resources. Although there is no specialist

classroom for science, the high quality of class bases and the range of additional areas such as the sensory room provide very good accommodation for the subject.

60. The subject leader very successfully ensures that the curriculum is followed and makes a good contribution towards the further development of teaching skills by observing and working alongside colleagues in their lessons. This has effectively maintained and developed the standard of teaching through changes to the curriculum and to the school itself since the previous inspection and has the potential to improve the quality of provision further.
61. As a result of very good teaching, pupils of all ages achieve very well in science. The most essential component of this very effective teaching is the determination of teachers and teaching assistants that all pupils will engage in learning activities, despite their learning difficulties. These high expectations are realised through very good, detailed planning that breaks down learning into very fine steps. This is helped by an innovative two-stage planning procedure that clarifies for each pupil the difference between essential learning that has to be achieved quickly, and desirable learning that is achieved gradually through experiencing a broad range of scientific activities. Special support assistants play a key role in assessing the pupils and contributing their own observations into the mix.
62. The teaching of science is practical and encourages pupil achievement through very good use of activities that stimulate their interest and arouse their senses. For example, they plant and care for cress seeds to study how living things grow. They experience forces through feeling the effects of air blown onto them by fans and hairdryers, study the properties of light through projectors in the sensory room and change the properties of materials, such as chocolate and jelly, in food technology lessons. All staff are aware of the finest of responses pupils make to these activities and keep very good records of all achievements. Teachers make very good use of this information to plan further activities that build upon the pupils' existing knowledge and understanding.
63. Pupils who have additional special educational needs achieve exceptionally well in science when taking into account the extra barriers to learning they face. Very good strategies are used by teachers to engage pupils in learning and these are appropriately varied in relation to individual learning needs. For example, a lesson on forces for pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties stimulated the pupils' senses and made learning exciting. Alternatively, the same lesson content for a class of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders was delivered with carefully attention to the learning environment and strategic use of resources, with more emphasis on visual rather than tactile learning and by controlled use of spoken language by the staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Inspectors were able to see lessons in all Year groups as well as looking at pupils' and students' work.

Pupils' achievement across the school is **satisfactory** and the school makes appropriate provision for all pupils of all attainment levels.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an improvement in the quality and quantity of hardware and software to enhance pupils' learning.
- Use of ICT in other subjects to promote pupils' learning and achievement is not sufficiently systematic.
- Recent staff training and development planning has been carried out well.
- The assessment of what pupils learn is good and informs what they do next.
- Technical difficulties in accessing ICT programs limit opportunities for pupils and reduce the confidence of staff.

Commentary

64. The school has improved the quality and quantity of learning resources since the last inspection. All classrooms and some other rooms have computers for pupils' and students' use. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 can use a range of equipment including digital cameras, dictaphones and tape players and make good progress. They take photographs of each other using a zoom lens, and conduct interviews holding a microphone, and learn to operate the volume and pause buttons on equipment.. The school has purchased an interactive whiteboard and pupils can identify and point to an image of themselves on the screen. A few can touch a directional arrow in a sequence and watch as their face moves across the screen in either direction or diagonally. There are plans to increase the number of interactive white boards, but, as yet, not all teachers use the interactive whiteboard to effectively support pupils' learning.
65. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 make satisfactory progress in developing their word-processing skills and producing menus and documents for their course work files. They are confident in the use of the internet for research and use word processing and clip art to produce work. Lower attaining pupils understand that pressing a switch creates a response on the computer screen, for example, a musical sound.
66. The use of ICT for pupils with communication difficulties is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the use of the sensory room and use the equipment well such as bubble tubes, fibre optic lights and switches to help stimulate movement. Teachers and support assistants make good use of a symbol vocabulary as an aid to communication .Overall, pupils do not have sufficient planned opportunities to use and practise their ICT skills in either specific lessons or in other subjects.
67. Leadership and management are good because the temporary Fulbright exchange teacher is supporting staff well and has a clear view of the way forward. Monitoring and planning of the subject is now developing well and this shows good progress from the time of the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory. Assessment is good and teachers use ICT well for planning, setting targets and recording achievements. Where ICT is taught, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good especially where there is confidence in the use and application of ICT equipment. There is a technician who effectively supports the development of a computer network . Occasional technical failures and difficulties in staff accessing programs on the network limit pupils' opportunities and diminish teachers' confidence. Appropriately, the co-ordinator has purchased a good range of resources and plans further staff training on the use of whiteboards and the use of ICT in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is underdeveloped. The school is aware of the need to develop this further and training is planned for next term. Lower attaining pupils use Big Macs to 'speak' and symbols and pictures to provide clues to 'time' such as a picture of a knife and fork to symbolise dinner time. The use of digital cameras to record work and significant achievements is good and whilst this is usually by staff pupils develop their skills well in the use of this equipment.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Inspectors observed one lesson of geography. A limited amount of the pupils' work was sampled for both subjects.

69. Insufficient evidence was gained during the inspection to make an overall judgement on the provision for geography and history. A scrutiny of the planning documents show that pupils experience a range of topics relevant to each subject, for example the Victorians in history, and weather and climate in geography. It is clear from the schemes of work that there is effective organisation and modification of the National Curriculum to meet the individual needs of all pupils. The coordinator monitors both subjects through classroom observation of teaching and

learning. Some pupils from Hazel Court have useful opportunities to learn geography alongside their peers in the mainstream school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Inspectors saw three lessons in Years 7, 8 and 10 and were able to look at pupils' work.

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses;

- Pupils achieve well in lessons due to good teaching.
- A good RE curriculum that is very appropriate to pupils' abilities.
- Subject leadership is good and ensures that the subject has a clear direction and priorities for further improvement.

Commentary

70. Pupils across the school achieve well in religious education. They benefit from a good range of learning opportunities, which enables them to learn about different faiths through many practical experiences. For example, many have visited local churches as well as a Buddhist temple and a synagogue. The good range of artefacts also helps them to learn about the uniqueness of some aspects of religion and to value these articles and treat them with care. In Year 7, pupils enjoyed a visual story of Noah. Because of good teaching, in which the interactive whiteboard was used to develop understanding of 'floods', pupils quickly understood the significance and meaning of the story. Planning indicates that pupils have good opportunities to build on this understanding by learning about similar stories in other religions, thus broadening their knowledge.
71. The quality of teaching in religious education is good and enables pupils to learn effectively. Teachers make effective use of the curriculum and of the good resources to enable pupils to make good gains in understanding about the different religions that they study. In Year 10, the good artefacts linked to Buddhism kept pupils focused and helped them to understand the differences in lifestyles between Buddhists and Christians.
72. The range of learning opportunities is good and provides many practical experiences for pupils to develop their understanding of lifestyles that are different from their own. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and promotes good awareness, extending language and communication skills well.
73. Subject leadership is good. There is a clear overview of provision and good support is provided to other staff. The development of the good curriculum for religious education has been a major focus in recent months. It is successfully promoting pupils' knowledge and awareness of religious issues, lifestyles and cultures.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART & DESIGN

No lessons were seen in art and design, and one lesson was observed in design and technology. Some evidence in art and design was obtained through discussions and from examples of pupils' work.

Commentary

74. The very high value placed on art and design is immediately apparent upon entering the school. Pupils' art work, of extremely high quality, is exhibited with pride on virtually every

available wall surface. Much of this is the product of the school's collaboration with a local art group, particularly the pupils' self-portraits, which have been featured on a local television news programme.

75. The work on display is a tribute to the high expectations held of the pupils, many of whom have additional special educational needs that make the production of such art work highly challenging. The self-portrait display very successfully creates a positive impression to pupils of belonging to the school community. Art and design is planned for very effectively and ensures that pupils' and students' skills are developed systematically.
76. One lesson in food technology was observed taking place with pupils in the mainstream school. The activities were appropriately matched to the pupils' needs and purposeful in preparing them towards greater independence.

MUSIC

One lesson was observed in music.

No judgement is being made about provision in music as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. From that lesson and from discussions and scrutiny of planning, it is evident that music plays an important role in the development of pupils' spiritual, social and cultural awareness. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils were observed listening to Mexican music as they learned about life in Mexico.

77. Regular visits from musicians enable pupils to hear and join in with a range of music-making activities. Annual concerts with other schools promote social activities and help to develop musical skills. Leadership of music is good and there is a good, newly-planned curriculum that is very relevant to the needs and abilities of the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Four physical education lessons were seen during the inspection. Additional evidence was obtained from planning documents, classroom records and photographs in pupils' records of achievement folders.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because activities are very well matched to the needs of the pupils and promotes personal improvement.
- The curriculum ensures that all pupils take part in a very good range of physical and sporting activities.
- Students in FE have excellent opportunities to exercise and therefore keep as healthy and fit as possible in the process.

Commentary

78. The achievements in physical education of pupils in Years 7 - 9 are good and those of pupils and students in Years 10 – 13 years are very good. The achievements of some pupils in Years 7 -9 seen during the inspection are occasionally only satisfactory as the pace and challenge are not as rigorous as elsewhere. In the best lessons seen, particularly in the FE department, this match is excellent and fully includes all pupils regardless of their individual learning and physical difficulties.
79. The very good teaching is typified by the encouragement of all pupils to improve upon their personal best performance. This is very apparent in an athletics lesson, where pupils try to

reduce their personal time running over a set distance. When they go on to run in relay teams they remain satisfied with improving their team's personal best and give enthusiastic support to each other, including members of the opposite team.

80. Physical education lessons for pupils who have additional needs are enhanced by very good support and advice from the school based physiotherapists and by provision of additional resources such as the hydro-therapy pool.
81. Very good leadership ensures that there is a very well planned programme of curriculum activities that develops the pupils' skills as they move through the school. For pupils aged 11 to 14 there is a very good range of activities planned to cover different levels of attainment and including all major types of physical activity. There are then very good opportunities for pupils aged 14 to 19 to benefit from engaging in projects that lead to a nationally recognised award. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn with their mainstream peers in PE and gain a wider range of skills since resources such as the discus and javelin are more readily available to them.
82. The excellent teaching of PE in the FE department provides outstanding regular exercise routines for all students. Adults and students alike take part in the keep fit regime. They have an excellent start to the day by moving their bodies and becoming as flexible and mobile as possible, whilst having much fun in the process.
83. The subject has made good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now appropriately dressed for physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Inspectors saw five lessons covering Years 8, 11, 12, 13, 14.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The contribution made by PSHE to the increasing independence of pupils and students.
- The very high quality of teaching which is based on very good planning and assessment.
- The very strong and high quality relationships pupils and students have with staff which impacts very positively on their learning.
- The variety of opportunities throughout the curriculum for reinforcing all aspects of PSHE.

Commentary

84. The practical curriculum, and the very good teaching provided for all pupils and students have a significant impact on improving their independence. They make very good progress towards their individual targets. These are challenging and very appropriate, with an emphasis on social, communication and basic skills that prepare them well for the next stages of their lives.
85. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Lessons are planned very effectively for the individual needs of pupils and students and supported by a range of imaginative resources. Consequently, pupils experience a very good range of practical topics that enhance their confidence, skills and independence. For example, very good opportunities are provided to increase their skills in personal hygiene. Social and communication skills are very effectively integrated into the teaching of all subjects. The taught programme is well supplemented by the use of lunchtime activities, when pupils interact with each other and staff, and learn to share and take turns. All pupils learn to take responsibility for themselves and each other. For example, each has a classroom task delegated to them which they carry out routinely. Pupils' achievements are assessed photographically, which provides a very good source of evidence of progress.

86. The taught programme is well thought out and includes sex and relationships education, careers education and planning for transition to further education. All understand that their bodies change as they grow and higher attainers understand the basic differences between men and women. All staff handle sensitive issues that may arise in lessons effectively and sympathetically, and pupils respond very well because of the very good relationships developed with the staff. There are very good links with Sussex Downs College and the transition process for the oldest pupils is well supported by visits to the college. Pupils, students and staff have many excellent relationships where trust and respect are strong foundations for PSHE to be developed further.
87. Elements of the citizenship curriculum are taught very effectively through topics such as relationships, co-operation and preparation for life in the wider world. Pupils are encouraged to make choices and to learn how to say 'no'. 'The Stranger-Danger' topic provides pupils with the skills to understand who in their community can help them and who may present possible dangers.
88. Opportunities for PSHE for FE students are very good. They benefit from a very appropriate accredited course (ASDAN "Towards Independence" curriculum), which provides a range of practical and relevant experiences designed to improve social and independence skills. The accredited course is supplemented by activities throughout the day. For example, students make full use of the excellent sports facilities of the college, well supported by students on the Community Sports course. Good use is made of the local environment to teach road safety skills, shopping and money management. Lunchtime activities take place in a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere where students build on their social, communication and mobility skills. Students participate in the Student Council and this contributes well to their confidence, knowledge and understanding of aspects of citizenship.
89. Leadership and management of the subject are very good in both the school and FE department. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is now very well planned and coordinated, with the specific needs of all pupils and students in mind. There is also very good liaison between the subject leaders in both establishments that ensures very smooth transition for pupils from the school to the college. There are very good links with other subject leaders to ensure PSHE is integral in all subjects.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2¹
Pupils' achievement	2
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	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	1
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

¹ In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.

