

INSPECTION REPORT

BRAIDWOOD SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103611

Headteacher: Mrs Fiona M Ison-Jacques

Lead inspector: Mr Declan McCarthy

Dates of inspection: 24th– 27th February 2004

Inspection number: 258879

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:	68
School address:	Bromford Road Hodge Hill Birmingham
Postcode:	B36 8AF
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gillian Winstanley
Date of previous inspection:	12 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a mixed community special school catering for deaf pupils aged from 11 to 19. There are currently 68 pupils on roll, all of whom have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and they enter the school with low levels of attainment. Approximately a half of pupils are of various Asian backgrounds, including Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. A small proportion of pupils are from other ethnic groups. Most pupils' first language is British Sign Language (BSL) and other languages include Arabic and Urdu. Fifty percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average for this type of school. When leaving school, all pupils move on to continuing education. The numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than usual is average. The school relocated to new premises on a mainstream secondary school site in July 2003, to promote greater inclusion, as part of the Local Education Authority's inclusion initiative. The school is also involved in a number of other initiatives including Excellence in Cities and Sports Co-ordinator initiative. It also gained Investor in People (IIP) status, the Schools Achievement Award and the European Award for Languages, all in 2003. During the inspection, the school received the Basic Skills Quality Mark for its high quality work in literacy and numeracy. The school has significant partnership links with the visiting teacher service for teacher training and a number of mainstream schools, particularly Hodge Hill School for inclusion.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23886	Declan McCarthy	Lead inspector	Science Physical Education English as an additional language
11437	Anthony Anderson	Lay inspector	
31106	Katy Khan	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious Education
22391	Nicholas Smith	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music
17546	Chris Wonfor	Team inspector	Personal social and health citizenship education French Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school with very effective arrangements for inclusion. Teamwork among all staff is very strong. Very good leadership and management have resulted in very good teaching and learning and a very good curriculum. As a result, pupils' achievements are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The ethos is very good and promotes high achievement and very good inclusion of all pupils.
- Pupils' achievements are very good because teaching, learning and the curriculum are good.
- Very strong links with the mainstream school and highly effective teamwork among staff contribute effectively to pupils' achievements.
- Assessment is very good and its high quality use has resulted in pupils' high achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good, resulting in very smooth transition of the school onto the mainstream school site and the rapid development of new initiatives for inclusion.
- Although new subject leaders have made a very good start in developing their subjects, they have yet to monitor teaching and learning formally.
- Accommodation and resources are very good and contribute greatly to pupils' learning.
- The very positive and developing links with parents and the community provides a very strong contribution to pupils learning and personal development.
- Very high quality care and very good provision for pupils' personal development ensures that most pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave well throughout the school.
- A small number of pupils do not attend as regularly as they should, despite the best efforts of the school to promote good attendance

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in May 1998. The issues identified in the last inspection have been resolved effectively with good improvements in all areas. Pupils' achievements have improved because teachers set high expectations for learning and teamwork with therapists, communicators and support staff is very strong. Leadership and management are very good, resulting in a number of awards and the successful implementation of the inclusion initiative with the mainstream school. There has been good improvement in teaching, learning, assessment and the curriculum. The school is more effective than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 9	Very 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 for all pupils including those who are at an early stage of learning English and pupils with additional special educational needs. There are no differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve very well. Pupils' achievements in their personal, social and emotional development are very good. Standards have risen and pupils' achievements in nearly all subjects are very good. Opportunities for external accreditation have risen steadily in recent years and in 2003 a small number of pupils gained A* to C grades in GCSE in a number of subjects and all pupils gained some form of accreditation through Entry Level Certificates and Certificates of Achievement on leaving school. Pupils make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). They are enthusiastic learners and pupils' achievements since they first joined the school are very good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good and lead to very good attitudes, good behaviour and very good relationships. Pupils enjoy school; they respect staff and work hard. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is very good throughout the school, and as a result pupils' learning is very good. Pupils are taught in both English and BSL and are therefore able to learn in their chosen language. Staff use both BSL and signed supported English during lessons making good use of visual aids to support pupils' learning and achievement. The strong teamwork between teachers, support staff and therapists ensures that all groups of pupils are supported effectively and achieve equally well. The use of assessment to check and record pupils' progress, set individual targets for pupils and in the planning and delivery of lessons is very good.

The curriculum is very good with a strong emphasis on communication, speaking and listening. Resources for learning and the accommodation are very good, promoting pupils' learning very effectively, with enhanced opportunities for learning alongside mainstream pupils. The school provides very good care for its pupils. Collaboration and partnership with parents, links with other schools, colleges and outside agencies are very good and effectively promote pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The very good leadership of the headteacher has led to a shared commitment to inclusion and a strong drive for raising pupils' achievement amongst staff. New subject leaders have made a good start in strategic planning and monitoring within their subjects. Financial management is very good. Governors are very supportive and have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However the work of the governing body is good as many governors are new and have yet to develop their strategic role. Statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold very positive views of the school. They receive very good information about the school and their children's progress. Parents are pleased with their children's progress and behaviour, although a very small number of parents expressed concern about bullying. Parents believe teaching is of high quality and the school is very well managed. Pupils are very enthusiastic and proud of their school. They believe that they are expected to work hard and try their hardest, and they confirm that all pupils are well behaved.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to work closely with the few parents whose children do not attend as regularly as they should to promote their attendance.
- To continue to develop the role of subject leaders so that they monitor provision within their subjects more systematically.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good throughout the school. It is consistently very good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, geography, history, religious education, in personal, social and health education and in physical education where pupils reach standards above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Pupils make very good progress towards their IEP targets and there is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, those from different ethnic groups, those who are at early stage of learning English or those with additional special educational needs. Pupils in Year 11 are achieving very well in examination courses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising throughout the school and pupils' achievements are very good because teaching, learning and the curriculum are very good.
- The school's analysis of pupil performance shows year on year improvement in pupils' attainment.
- Increased opportunities for accreditation and strong inclusive links with the mainstream school enhance pupils' achievements

Commentary

1. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests show a distinct improvement over the 2002 results with a few pupils in Year 9 gaining the expected Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This represents excellent achievement for these very few pupils since they entered the school and is a result of very good teaching and learning and a very well planned curriculum. Similarly, results in GCSE and external examinations have also improved markedly with three pupils out of five entered gaining five A* to C grades in art and design, geography, design and technology, science and English. These results represent a steady rise in standards since the last inspection when the very few pupils who were entered for GCSE achieved at best a Grade D. All pupils in Year 11 are now entered for GCSE or Entry Level Certificates and nearly all those who entered gained a number of Certificates in a wide range of subjects including English, mathematics and science. Furthermore, all pupils leave the school with a recognised qualification in British Sign Language (BSL). Pupils also excel in physical education and have won a number of national competitions in football and cricket. Students at Post-16 also achieve equally well in relation to their capabilities, gaining nationally accredited Youth Awards.

2. The main reason for pupils' very good achievement are very good teaching which is enshrined in high expectations for learning, good subject knowledge and the development of pupils literacy and communication skills. Very good teamwork between communicators, therapists and support staff promotes pupils' learning and their high achievement. Another major factor in high achievement is the highly relevant and very well planned curriculum, which ensures that basic skills are very well promoted and provides very good opportunities for pupils to follow examination courses with extensive opportunities for learning within the mainstream school. As a result, there are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls or different groups of pupils. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning also greatly enhances their achievement. As a result they are achieving very well in nearly all National Curriculum subjects.

3. The school's own detailed analysis of attainment over time shows a steady year-on-year upward trend with more pupils reaching or exceeding their targets. Additionally, the schools' own challenging statutory targets for Year 9 pupils gaining Level 5 and Year 11 pupils achieving five A*-C grades were met in 2003 and pupils are on course to meet the more challenging targets set for 2004. Pupils make very good progress towards their IEP targets because assessment is very well used to set realistic and challenging targets. Pupils are involved in this process so they know what they should achieve and what they need to do to further improve. Teachers always take full account of pupils' IEP targets in their planning so that clear learning objectives are set and precise methods and resources are matched very carefully to individual needs. The school uses assessment effectively to set realistic and challenging targets for particular year groups with an upward trend in pupils' performance against these.

4. Since moving to the new building on the mainstream school site, further opportunities to raise pupils' achievements are materialising, due to the very good inclusion of deaf pupils in the mainstream school. This is a significant development since the last inspection and the school through shared initiatives with mainstream staff, is now uniquely placed to raise standards further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development is very good. The levels of pupils' attendance is satisfactory and their punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils exhibit very good attitudes in the classroom and around the school.
- Pupils are well behaved throughout the school
- Pupils' personal development is very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The attendance of nearly all pupils is very good, although a very small number of pupils do not attend as regularly as they should

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.9	School data:	1.6
National data:	7.4	National data:	1.2

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

6. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and they show very positive attitudes to the teaching and support staff. The school's culture is built on a very sound foundation of care for the individual and this is very effectively underpinned through the school's approach to maximising learning and achievement of each individual pupil. As a result, pupils' attitudes are very positive and they demonstrate enthusiasm in everything they do. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and good behaviour management systems are in place and are consistently implemented across the school. This provides a high level of stability in the school and it is clear that day-to-day behaviour management and control is very much a team effort by a united combination of teachers, classroom support assistants, and other adults in the school.

7. The school council meets on a regular basis and its members have been elected via a democratic procedure in which the leading contenders had to give a presentation to their prospective electors. This positive enhancement to pupils' personal development has recently been extended by a link to the school council at Hodge Hill School for the mutual benefit of both deaf and hearing pupils. Many other opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for their own standards of work and for presenting good attitudes and behaviour in their everyday life at school. Some pupils are members of the young peoples' parliament and this provision significantly enhances their personal development. Although there is a very small amount of documentary evidence showing occasional challenging behaviour on the part of pupils, the atmosphere during the inspection was one of calm and tranquillity as pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes to each other and to all adults on the site.

8. All pupils attend daily acts of collective worship and one such assembly observed during the inspection promoted care and consideration for others and moral development linking this very effectively to the school's policy and procedures for intervening positively when things go wrong. Good use was made of volunteer pupils by the headteacher to provide demonstrations of what is and is not permitted within these procedures. All pupils joined in a very effective prayer which provided a very good opportunity for reflection.

and developed pupils' spirituality very well. Assemblies are also regularly used to enlighten pupils about their own culture and to discuss and explore spirituality through faith and by means of references to curricular subjects such as art, music and drama. Pupils are taught how to be 'hearing aware' and that they should feel proud to be deaf. Pupils have many opportunities to practice and develop their social skills both in the classroom and during the lunch break when most pupils visit the school dining room, which is shared with the pupils from Hodge Hill. Pupils interviewed during the inspection appreciated the quality of the food and confirmed that they have good working and social relationships with the pupils of Hodge Hill. Many pupils from Braidwood now spend part of their school life in Hodge Hill for to widen their learning opportunities, which also has a positive effect on their social development, self-esteem and growing independence.

9. The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory when compared to similar schools and nearly all pupils arrive in school and to their lessons on time. The incidence of unauthorised absence is a little higher than other similar schools and the main reason for this is extended holidays taken during term time by a minority of pupils and their parents. This practice is actively discouraged by the school, which monitors and promotes attendance very effectively

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10. The school provides a very good quality of education for its pupils, including those with additional special educational needs and those who are at early stage of learning English. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum is very good. The school also provides very good quality care, welfare and guidance for pupils, links with parents are good and links with local schools and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

11. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is very good. Assessment is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teamwork between teachers, communicators, therapists and support staff is very good and enhances pupils' learning and achievement.
- Very good support for teaching at post-16 is provided by the communicator to ensure pupils have full access to learning,
- All teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning, good subject knowledge and maintain very good relationships with pupils: consequently, pupils are very enthusiastic learners and achieve very well.
- Assessment information is used very effectively to move pupils' learning forward.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(5)	20(50)	14(35)	3(7.5)	1(2.5)	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.

12. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection with a much higher proportion of very good or better teaching and fewer unsatisfactory lessons seen. Not only was teaching very good in lessons seen, but very good teaching is also confirmed from pupils' work. Improvements to teaching are the results of well established Performance Management arrangements which extend to all staff and the provision of high quality training and support brought about through the strong leadership of the headteacher. As a result, very good teaching is seen in nearly all subjects.

13. All groups of pupils, especially those with additional special educational needs and those who are at an early stage of learning English, learn very effectively because there is very good teamwork between teachers, communicators, therapists and support staff, particularly in planning and assessment. In nearly all lessons seen, support staff adapted their sign language and made very good use of resources to ensure a close match between activities and individual pupil needs. The use of signing and visual communication aids is very well established in the majority of lessons and all staff make full use of their knowledge of pupils to accommodate their needs in lessons. This leads to enthusiasm for learning and increased self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. As a result, most pupils try hard in lessons and focus on their learning.

14. Teaching of Year 12 students is provided by a lecturer at a local college and therefore no judgements were made on the quality teaching in the college. However judgements were made about the quality of teaching support provided by the communicator in lessons seen, which was very good. The communicator adjusted their sign language register in each lesson so that students fully understood the teacher's expectations. As a result students were able to engage fully in learning and achieve well in lessons.

15. Teachers consistently set high expectations for learning as teachers challenge pupils' thinking through extended question and answer sessions and urge them to work harder towards their objectives in lessons. Pupils are also provided with good homework opportunities to extend their learning. Pupils acquire new knowledge, understanding and skills quickly because teachers have good subject knowledge and know precisely how to develop pupils' learning. This was clearly seen in high quality subject planning and very good use made of learning objectives, which were then reviewed with pupils at the end of lessons. As a result, pupils had a good understanding of how well they were achieving. Teachers maintain very good relationships with pupils so that pupils show respect, behave well and focus on their learning. Consequently, pupils focus on their learning enthusiastically in lessons and constantly try to better their previous performance. High quality teaching was also confirmed in the very positive comments received from parents and pupils in their questionnaire responses. Pupils believe that they are expected to work hard and do their best, and nearly all parents declared that teaching was good.

16. Good improvement in assessment since the previous inspection has resulted in greater consistency in its use to track pupils' progress and set realistic and challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Assessment information is also used very well to plan highly relevant sequences of lessons, which take full account of pupils' different needs. Teachers' take full account of each pupil's IEP to ensure a close match between activities and to individual special educational needs. As a result, lessons are very well planned to accommodate the varying needs of different pupils. Clear subject targets are set for pupils, which are reviewed regularly and reported to parents. All parents and pupils are involved in this process and teachers maintain very good records with examples of pupils' work. Consequently, parents receive very good information on the standards their children have reached and their achievements in annual reports. Pupils now have increased opportunities to take external examinations and assessment in these areas is very good.

The curriculum

17. The school offers its pupils a very good range of curricular opportunities, with the exception of French for pupils in Year 9. The curriculum for Year 12 pupils is good. The overall curriculum is very well enriched through additional activities provided outside normal school hours. Learning resources are also very good as is the new school building and its close proximity to other mainstream schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been very well planned to meet the needs of all pupils at the school, including those with additional special educational needs.
- The curriculum at post-16 is well matched to the needs of the few pupils in Year 12 with additional special educational needs
- A wide range of additional activities enrich pupils' learning very well.
- The accommodation and high quality learning resources support pupils' learning very well.

Commentary

18. Since the school moved to its new premises it has worked very hard to quickly establish a new and specific curriculum to meet the needs of its pupils. Indeed only four subject policies have not been re-written since the move. This year the school has matched the curriculum timetable with that of the mainstream school's so that pupils in Year 10 now have very good opportunities to access GNVQ courses as well as continuing to follow certain GCSE courses in Braidwood School. The physical education curriculum for Years 7 to 11 has been matched to coincide with the mainstream PE lessons. The school has also made good progress since the last inspection when ICT and French were deemed to have insufficient time to be taught effectively. Very good opportunities for using ICT within all subject areas are now in place, which enhances pupils' learning across their subjects French has also improved for Years 7 and 8, and is available as an option at the mainstream school for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Although the majority of Year 9 pupils are rightly disapplied from French, the decision to disapply all pupils in Year 9, results in reduced opportunities for a few pupils to learn a foreign language. The curriculum takes appropriate account of guidance in the National Curriculum and the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Indeed, teachers' planning includes literacy and numeracy and ICT skills for each lesson taught. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) takes appropriate account of matters relating to sex education and relationships, as well as alcohol and drugs misuse. While citizenship provides pupils with the opportunity to learn about their role in their community, indeed many pupils already have strong opinions on the quality of their local services. Statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship, are well met.

19. Curriculum planning although still quite new, is very effective and teachers' planning fully takes account of opportunities across all subjects to enhance pupils' learning. For example, citizenship and PSHE are taught as discrete subjects, yet include other subjects such as science, geography, literacy and numeracy within its planning. Planning also takes full account of the wide range of attainment within Year groups and ensures that tasks are very closely matched to the needs of each pupil. The much improved curriculum is the result of very good monitoring by the deputy head with effective support by subject leaders.

20. Year 12 students have the option to continue their education at a nearby college. The course is modified each year by the college to meet their specific needs. The majority of students in Year 12 leave school to continue their education in local colleges of their choice. However close links have been provided with a particular local college, who provide a relevant vocational course for the few students with additional special educational needs For example, the current year group are following an accredited Youth Award course in Life Skills which is enhancing their learning and considerably improves their self-confidence and self-esteem within an adult environment.

21. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of activities outside the school day. There are regular visitors to school such as artists, writers and an actor in residence. Visiting musicians work with the school and are currently involved in teaching pupils to play percussion instruments. The project will

culminate with an evening performance at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. Industrial tutors and links with local commerce enhance pupils' work experience and career opportunities. Sport also features highly. Pupils attend sporting activities outside the school such as athletics meetings at the National Indoor Arena. The school is currently offering rugby coaching for the first time, with the possibility of establishing a school team, if sufficient numbers are available. Lunchtime clubs include circuit training to improve pupils' cardiovascular fitness. The school carefully monitors pupils' involvement in activities. For example, visits are closely monitored to ensure that if pupils miss some lessons, for rehearsals, these are noted by staff. Steps are then taken to ensure this does not happen too often and pupils do not miss important aspects of their learning. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to France, which makes an important contribution to their personal development as well as developing their use of a foreign language.

22. Pupils' learning is very well supported by the new school's accommodation and its close proximity to other mainstream schools. This allows for pupils' needs to be fully met. For example, deaf pupils join hearing pupils for physical education and dance, which is provided by mainstream teachers. The accommodation is of a very high quality and has been purpose built to meet the needs of deaf pupils. Careful attention has been given to acoustics and the school's environment with enough space for important support services such as Audiology. Learning resources are equally of high quality, for example, each classroom has a combined OHP and data projector that enhances images for pupils ensuring they can fully participate in lessons. The library facilities are first class although this excellent room is not yet in full use, especially for pupils' independent study. The quality and experience and number of staff to support deaf pupils are extremely good. Indeed a freelance visiting teacher of the deaf is employed to support pupils' learning and personal development. This teacher is given time to discuss with the pupils their IEP targets and any other concerns which they may have. As such, the teacher provides invaluable objective support for pupils' needs.

Care, guidance and support

23. The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good as are the procedures for supporting and guiding pupils' through monitoring. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection arrangements are in place and very effective with relevant staff fully trained in systems and procedures
- Good risk assessments take place in advance of school trips to ensure pupils health and safety.
- The school provides a very high level of pastoral support and guidance as pupils' progress through the school with the additional assistance of a wide range of medical professionals.
- The monitoring systems for pupil attendance and behaviour are very good.
- Very good support and advice is provided by the audiologist to guide teaching and learning

Commentary

24. The named person for child protection is known to all staff in the school and very good staff training in child protection issues has also taken place so that all staff are fully aware of the procedures to follow if a pupil is ever at risk. These very good systems and procedures also include the development of a policy on safe handling, which is known to all staff and communicated effectively to pupils. Teaching and support staff, who are very well supported by a range of external agencies, provide a high degree of pastoral and welfare support to individual pupils. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored both formally and informally by the school and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of effective strategies which are well documented on pupil records and review statements. Pupils have very good access to an independent person who will listen to their views and offer advice as appropriate. Independent interpreters also provide very good assistance to pupils in their understanding of lessons, for example when visiting Hodge Hill School. The provision of learning mentors also significantly enhances the element of care and support to all pupils in the school.

25. In the classroom and around the school, teachers and support staff clearly know their pupils very well and they are quick to observe any personal difficulties exhibited by them and to take appropriate and remedial action. There are good health and safety procedures with regular fire drills, which are recorded well. A further very good log is maintained of pupils' medical records including food allergies. The school also carries out Health & Safety audits of the site and is proactive when considering possible risks on external trips out of school.

26. PSHE lessons are used well to provide pupils with the opportunity to think about themselves and to express ideas and suggestions as to how they perceive a range of issues. In addition, the school council is able to have an influence in the way the school is run and every pupil is able to contribute to the work of the council by way of the well-developed pupil feedback system. Pupils' personal development is further enhanced through the provision of both school wide and individual targets to which pupils are expected to work. Wide ranges of very good strategies to manage behaviour are in place and they are regularly reviewed and/or adapted to ensure that systems and procedures match pupils' needs and requirements.

27. The school benefits greatly from the very good support and advice provided by the audiologist. Pupils hearing needs are regularly assessed by the audiologist who is based in a new purpose built audiology room. This assessment information is shared with teachers, communicators and pupils so that precise strategies to promote more effective communication in lessons are developed. Very good technical support is provided for testing hearing aids. As a result, pupils engage with their learning more effectively in lessons.

28. The very high level of child protection and welfare support to pupils at the school, together with the very good procedures for promoting pupils personal development and well being, have a very positive impact on their learning and self confidence and they are a significant strength of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

29. Parents' views of the school are very good, as are the school's links with parents. The schools links with the local community, Hodge Hill School and other local schools and the local college for post –16 students are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Parents are very well informed and supported by the school.
- The school utilises the community, other schools and the local college of further education very well to support the curriculum.
- The quality of information parents receive is very good.

Commentary

30. A significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers and support staff are good and that the school is well managed. A few parents expressed concerns about bullying but the inspection evidence does not support this view as demonstrated by interviews with senior staff, an examination of the school's records, and several discussions with pupils. Good social and academic links have been developed between Braidwood and Hodge Hill Schools with a growing and positive relationship between staff and pupils at both schools.

31. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, governors' annual report to parents and via regular and well-designed newsletters is of a high standard. Annual academic reports to parents are of a very good standard and include a comprehensive log of each pupil's academic and personal development at the school. There are a number of parents' evenings and open days each year during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress. In addition, Annual Reviews of each pupil's progress fully involve parents. Parents' evenings are also very well attended and are also supported by a range of external and internal professionals. The school's home liaison team provide very valuable support to parents both at

home and at school and they were also observed to provide very good bi-lingual support to Asian parents at a local day centre for the deaf. Lessons in signing are also available to all parents at this centre.

32. The school also makes very good use of the local and wider environment to enhance pupils' curricular access. For example, the school has a very good link with Cadbury who has provided additional ICT resources to the school as well as the setting up of mock interviews for pupils. A local supermarket has also provided valuable work shadowing facilities at their local branch and a joint curriculum in religious education has now been set up with Hodge Hill School. Many pupils have visited France, which is a regular destination for the school in order to enhance pupils' appreciation of other cultures. Classes in deaf awareness have also been set up within Hodge Hill as a direct result of the growing partnership between the two schools which also includes pupils' attendance at Hodge Hill School for lessons in mathematics, science, business studies, leisure and tourism and physical education. All such lessons are taken with Hodge Hill pupils and the developing relationship between the two schools is very inclusive. The provision of work experience and careers advice and assistance to all pupils is also a very positive element of the school's work.

33. The school's very positive and developing links with parents and the community provides a very strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and it is a major strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

34. Leadership and management are very good. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured good improvements since the previous inspection. The deputy head provides very good support for the headteacher and subject leaders have made a very good start in developing their subjects. They now rightly plan to develop their monitoring role further. The school is very well organised and managed. School governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very effective and purposeful leadership, developing a very good ethos for inclusion and very strong teamwork between staff.
- Although governance is good overall, new governors have yet to fully develop their strategic role.
- Systematic monitoring of lessons by the headteacher has led to good quality teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Subject leaders have yet to establish formal arrangements for monitoring aspects of provision in their subjects.

Commentary

35. The good improvements to all aspects of the school's provision is due to the very good and determined leadership of the headteacher. She has pioneered the initiative of re-locating the school into its own purpose-built accommodation on a mainstream school site and leading all staff with her in the process. This has led to very strong teamwork and a shared vision amongst all staff and mainstream colleagues for greater inclusion. Since re-locating last September, the headteacher has forged very strong links with the mainstream headteacher and together with staff, ensured that deaf pupils not only mix socially with their hearing peers during breaktimes and lunchtimes but participate in learning alongside their hearing colleagues. This is particularly well developed in physical education where nearly every class participates in mainstream lessons. The headteacher has driven forward a number of initiatives, moving away from the medical model of deaf education which focused on a particular method or approach in communication to a more inclusive model which focuses on deaf pupils' strengths in communication while still developing their skills in BSL. As a result, the headteacher has ensured that all pupils leave with a nationally accredited qualification in BSL. The school also achieved the European Languages Award in 2003 for the teaching of French to deaf pupils. Furthermore, the headteacher has led the development of strong links within the community for the benefit and she is very proactive in her drive for improvement.

36. The deputy headteacher provides very good support for the headteacher, particularly in the area of curriculum development and performance management. Before the school relocated in September 2003

subject leadership was carried out by staff from the Secondary Resource Centre (SRC) attached to the school. Links with the SRC have terminated and consequently most Braidwood teachers are new to the role of subject leadership. In the relatively short time since September 2003, nearly all subject and whole school policies have been reviewed and staff have received ongoing training to develop their new subject leadership roles more effectively. As a result of this, subject leaders have made a very good start in developing their subjects, for example with very clear action plans linked to the school's well thought-out priorities for improvement, the development of relevant schemes of work based on national guidelines and to promote inclusion and the development of assessment new systems which are already being used effectively to track and record pupils' achievements within subjects. However, subject leaders have yet to fully develop formal monitoring arrangements within their subjects.

37. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the work of the school strongly. They review all aspects of the school's work through well-established committees and individual governors have established formalised links in key subject areas. However, many governors are new to their role and the governing body has yet to formalise systems for visits to the school in order to view the school's work more objectively. Governors ensure that their legal responsibilities are met, and they are fully involved in the development and review of policies.

38. Management is very good with very good use self-evaluation and use of performance data to set targets for raising standards and improving provision. This is achieved through a well thought out strategic school development plan, which is monitored and reviewed regularly by staff and governors. The very good accommodation and very good resourcing is a significant aid to learning and management ensures these are put to full use. Very good management has ensured that the barriers to pupils' learning, particularly their poorly developed literacy skills are systematically reduced so that all pupils are achieving their potential. Financial management is very good and governors monitor the budget closely so that money is spent on the school's real priorities.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,011,655	Balance from previous year	85,797
Total expenditure	1,030,374	Balance carried forward to the next	67128
Expenditure per pupil	14,512		

39. Good attention is paid to the principles of ensuring the best value in spending decisions, through challenging spending decisions, comparing costings and consulting widely with staff. Care is also taken to ensure that the carry forward budget is used for its intended purposes and for improvements in the school's priorities for development.

PROVISION AT POST-16

40. Provision for post-16 is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and makes a good contribution to their personal development.
- The communicator provides very effective support for teaching and learning in the College
- Leadership is very good.

Commentary

41. The school has established a service level agreement with a local college to make provision at post-16 and it monitors the work of the college closely. Each year the school offers a group of similar post-16 pupils

the opportunity to extend their education for another year by attending a local college. The current group of pupils is following a nationally accredited ASDAN course (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) Towards Independence. This course provides an appropriate degree of challenge for many pupils enabling them to receive recognition for their efforts.

42. Pupils attend college for the majority of their time, supported very effectively by communicators to facilitate communication between teachers and students, resulting in full access to learning. Students only attend the school for registration and tutorial periods. This enables them to work with their peers from other schools, including those with quite different needs. Students learn very well and achieve not just academically but also socially, enhancing their self-esteem and self-confidence. Students have the opportunity to improve their key skills such as numeracy, communication, ICT and life skills. They also follow an art and drama course, and experience working and learning in a different environment. College staff regularly monitor and assess pupils' learning and achievements, providing the school and parents with reports on pupils' progress. There is no doubt that many students grow up quickly within this adult environment and become independent young people. Indeed, many go on to choose different types of courses they would like to follow when their present one finishes.

43. The quality of leadership and management shown by the co-ordinator is very good. She clearly understands pupils' needs and regularly liaises with the college to ensure students are achieving as well as expected. Indeed, many achieve above initial expectations.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FRENCH)

English

44. Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in English are very good because of the very good teaching
- Literacy across the curriculum is a strength of the school and is included in other subject plans
- Pupils' achievements in BSL are very good and their communication skills are very well developed
- Leadership and management of the subject is very good

Commentary

45. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a coherent approach towards improving reading skills. This includes the provision of carefully thought out booklets for pupils which record their current reading age and projected targets to improve learning, which pupils have discussed with teachers. Inconsistencies reported previously have been addressed so that all pupils now use texts appropriate to their ages. There is a new scheme of work, which is comprehensive and includes the use of learning in small steps for lower ability pupils, which is clearly adapted to their particular needs.

46. Standards on entry are low, some pupils are unable to communicate other than through simple gesture and their vocabulary is poor. However as pupils move through the school standards improve because pupils' achievements are very good in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Very good support is provided in English and the support programme is enhanced through sharing basic skills and specific work with the BSL support assistants. As a result pupils are also achieving very well in communication, enabling them to be successful in external examinations such as GCSE. Pupils' speaking skills are assessed very well and all pupils gain an accredited qualification in BSL on leaving school, which demonstrates very good achievement in the use of BSL as pupils move through the school. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed through effective communication in lessons. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 explain and describe the effects of global warming. They are able to 'hot-seat' Fluellen, a character in Henry V to explain his actions. A Year 9 pupil was able to explore the use of irony in 'The Welcome Table' by Alice Walker, which is above average attainment for hearing pupils. Lower attaining pupils plan an exciting weekend for an old age pensioner and a teenager when they visit Blackpool with group discussion and support. Pupils' achievements in writing are also very good. For example, higher attaining pupils investigate the use of onomatopoeia, alliteration and personification in their written work.

47. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Pupils' contributions are valued, objectives are discussed before each lesson and pupils are motivated to learn and achieve their potential. The use of questioning as a tool to probe pupils' understanding of concepts is very good as is the teachers' own subject knowledge of the curriculum. There were several examples of detailed work on fiction/non-fiction which challenged both the low and high attainers. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils described the attitude of the writer towards the use of child chimney sweeps when exploring William Blake's poem 'The Chimney-Sweep'. Year 9 pupils investigated the concept of figurative language through the use of 'tone' in a scene from Henry V.

48. Leadership and management of the curriculum are very good. The subject leader has a clear vision for the subject. Formal assessments of reading are completed for each pupil. The National Strategy for Literacy in Year 7 to 9 has been very well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils with key objectives for each year group including word/sentence level activities and analysis of text. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow Entry Level or GCSE exams from the examination board. The range of resources used has increased including literacy games such as Textopoly and texts such as 'Heaven Eyes' for Year 8 pupils. These develop pupils' interest and increase their motivation for reading and as a result they achieve very well. Now that the school shares its site with the mainstream secondary school the school rightly intends to review its communication policy for the benefit of pupils, communicators and mainstream staff.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. English is very well promoted in other subjects. English vocabulary, its meaning and its spelling is taught systematically and communicated very effectively to pupils. Speaking, listening and communication are very well promoted in lessons. Pupils' ability to discuss and share their opinions with a clear understanding of the arguments presented was a striking characteristic observed in lessons. A Year 11 lesson encouraged pupils to discuss the effect of body mapping and society's response to stereotypes.

50. Pupils are encouraged to share and communicate their ideas in all lessons, including art, where a discussion on the use of perspective was observed and food technology, where lower ability pupils were actively encouraged to make choices independently. Different methods of communication are evident across the curriculum such as the writing of newspaper articles, the idea of using 'catch phrases' and analysis and argument in PSHE and citizenship. There was very good use of research skills using the Internet in several lessons, including religious education, geography and history.

French

51. *French was sampled as no lessons were seen during the inspection. Discussions took place with the subject leader and pupils' work was seen.*

52. French is only taught to pupils in Years 7 and 8 but no lessons were seen during the inspection. Therefore it is inappropriate to make a judgement on pupils' achievement. However, pupils do develop their knowledge of the French language through activities focusing on simple greetings, colours, numbers, and food and drink. The most competent pupils make good progress in retaining learned vocabulary. All pupils have the opportunity to visit France during a week long residential journey and numbers of pupils going on this trip have increased year on year.

53. From September 2003, the school decided to redesign its existing curriculum and re-write a new one. Unfortunately, this provision is now only available to pupils in Years 7 and 8, while the school decided to disapply all existing Year 9 pupils. Although most of these Year 9 pupils have additional special educational needs there is a missed opportunity for a few more able pupils in Year 9 to learn French and extend this in Year 10. Some current Year 9 pupils benefited from their residential trip to France in June last year as Year 8 pupils, but have been unable to continue with their studies. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered the opportunity to follow a GCSE course at Hodge Hill School.

54. The School achieved the European Languages Award due to the approaches it was using to teach French to deaf young people.

MATHEMATICS

55. Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is very well managed.
- Specialist skilled teaching ensures high expectations and challenging lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils' achievements have improved as a result of the revised policy, schemes of work and improved assessment.
- The use of ICT in lessons enhances teaching and learning very effectively

Commentary

56. Achievement in mathematics is very good. This is linked to very good teaching and learning, improved curriculum planning and use of assessment to move pupils' learning forward. The organisation of pupils into very efficient groups of similar abilities has helped to raise achievement, as it has simplified the way teachers plan. More focused planning has ensured that pupils of all abilities make equally good progress. The matching of the schemes of work to the partner mainstream school also increases the possibility of inclusion for pupils. Most pupils in Year 9, who are lower attainers, recognise patterns in colour and number sequences, they sign, say and spell their answers. The more able pupils in Year 9 show an understanding of their own targets, they are able to predict in probability exercises; they record their own marks.

57. Most pupils in Year 11 understand the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. All pupils develop effective communication skills, giving them increased confidence to accept the challenges of teachers in a calm and relaxed manner. The higher attaining pupils in Year 11 can handle data effectively and interpret time, distance and speed graphs accurately.

58. The best lessons featured very good knowledge of the subject and very effective planning for individual pupils. The use of ICT in these lessons made a significant contribution to teaching and learning; it was instrumental in capturing pupils' interest and reinforcing their mathematical skills. In a very good lesson in ICT, Year 10 pupils used spreadsheets as they combined their mathematical skills with ICT understanding to make arithmetic formulae.

59. In all the lessons, teachers and support staff very effectively guide, monitor and encourage pupils. They sign and interpret with great skill and understanding; these activities are clearly enhancing learning experiences and communication. The School has developed a range of signed technical mathematics vocabulary, which ensures that pupils access the language of mathematics. Teachers assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding during the lessons and provide effective feedback to help them make progress.

60. One significant feature that strengthens the teaching is the very good relationship between the staff and the pupils. Pupils are well managed, which ensures that they are kept busy, and, as a result, they make gains in learning. Pupils have the confidence to contribute in plenary sessions of the lessons, or ask for help. The relationship with communicators is a significant factor in how well the pupils become aware of how much they have learned. Pupils develop their communication skills effectively and they are able to discuss examination needs. For example, a pupil in a mainstream class helped his classmates through the interpreter from Braidwood, a very successful exercise made real when the teacher explains the levels achieved. The staff are skilled in asking individuals questions that differ in their challenge; this helps to involve all pupils and is effective in assessing their knowledge and understanding.

61. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is a highly skilled teacher; he is enthusiastic and works closely with many schools, the local education authority, support teams and teachers of the deaf. As a leading mathematics teacher, he has made a contribution to the development of the subject in mainstream schools, in raising standards in school and in gaining awards. The issues arising from the previous inspection have been addressed well and in the intervening time the subject has had a high

profile in the school as part of the national strategies. Resources are very good and enrich the learning experiences. They are chosen to match pupils' abilities and interests. Staff training is very good, matching teacher expertise to the needs of pupils. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in terms of teaching the deaf and raising standards. The co-ordinator ensures that the team consider both the further improvement in mathematics as well as the moderation of the work that pupils produce. The subject makes a very significant contribution to pupil achievement

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Pupils' mathematical skills are used very well in subjects other than mathematics. All lesson plans have sections in which teachers can identify opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills. The format is well embedded and every teacher completes or highlights the section. This means that mathematical skills are used very well in a range of subjects, directed very effectively by the co-ordinator. For instance in geography lessons pupils use graphs to compare temperatures around the world; in design, they measure plans and in food technology they use their understanding of weight to complete recipes.

SCIENCE

63. Provision for science is **very good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are very good throughout the school and by the end of Year 11 they gain accreditation in public examinations.
- Pupils' learning is very good as a result of very good teaching; this enables them to achieve very well.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and set high expectations for learning so pupils acquire new scientific knowledge and skills methodically.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment to move pupils' learning forward.
- Subject leadership is very good and has led to very good developments in science teaching and learning.
- Pupils enjoy science and behave very well in lessons.

Commentary

64. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in science and there are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls or in the achievements of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils identified with additional special educational needs, higher attaining pupils and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. In Year 7 pupils develop a good understanding of chemistry. For example, they investigate acids used in the home such as vinegar and lemon juice and they observe blue litmus paper turning red on contact with acids. In Year 8, pupils further their understanding of fair testing and develop very good skills in writing up scientific investigations under correct headings, recording their results scientifically. This was seen, for example, when pupils investigated the release of energy from food. Pupils in Year 9 extend their knowledge of science and its applications in everyday life, for example in learning about the dangers of cigarette smoking and its harmful effects on the human body. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow examination courses and by the time they leave school all pupils gain GCSE or an Entry Level Certificate in science. Standards have risen year on year and in 2003 one pupil gained a Grade C at GCSE which represents excellent personal achievement.

65. Pupils learn very well, acquiring new scientific knowledge and skills quickly as a result of very good teaching. Consequently, pupils' achievements are very good. In all lessons seen teachers used a variety of strategies such as demonstration, discussion, and small group investigations to stimulate pupils' learning. Teachers also use resources very effectively, particularly ICT to develop pupils' learning more effectively. This was seen in the use of an interactive whiteboard and digital projector to display pupils' results and the use of video, for example in showing various respiratory diseases as a result of cigarette smoking. Teachers also work very well with support staff and communicators in managing pupils' learning and behaviour very well. All staff promote literacy and the use of signing to facilitate communication very effectively in science. As a result, pupils deepen their understanding of science.

66. Particular strengths in teaching throughout the school are the teachers' very good knowledge of science and high expectations for learning, which ensures that pupils develop a very good understanding of important scientific ideas. Teachers also make very good use of assessment, which ensures that pupils' work is precisely matched to their levels of understanding. Planning is thorough and includes clear objectives, which are reviewed with pupils at the end of lessons. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

67. All pupils enjoy science. They are very enthusiastic learners and behave very well in lessons because teachers make learning interesting and lessons are delivered at a brisk pace.

68. Very good subject leadership has led to very good improvements in teaching, learning, the curriculum and pupils' achievements, with enhanced opportunities to share ideas and resources within the mainstream school. There is a much greater emphasis on learning through investigations, the use of ICT and the development of literacy and numeracy skills in science teaching and learning. Science teaching and learning is also regularly monitored and improvements identified and effectively acted upon. The subject leader is very clear about how to develop the subject and ensures staff make very good use of visits, for example to the environmental study centre.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

69. The provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation and resources are very good
- Very good teaching and Inclusion programmes extend pupils' learning very well
- Leadership and management are very good and has ensured that ICT is very well used in subjects to support teaching and learning

Commentary

70. Achievement in ICT is very good, given the extent of the difficulties in pupils' learning when they first enter the school. Despite these difficulties and the short time for development, records show very good and continuous progress. Pupils in Year 7 are familiar with computers, and the most skilled operate a basic mathematics programme skillfully, with guidance from staff. They achieve quickly and by the end of Year 9, pupils use spreadsheets to investigate and organise information about trends in holidays. They also use a number of websites for research purposes. By the end of Year 11, pupils are able to work independently follow instructions very well and access very complicated tasks with confidence. Most follow accredited courses and gain good examination results. Pupils also understand how the quality of their work can be improved using digital cameras and projectors which are linked to the Internet.

71. The greatest strength in teaching lies in the use of relevant projects that appeal to pupils and give a reason to use ICT. The very practical approach of using the national guidelines to set basic targets when pupils arrive enables teachers to plan carefully to ensure that pupils have high expectations when they follow examination courses. They make very good gains in learning. The skills that pupils develop enable them to be confident when they work in other schools and subjects. Spreadsheets are used in a range of different lessons, pupils have much practice in basic skills and this is carried over into other situations. Relationships are very good, pupils work well with their support staff, they are comfortable in the suite and inclusion is very good. Pupils help each other; they have opportunities to improve communication through signing and discussion. This helps to increase understanding of research work and surveys. Teachers plan carefully to provide activities to match pupils' needs, and pupils learn to move from group to independent work.

72. The school has a very well designed room to work with sufficient computers. This room also takes into account the specific needs of the pupils so that when staff sign, pupils can see them clearly. Teachers set

high expectations for learning and make very good use of data projectors to support pupils learning. Pupils are engaged through high quality activities and support to promote learning
Teaching assistants are skilful; they support pupils well, and do not do too much for them. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and competence. Learning is reviewed at the end of each lesson, but differences in attainment are identified and pupils are given pointers about how to improve.

73. Leadership and management are very good. Involvement in National strategies, the curriculum framework and collaboration with other schools means that the school continues to develop an outward looking approach. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed very well, with a much improved policy, despite the provision only being established recently. Resources, and the curriculum have greatly improved, as well as the level of staff skills, due to very effective training. A good system of assessing gains in knowledge, skills and understanding has been established. Monitoring is also much improved, ensuring that pupil profiles are correctly completed, several with good annotation. There are very good plans for the future development of the subject. The subject leader has a very clear vision for raising standards across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. This aspect has improved greatly since the last inspection. It is now very good. Improvement has been secured through staff training and increased resourcing. ICT is used very effectively in other subjects to support teaching and learning. For example, subject plans and schemes of work all contain sections for using ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

75. Pupils make very good use of the Internet for research and every class has digital cameras to make projects very presentable and records meaningful. Computers are well used in mathematics; they are especially effective for communication. They are well used to encourage and promote independent learning in many subjects. In design and technology, for example, pupils use ICT to enhance the presentation of projects on advertising and packaging. The results are professional and pupils are, rightly, very proud of their work.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

76. Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in geography are very good because of teachers' high expectations
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Very good use of ICT is a strong feature of the curriculum
- Pupils gain very good results at GCSE in comparison to similar schools
- The use of technical vocabulary associated with geography is exceptional
- Some of the marking in books is negative and does not adhere to the policy adopted by the school.

Commentary

77. Pupils' achievements are very good because high expectations are set for learning by both specialist teachers. Consequently, achievement has risen from satisfactory to very good since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 7 study plans of the classroom and use a ships' log to enhance their map skills. Higher achievers investigate microclimates and weather systems using vocabulary such as visibility and temperature precipitation. At Year 11, high achievers are studying for the Welsh Joint Examination Board Certificate of Education and GCSEs investigating topics such as long shore drift, settlement hierarchy and are able to shape questionnaires. Both teachers have clear subject knowledge and are adept at using ICT in lessons. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils' knowledge was checked throughout to ensure they had grasped the idea of how ecosystems exist. Pupils' learning was inspired because of the high expectations, use of varied teaching skills and excellent relationships between the teacher and pupils.

78. Leadership and management are good. There is a team approach to assessing individual pupils' progress each month. Planning has improved and now includes links with literacy and numeracy in each strand of the scheme of work. The co-ordinator has encouraged links with the mainstream secondary school including exchanging resources and mutual visits.

79. Standards of work seen in geography have risen since the last inspection. Two pupils gained grade Cs in their GCSEs. All pupils are entered for accredited examinations and the department sets the standard for achievement in the school because they are above average for similar cohorts nationally.

80. Computers are used very effectively to promote pupils' learning with a variety of sources including a system which is currently being piloted to promote pupils own involvement in assessing their progress, as demonstrated when studying plate tectonics. Pupils researched information on the different types of plate boundary and where and why earthquakes and volcanoes happen.

HISTORY

81. Provision in history is **very good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Very good match of activities to the different needs of pupils leads to very good achievement
- Very good liaison between Braidwood and Hodge Hill Schools supports inclusion
- Teaching is innovative and stimulates pupils' desire to learn
- Individual pupil targets are assessed by both pupil and teacher
- Leadership of the department is very good
- Assessment is very good as all pupils take end of module tasks and baseline assessment tests

Commentary

82. Pupils' achievements are very good in history. Teaching is very good because of secure subject knowledge to teach the curriculum effectively. To make it lively and interesting for all pupils, irrespective of their abilities. Since the last inspection, the scheme of work has been improved by the co-ordinator to ensure a closer match between lesson activities and pupil' learning needs using technology and new materials.

83. Leadership and management of the curriculum are very good. All pupils, who took history in Year 11, achieved external accreditation, including distinctions at Entry level and two pupils gained GCSEs. Very good use of ICT is made using digital photographs as visual prompts, enlarging historical images and PowerPoint presentations.

84. Teaching is very good and challenges the pupils' learning. At Year 7, pupils enter with little idea of 'time' or the notion of historical events. Some very good matching of work to pupils' attainment levels was seen in Year 7 workbooks which helped low attainers make up their own Roman legions. High attainers were able to explain what historical sources were and guess what different Roman artefacts were used for. By the end of Year 9, a high attaining pupil included in mainstream lessons was able to express their views on child labour and produce a detailed project on Queen Victoria using ICT to support the presentation.

85. Pupils' enjoyment of the subject is evident from lessons and scrutiny of work. Subject specific vocabulary is used with all pupils using pictures and different strategies to get the meaning across. This was evident from work in Years 7 to 9 on the Spinning Mule and how different sources of power developed through the eighteenth century. Progress in Years 10 and 11 is good. There are no high attainers in the current group of pupils; nevertheless, subjects covered include The American West and Prehistoric Medicine, indicating that expectations of low achieving pupils are still very high.

Religious education

86. Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements in religious education are very good because of teachers' high expectations.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good
- Overall pupils make very good progress in this subject.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral development

Commentary

87. Pupils' achievements in religious education are very good. In Year 7, low attaining pupils understand the use of vocabulary such as 'atheist' and 'agnostic' while high attainers learn what justice means to Christians. By the end of Year 9 all pupils are able to discuss how they would choose a partner in life. All pupils in Year 11 take accredited courses toward Entry Level certificates and two pupils achieved GCSEs in 2003. Pupils' very good achievement is due to very good teaching Teachers' high expectations are clear from lesson observations and the quality of the marking in exercise books. Ideas like suffering are taught appropriately so all pupils can access them at their levels.

88. Leadership and management of religious education are very good. The co-ordinator's adaptation of the agreed syllabus has been adopted by the mainstream school because of its high quality. The scheme of work is closely monitored ensuring the major faiths are explored imaginatively. A pupil-led video about Ramadan was produced from a story-board format by lower attaining Year 11 pupils.

89. Moral development of pupils is enhanced by the teaching in religious education lessons. Subjects such as Christianity and Drugs and understanding the main features of Christian marriage are discussed at Key Stage 4. Links to PSHE and Citizenship are clearly delineated. Methods of teaching are inventive and encourage pupils' learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

90. *Art and design, design and technology and music were sampled and physical education is reported in full below*

91. **Design and technology**, including food technology is relocated in new accommodation on the Braidwood site and in a food technology room on the west site. These rooms allow the subject to be taught effectively, despite having had to build up resources in a short period. The specialist room for design and technology is very carefully designed to enable pupils to work safely and productively. The work produced by pupils in both departments is of high quality, showing how well the subjects have been improved; the schemes of work have been developed well and they aim to raise pupils' thinking and handling skills in an enjoyable way. Pupils' very good results at GCSE are very clear evidence of how much has been achieved. Links with mainstream schools, workshops and resources are very well developed.

92. In the lessons observed, good teaching was lively and interesting and pupils were encouraged to develop independence skills. Language, mathematics, health and safety were well reinforced. The very effective teamwork of support staff ensures that all pupils are included. Pupils show their initiative and share the responsibility for clearing up at the end of the lesson. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

93. The teaching of **art** is undertaken by a subject leader with considerable expertise in the subject. In most lessons, very good activities are provided, which appeal to the pupils and as a result they enjoy art. For example, in one lesson observed during the inspection, pupils worked with pastels from still life and they explained why they had chosen a particular colour to explore depth. They are encouraged to produce very high quality work, which leads to very good examination results and exhibitions of their art in public places, such as the local airport. The behaviour of pupils is very good which enables them to rise to the challenging work presented by visiting artists in residence. Art is well resourced, which ensures that pupils are all able to develop their individual skills. An art club provides further opportunities for pupils to express themselves, for example by printing. Links with mainstream schools are very good and enhance the range of activities on offer. The subject has a high profile and there has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

94. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop **music**, particularly through the teaching of signed singing, the use of a community worker to teach Indian drumming and the opportunity to play their compositions using percussion instruments in the Birmingham Symphony Hall. Pupils enjoy music tremendously and this was seen in the very good signed singing lesson seen during the inspection. Pupils develop a sense of rhythm through musical dance which is very well supported in the physical education curriculum.

Physical education

95. Provision in physical education (PE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are very good because they have extended opportunities to learn alongside their mainstream peers and are taught by specialist teachers.
- Very good teamwork between teachers and communicators ensure pupils learn very effectively and impact positively on their achievements.
- A rich curriculum enables pupils to participate successfully in a wide variety of sporting events.
- Pupils enjoy physical education which enhances their personal development.
- Very good subject leadership has ensured very good improvements since the last inspection.

Commentary

96. The excellent opportunities available to pupils to learn alongside mainstream pupils ensure very good achievement. Pupils are taught by PE specialist both from Braidwood and the mainstream school. This enables pupils to benefit from high quality teaching where expectations are high. As a result, their learning is very good. Resources are shared with the mainstream school and all teaching takes place in the mainstream gymnasiums. Deaf pupils learn rugby, football, basketball, dance, athletics and cricket alongside hearing pupils from the mainstream school. This represents excellent inclusion and a model of best practice, because deaf pupils achieve equally well in PE activities as mainstream pupils. For example in a Year 11 five-a-side

lesson, pupils from both schools were mixed into various teams and Braidwood pupils played as competitively and effectively as their hearing colleagues.

97. A strong feature of successful inclusion in PE is the very good teamwork between communicators and mainstream teachers. During a dance lesson for example, the mainstream teacher demonstrated 'Rock 'n Roll' steps while the communicator signed alongside. Both the communicator and the teacher encouraged all deaf and hearing pupils to dance in pairs and then to feed back what they liked about each other's performance at the end of the lessons. As a result, all pupils interacted very effectively together and performed equally well in dance.

98. There are very good opportunities to extend pupils' learning through active participation in competitive sports. For example, since the last inspection pupils achieved the national under-14s championships in football in 2001 and this year 14 boys reached the finals. Pupils are regularly awarded top places in the six-a-side cricket tournament run by the National Deaf Children's Sports Association. They participate in and achieve very well in the Birmingham Indoor Athletics Challenge, they go rock climbing, horse riding and sand surfing. Pupils have been entered for the National Indoor Rowing Championship[s alongside their mainstream colleagues.

99. Pupils thoroughly enjoy physical education lessons, including dance. Their personal development and that of mainstream pupils is considerably enhanced as they learn together, communicate together and deepen their awareness and understanding of their differing needs. Consequently all pupils realize that there are very few differences in the competitiveness and performance between deaf and hearing pupils.

100. Very good improvements to provision in PE and pupils' achievements are the result of very good subject leadership. Through imaginative developments the subject leader has developed a very good curriculum with an emphasis on full inclusion and very strong teamwork with communicators and teachers. High quality teaching has also been assured through the use of subject specialist and the sharing of resources. Very detailed assessments are in place and very good use is made of these to track pupils' progress through the Physical Education Profile. Provision for PE is a clear strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader has produced a comprehensive programme of relevant topics that pupils study as they move through the school.
- Pupils from Years 9 to 11 follow a very good careers programme that prepares them well for leaving school.

Commentary

102. Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress in both these discretely taught subjects. The school decided quite deliberately to teach both subjects within the timetable. The school rightly places great emphasis on pupils' personal development and this is evident in all the work that it does. Lessons in citizenship and PSHE build on this extremely well to promote pupils' personal development in a formal and planned way. The school is keen to extend the quality of the work that it does and is, therefore, very willing to explore and participate in new initiatives. For example, in addition to the school's highly effective school council, pupils also join with the mainstream school for a joint school council, while some pupils attend the Young People's Parliament in Birmingham. Pupils who are members of these committees take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, not only do they support events within the school they also organise activities for the whole school to raise money for others, such as Comic Relief and Children in Need.

103. The subject leader for both PSHE and Citizenship is extremely enthusiastic and very well organised. She has produced a highly age-appropriate syllabus that addresses PSHE topics such as personal care, safety,

healthy living, bullying, and sex and relationships in a systematic way, which builds upon knowledge and understanding as pupils move through the school. In addition, all pupils follow a discretely taught lesson on citizenship, which covers topics such as local issues in Year 7, national issues in Year 8 and global issues in Year 9. Older Year 10 and 11 pupils are asked to consider more complex topics like moral understanding, the electoral process and local government. Pupils are expected to complete homework, which may involve research, just like any other subject on their timetables. Consequently, pupils in all years develop knowledge and understanding of these aspects through activities that are appropriate to their age and interests. This equips them very well with the skills required to become full members of society. Year 11 pupils are very knowledgeable about their own rights but also that with their rights come responsibilities. Pupils are able to articulate passionately their beliefs and opinions in a very mature way.

104. The school also ensures that pupils are very well prepared for life after school. There is a high quality careers programme that supports pupils and gives them every opportunity to experience a variety of jobs and professions prior to leaving school. Pupils are aware of what a CV is and how important it is for future employers. The school has close links with local business and commerce. All Year 10 pupils experience work shadowing and in Year 11 pupils attend a two week work experience placement. Pupils also complete a detailed diary of their experience, which includes a critical report from their employer, plus very helpful annotated comments from teaching staff. Careers education and guidance in lessons is well supported through links with the school's Connexions personal adviser and access to a calm and relaxed careers library, full of helpful advice for pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	2
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3	3
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	2	2
Overall standards achieved		2
Students' achievement	2	2
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		2
Attendance	3	4
Attitudes	2	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2
The quality of education provided by the school		2
The quality of teaching	2	2
How well students learn	2	2
The quality of assessment	2	2
How well the curriculum meets students needs	2	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		2
Accommodation and resources	3	2
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		2
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	2	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). In a special school such as this standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not national standards.