

INSPECTION REPORT

OLD PARK SCHOOL

Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103880

Headteacher: Gill Cartwright

Lead inspector: George Derby

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th March 2004

Inspection number: 261975

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	129
School address:	Corbyn Road Russells Hall Estate Dudley West Midlands
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Telephone number:	01384 818905
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rita Tonks
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Old Park is a large, well-established, special school catering for up to 140 pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) as well as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). It caters for the full age range and has a very large further education department, which includes pupils and students from Year 10 to Year 14, taught in mixed age classes. Many other classes also have mixed age groups. There were no Nursery children at the time of the inspection and only two Reception children, who were taught alongside Year 1 pupils.

The school draws its pupils mainly from the Dudley area. Pupils mostly come from white (British) backgrounds, although 26 come from Pakistani heritages. There are small numbers from mixed backgrounds (white and black Caribbean and white and Asian) and also black Caribbean and other black backgrounds. Twenty-eight pupils are at an early stage of learning English, as this is not their main language. Their home languages are mainly Punjabi or Urdu. The difficulty they have in learning language is often related to the difficulties they have with learning generally.

The headteacher was appointed a year ago, although she had been a teacher and deputy headteacher (for a very short time) in the school previously. Staff recruitment has been problematic for some time and some posts remain unfilled.

In 2002 the local education authority (LEA) identified that the school was giving cause for concern. It has supported the school since then and has recently identified it as being in a position to manage its own development.

In order to improve educational and social inclusion, provision for special educational needs is being reviewed by Dudley LEA. The school is, therefore, subject to re-organisation proposals.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Modern foreign language
9009	Valerie Bradley	Lay inspector	
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage Special educational needs
22466	Diane Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music
11642	Carol Parkinson	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography History Personal, social and health education Religious education
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Science Physical education English as an additional language Post 16

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Old Park provides a poor education for its pupils. Pupils' achievements are limited and their progress is unsatisfactory. This is because the teaching is unsatisfactory overall and is poor in Years 10 to 14 (further education department). The curriculum is unsatisfactory because pupils are not taught all they should be. The physical and emotional care that pupils receive, and especially the personal care for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), is good. However, there are numerous outstanding health and safety issues, many linked to the poor state of the building and grounds and the limitations of its design for the current population. The leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory and poor in places; the headteacher's sound leadership is undermined by a lack of support from some senior staff. Governance is improving, but is unsatisfactory. Although a number of promising initiatives have been recently put in place, these have not yet had an effect on standards. The school provides poor value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Links with parents and the local community are good; parents and pupils like the school.
- The relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
- The provision for physical education is good.
- New initiatives introduced by the headteacher are beginning to improve the school.
- Staff do not use a wide enough range of strategies to develop pupils' communication skills.
- The behaviour of some older pupils often interferes with their and others' learning and the management of their behaviour is ineffective.
- Provision for pupils in the further education department is poor overall, although it is good for outdoor pursuits and the range of award-bearing courses is wide.
- The senior management team is ineffective and subject co-ordinators' roles are under-developed.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall and poor for Foundation Stage children.
- Resources, including staff expertise, are unsatisfactory.

Improvement since the school was inspected in 1998 has been poor. Little was done until the current headteacher was appointed. Since then she has worked extremely hard to deal with the legacy of considerable under-development and significant decline. The progress in addressing the five key issues has, however, been poor. For instance, the length of the school day has not been increased, and the full National Curriculum is still not in place.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 6	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 9	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 11	Poor	Satisfactory
Year 13	Poor	Satisfactory

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

Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall. This is a result of inconsistent support for pupils' communication skills, a lack of time for learning, and not enough being taught that should be

taught. Improvements in the lower part of the school mean that some pupils achieve well in those classes. However, the quality of provision is too uneven for pupils to make consistent progress. In the further education department, because the quality of teaching is poor and planning for areas of work such as key skills is poor, pupils make very limited progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory, although there is insufficient attention to the development of their social skills. Pupils' interest in their lessons and their behaviour is satisfactory in most parts of the school, though it is generally better for the youngest pupils. However, behaviour is unsatisfactory overall, because it is unsatisfactory for too many older pupils and students; for some students there are not effective programmes in place to help them to manage their behaviour. Attendance is unsatisfactory; punctuality to school and lessons is reasonable.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is unsatisfactory; the quality of teaching across the school is unsatisfactory overall and poor in the further education department. Across the school, there are individual classes where pupils are taught well but these are too few. Work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs or is interesting. Teaching is best in some of the classes for younger pupils, where much encouragement is provided and teachers insist that pupils behave well. The work of teaching assistants is sound, although, at times, they are not given enough to do when supporting a class. There are some very good examples of individual teachers beginning to work very well with outside specialists, such as the speech and language specialists, to support pupils' communication. However, the limited curriculum is supported by too few other opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. This, the unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and a lack of well-targeted support also limit pupils' progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school and the work of the governing body are unsatisfactory, but are improving. The leadership and management of the further education department are poor. The senior management team is ineffective. There is currently little support for the strategic development of the school given by two key members. However, others support the headteacher well. Management is also weak. The headteacher is determined to address the school's shortcomings, as is apparent in the number of initiatives she has put into place. She has a clear vision as to what needs to be done and is ably supported by one deputy headteacher. She is also well supported by the chair of governors, although, currently, governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities. There is a considerable amount to do in almost all areas of the school's work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils generally have positive views of the school. They do have some valid concerns, however. For instance, pupils' annual reports do contain limited information about progress. The school has now developed ways of gathering parents' views and is responding to their concerns. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve in order to improve the quality of the school's work and to raise the pupils' achievements (especially in the further education department) are to:

- Improve the leadership and management of the senior management team, and those of subject co-ordinators.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning (including staff expertise), the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and the resources for learning available.
- Support pupils' communication and their achievement through the use of signs, symbols, objects of reference and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Improve pupils' social development and the monitoring and management of behaviour of older pupils.
- Ensure that the curriculum is fully taught and that there is enough time for learning.
- Improve the quality of the accommodation and rigorously monitor and eliminate health and safety hazards.

and, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that:

- the National Curriculum and religious education are taught;
- the school complies with health and safety procedures;
- performance management is fully in place;
- the school sets meaningful whole-school targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' attainment is very low when they enter the school. They do not reach the standards expected for their age. This is due to their severe or profound learning difficulties. However, they could reach much higher standards than they do. Pupils' achievements are limited and are poor in the further education department. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils often made good progress. There has, therefore, been a considerable decline in their achievement since that time. Pupils whose home language is not English achieve at the same rate as their peers. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall, but in language development they make better progress because of the additional specialist support they receive. This is, however, too little in amount to affect most pupils greatly. Pupils with additional special educational needs also make limited progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make good progress and achieve well in physical education.
- Some pupils and groups achieve well in lessons in the lower part of the school.
- Progress in most subjects is unsatisfactory and in some subjects pupils are unable to make the progress they could because the subject or part of the subject is not taught.
- The school does not set whole-school targets to raise achievement.

Commentary

1. Physical education was a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection and this continues to be the case. Pupils make good progress across a wide range of all aspects of physical education. This is because the subject is taught well and it is well led and managed. All parts of the subject are taught and there is a good match of activity to pupils' needs and good account taken of any physical disability. Work builds well on what pupils have done and learned previously. There is good support from the swimming instructor and expertise in helping pupils with a wide range of special educational needs.
2. The headteacher has worked hard, and in the face of a lot of difficulty in recruitment, to appoint staff who have good knowledge of the National Curriculum and the national strategies. These keen and enthusiastic staff have been provided with good support to help them gain expertise in dealing with the range of special educational needs of pupils in their classes. Their knowledge of SLD, PMLD and autism is developing well and they clearly plan to build, in small steps, on what pupils have learned before. It is in these classes (usually in Years 1 to 7) where pupils tend to make the most progress.
3. The decline in pupils' achievement in most subjects is because of the number of key factors which have affected the school's work and progress in relation to personal targets and subjects. These principally include:
 - weak teaching overall and poor teaching in the further education department, including a lack of expertise in relation to the pupils' special educational needs;
 - a lack of ways of helping pupils to communicate or learn using signs, symbols, objects or reference and ICT;
 - some pupils' behaviour, which interferes with their learning and prevents the learning of others;
 - a curriculum which does not meet pupils' needs, does not enable pupils to make progress and where not all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught;
 - limited assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and no target-setting system to raise attainment;
 - a lack of development of subjects and under-developed co-ordination.

This has been in line with the general decline in the leadership and management of the school and although aspects of the school are beginning to improve there is much work still to be done.

4. The school does not set meaningful targets to raise pupils' attainment. Although 'zero' targets are set this does not meet statutory requirements and does not help the school to focus on what needs to be done to help pupils improve. This is partly to do with a past lack of an assessment system and tracking of pupils' progress. Both of these are at an early stage, with only data for one year (for pupils in Years 1 to 9) collected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to their work are satisfactory. Behaviour is unsatisfactory, particularly that of older pupils and students, and is not managed well. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, although social development is unsatisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory, although punctuality is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good when work is interesting.
- Staff have little external support and advice for managing pupils with complex difficulties and sometimes their approach reinforces the behaviour which is meant to be eliminated.
- The quality of playground supervision and vigilance needs to improve.
- There is little opportunity for pupils to take responsibility.

Commentary

5. When activities are well paced and work is interesting, pupils are enthusiastic about their work, and concentrate well. For example, when pupils in Years 7 to 9 were working with mainstream pupils in Holly Hall High School, they were able to work quietly and calmly, and concentrated well on what they were doing. Most pupils want to come to school; they enjoy school activities. Pupils appreciate the praise given, and the certificates awarded. However, when they are given un-stimulating tasks or are not working at appropriate levels, pupils sometimes lack motivation. Similarly, when the pace of the lesson is slow, or pupils are required to wait too long while others take their turn, pupils lose concentration and become noisy.
6. Pupils' behaviour ranges from good to unsatisfactory. The school works hard to avoid exclusion, and there were only two exclusions during the school year preceding the inspection. Both these pupils remain on roll. In one case there was very good liaison with external agencies to set up a work-related programme, which has proved successful.
7. The school generally operates as an orderly community, but some lessons are seriously disrupted when behaviour is not managed satisfactorily. In classes where clear parameters of acceptable behaviour and language are set and adhered to, pupils respond well, and behaviour is good. However, in other classes individual pupils, who exhibit challenging behaviour as part of their learning difficulties, interrupt a significant proportion of lessons. Although other pupils try to ignore this behaviour, it has a direct effect upon the levels of concentration in lessons. The school is developing a whole-school system of using words, signs or symbols to ensure that pupils are fully aware that certain behaviour is unacceptable. This is not yet embedded, so does not yet ensure the setting of clear standards of expected behaviour.
8. The school has reorganised the lunchtime arrangements well so that pupils whose behaviour was unacceptable now eat separately, with additional support. This helps to ensure that the remainder of the school population enjoy a calmer atmosphere. The youngest children continue to eat their lunch in their own classroom.

9. The school is reviewing the behaviour policy, and the system of rewards and sanctions. Training is ongoing regarding appropriate physical intervention and handling of pupils. Agreed behaviour support programmes have been initiated for pupils who exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. However, these are not underpinned by sound principles and consequently, many examples were seen where pupils' difficult behaviour was actually reinforced by staff. The school recognises that the initial guidelines set up for behaviour management in these programmes are too general and often inaccurate to ensure consistency of management. It is intended that future programmes will be more skilfully designed and specific to pupils' individual needs.
10. On the playground there is some physically intimidating behaviour, despite a high level of supervision. Staff are not always vigilant in noticing this developing. Both the school and parents are aware that bullying does occur. The school deals with any issues which do arise sensitively and swiftly. There is no evidence of racial tension, however.

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	91	2	0

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

11. Where pupils are given opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, most respond very positively, but generally opportunities to take responsibility are limited. The school encourages the development of skills for independent living; for example, older pupils are given good opportunities to acquire independent travel skills, and to access college courses. There is no formal opportunity for pupils to express their views and make decisions, although in some classes pupils are able to contribute their views and experiences in circle time.
12. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and are well below those found in similar schools nationally. To a large extent some of this is because pupils with severe medical conditions, including those with PMLD and some with deteriorating medical conditions, are away from school for long periods of time. However, there is a high level of unauthorised absence. The school monitors attendance daily, and liaises well with parents when pupils are away for long periods of time. The ethnic minority support worker plays a valuable role in ensuring that parents whose language is not English have an effective means of communication with the school. There is currently no education welfare officer attached to the school and it is difficult to fully follow up any attendance issues.
13. Pupils generally arrive punctually at school, nearly all via school transport shared with a nearby special school. If delays do occur regularly, there is appropriate liaison. The transport programme arranged by the LEA has a detrimental effect on the length of the school day; Old Park pupils are transported to school after those of the other school, and then collected before them at the end of the day. This severely restricts what can be taught and means that older pupils in particular have too little taught time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.8	School data	1.8

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

14. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given adequate opportunities to appreciate the range of cultures within the school. The school has

visits from musicians and drama groups, and pupils make appropriate visits into the community.

15. Collective worship meets requirements. Pupils enjoy the weekly opportunities to join together and celebrate their own successes and those of others. There is a monthly assembly to which parents are invited, when the 'Pupil of the month' award is made. The school celebrates Diwali and Eid, as well as Christian festivals. There are opportunities daily for pupils to reflect on a weekly theme.
16. All children are satisfactorily taught the difference between right and wrong. Staff provide good role models but do sometimes reinforce the inappropriate behaviour or habits of older pupils because they are unaware of how to manage complex behaviour difficulties. The majority of pupils are very aware, from their arrival in school, that their behaviour affects others and most show developing self-discipline. A number of pupils display low levels of self-esteem, often leading to aggressive behaviour.
17. Provision for the social development of pupils is unsatisfactory. The lack of support for pupils' communication is a significant limiting factor. Relationships between most pupils are good and constructive friendships are made. Pupils, especially older pupils, have good opportunities to make visits to widen the range of their experiences. Older pupils also have the benefit of two residential experiences. However, pupils' social development is not assisted when school staff tend to do things for pupils that they could very well do for themselves. There are few planned opportunities to help pupils to work together and sometimes pupils' inappropriate social behaviour, such as hugging or kissing staff or even visitors to school, is not commented on.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. This is because of significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, the poorly constructed programme of work in some subjects and especially in the further education department, and weaknesses in the monitoring pupils' progress and aspects of health and safety. These limitations mean that pupils do not achieve as much as they could do academically, although personal care is strong. Good relationships with parents and the community also have a positive impact on pupils' personal growth. The school is now making good use of external resources and professional support, something which was discouraged previously.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and the quality has declined significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although some staff understand the pupils needs well, overall staff have too little knowledge of these; planning for the pupils' needs is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment and the monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' expectations are often too low.
- Teachers do not consistently insist on high enough standards of behaviour.
- The quality of the teaching in the further education department is poor.
- There is some good teaching, particularly in Years 5, 6 and 7.
- Encouragement and engagement of pupils are good for the younger pupils in the Foundation Stage to Year 7, but pupils with the most complex needs are sometimes involved little in lessons because teachers do not use sufficient ways to help them learn.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (6%)	17 (25%)	33 (49%)	10 (15%)	1 (1%)	2 (3%)

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.

18. There are weaknesses in nearly every aspect of teaching. Although a bleak picture of teaching is painted, staff are caring and work hard to do their best for the pupils. Most are keen and eager to learn and to do better. A lack of knowledge of the pupils' needs and what the pupils need to learn next are at the heart of the weaknesses but also results in:
 - limited planning to meet pupils' needs;
 - limited strategies for helping pupils to learn;
 - low expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - the unsatisfactory management of the behaviour of older pupils;
 - the ineffective use of time in lessons;
 - not all pupils having the same opportunities to learn in lessons.
19. Teaching is satisfactory for the youngest pupils (in Reception and Years 1 and 2), where work is planned to build on what they have learned before and is interesting and motivating. There are also classes throughout the school where teaching is sometimes good (such as in Years 5, 6 and 7 and in some lessons in Year 8 and 9). The teaching here is often by staff the headteacher has recently appointed and where the greatest challenge is provided for pupils. Where teaching is good, the pace is lively, individual lessons are full of information and, by the great effort of all staff, the varying needs of different pupils are met. The school relies on a small number of temporary staff, because permanent appointments have been difficult to make. Some of these teachers produce high quality and challenging work for pupils, while others need considerable support. The lack of good school systems for induction and support make it difficult for temporary teachers to plan work and address pupils' specific needs; some do not understand how to make the curriculum meaningful for pupils with complex needs.
20. Teaching in the further education department (which includes pupils from Years 10 to 14) is not expert enough to deal with the very wide range of needs. A third of it was judged to be less than satisfactory. Some staff are very inexperienced and are given too little guidance or support in their teaching. Work planned often does not match the needs of pupils or students and, in some cases, results in teaching being very poor. Occasional unplanned changes in organisation result in classes which are unacceptably large and teachers are not able to manage learning effectively.
21. Teaching assistants are used well in the practical parts of lessons; when the whole class is being taught they sometimes have little to do. When available, a bilingual support assistant works with pupils with English as an additional language, giving good individual support, and translating between the mother language and English. She focuses well on language development, and records pupils' progress very well, later concentrating on areas where it is thought pupils need extra help. Most support is within lessons, in a warm and positive relationship between staff and pupils. This encourages good confidence and motivation for pupils to try hard, understand what is happening, and be fully involved.
22. Weaknesses in the school's systems, in particular in assessment procedures for meeting the needs of all pupils, the under-development of the curriculum, and the unsatisfactory resources, have all undermined the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
23. The weakness in day-to-day assessment procedures means that teachers do not plan effectively for all groups of pupils because their needs are not identified clearly and specifically

enough. This means that pupils do not have equal opportunities to learn, especially in Years 10 to 14 in the further education department, and so make insufficient progress overall. Teaching for pupils with additional special educational needs, such as autism, is unsatisfactory, because teachers do not have enough specialist knowledge of the particular difficulties. Some teachers are very inexperienced and are not aware of the range of communication systems which are available. There is limited use of signs and symbols, essential for communication with so many pupils.

24. The lack of use of ICT to support learning compounds the difficulties that teachers and pupils have in teaching and learning from a varied curriculum. Inadequate ICT to support pupils' access (often because of their physical difficulties) makes it more difficult for pupils to take part in lessons. A lack of expert support for managing the challenging behaviour of pupils with more complex needs has resulted in the pupils' difficulties being compounded and sometimes reinforced. This often prevents the pupils from learning. In addition, where general misbehaviour or silliness occurs in class, pupils are rarely asked to stop, although on occasion they responded quickly to verbal instructions from their peers.
25. The outdated curriculum and the school's previous poor financial planning have resulted in limited resources and limited staff training. The curriculum is not designed to build up or extend pupils' subject-specific skills over time and, as a result, teachers' planning is not well enough supported by the curriculum, and expectations of pupils are too low. Often, subject material taught is not appropriate to the age of pupils or is at their interest level. Pupils and students are often bored (although some passively accept what they are given), cannot make choices and have little control over what is happening to them. Often pupils have to wait their turn for a long time to take part in an activity and, overall, the use of time is unsatisfactory.

Assessment

26. Although there has been some improvement in the way the school assesses, monitors and evaluates pupils' progress in subjects since the last inspection, not enough has been done. Some teachers and support staff have strong informal knowledge of where pupils are in all of the work that they are doing but this is not underpinned by monitoring and assessment processes in all areas of the school's work. Although the school has recently introduced the 'P' levels¹ in English, mathematics, science and PSHE, these are not yet informing teachers' planning sufficiently, and assessment in other areas of the curriculum remains unsatisfactory overall, except for physical education and personal, social and health education and for Foundation Stage children,. In other subjects, although teachers generally know what pupils can do, they do not know whether this constitutes progress from previous years and do not systematically record this. Reports to parents exemplify pupils' experiences in these subjects but rarely give a clear idea as to how what the child does now constitutes progress from previous years.
27. Assessment and monitoring practice in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory because the Foundation Profile is now in place and staff are systematically collecting evidence towards the goals set. They have good informal knowledge of the children's needs and use the assessments provided by visiting specialists well to guide their practice. In English, practice in assessment is satisfactory and staff, particularly in Years 1 to 9, take pupils' individual education plan targets and English needs into account. In the further education department, assessment in relation to the accredited courses is satisfactory. However, assessment in relation to meeting pupils' additional special educational needs and the use of this to plan the next steps in learning are not.
28. Individual education plans are of satisfactory quality and generally identify appropriate targets for pupils, although not all make clear which targets have main priority. In addition, for some

¹ These are the nationally recognised 'performance' levels (1 to 8) which precede the National Curriculum levels of attainment.

pupils who have challenging and other difficult behaviours, the behaviour plans put in place are not adequately monitored for their effectiveness and there is a lack of consistency of approach. The school is aware of this and has recently established a working party to develop policy and practice in the management of behaviour. However, for individual pupils there is the need for more expert teaching and external advice to support the very committed teaching assistant support available.

The curriculum

The curriculum does not provide a sufficiently wide range of subjects for all pupils. The school does not do enough to enrich the basic curriculum with wider activities and opportunities. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.
- The time available to teach the curriculum is well short of the recommended amount of time.
- Some groups of pupils are not taught as wide a range of subjects as others.
- The school's progress in developing the curriculum since the previous inspection has been poor; planning fails to support pupils' progress.
- Staff have insufficient experience of teaching and supporting pupils with the range of needs currently in the school and some have little knowledge of the National Curriculum programmes and how to adapt them to meet the pupils' needs.
- The accommodation restricts pupils' learning and progress.
- Insufficient resources limit learning.

Commentary

29. The way the school organises classes, many with mixed age groups spanning key stages, makes it very difficult for the school to plan and organise activities which meet statutory requirements. The main subject weaknesses are:
- Religious education is not fully taught throughout the school; for some it is part of personal, social and health education but the religious education links are not clear and for others, such as those in further education, it is not taught to the majority of pupils or students.
 - A modern foreign language is not taught; pupils are said to be disapplied but are not.
 - Citizenship is developing but is insufficiently planned for.
 - Activities for Year 1 pupils is based on Foundation Stage planning; there is no planning to identify which parts of the National Curriculum the activities relate to and consequently parts of the programmes of study are missed.
 - In many cases throughout the school, pupils do not have literacy and numeracy lessons each day.
 - Other subjects such as history, geography and music are often short of time.
 - Teachers do not plan to include ICT in their lessons, which could support pupils' abilities to communicate, as well as enriching their learning of different subjects.
 - There is little or no clear planning to include literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. .
30. The time for learning is far too short. This was highlighted in the previous inspection report, and no action has been taken. The time is further shortened by occasional late arrivals and settling into classes, and by finishing early to get ready for the transport – in some cases, very early. Often, breaks are extended informally by five or ten minutes. Lessons frequently start late; up to 35 minutes was noted during the inspection.
31. Some groups of pupils are not taught as wide a range of subjects as others. In many cases, teachers do not have the skills to teach pupils with autism. These pupils tend not to take part in many lessons in suitable ways, or are doing something entirely different from the other pupils for long periods. Such activities are often not positive or well-planned occasions. Pupils

who have PMLD have a curriculum that has improved since the previous inspection, and is now more appropriate to their needs, particularly with the multi-sensory activities that take place. However, they still do not have a full range of opportunities in school, or in out-of-school activities. They have little access to appropriate technology to help them learn.

32. The wider opportunities for the more able pupils at the top of the school are much better than they are for less able pupils, and for those who are younger. Some pupils have good experiences out of school, such as the links with local colleges, outdoor pursuits, and work experience placements. There are too few opportunities for most pupils to do something worthwhile at lunchtimes, such as in school clubs. Links with other schools for sporting activities are few, other than an annual swimming gala. Opportunities for organised extra-curricular activities are restricted because of transport arrangements, but older pupils can attend a youth club on Friday evenings.
33. Pupils whose home language is not English have the same access to the curriculum as other pupils. They join in with lessons as far as their abilities and their teachers' skills permit.

Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning

34. There are insufficient numbers of experienced and well-qualified teachers to meet the wide range of needs of pupils. This is particularly significant for those pupils with complex needs and for those who are autistic. A part-time bilingual support assistant helps pupils with English as an additional language, but this is not enough to inform all teachers of the pupils' understanding. New teachers have a mentor and are supported well by colleagues. Temporary teachers are not as well supported; some have very little guidance on what the pupils know, understand and can do, so that they can plan appropriate work for them. There are significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.
35. The numbers of support staff are adequate, although they are not always well deployed. In the further education department they are often responsible for planning work and teaching groups. A few are training for higher levels of accreditation; however, they are not always deployed where they are most needed.
36. Some parts of the accommodation are poor and there are many health and safety hazards:
 - The library area has been well thought out and pupils enjoy using it; the ICT area is open-plan (with the library) which limits pupils' concentration.
 - There are no specialist rooms for science, art and design, food technology, design and technology or music, although there is a small, poorly planned and inaccessible kitchen area and woodwork room.
 - The swimming/hydrotherapy pool area is still without adequate changing facilities as mentioned in the last report.
 - As groups are large, circulation space for wheelchair access and space for older pupils and students are limited in some areas.
 - The facilities for personal hygiene are very poor and do not promote dignity and independence, although attempts have been recently made to improve them.
 - The staff have tried hard to provide a sensory room; however, this has few effects and the temporary classroom is poor.
 - The temporary classroom for the Foundation Stage children has poor toilet facilities and access; the play area has been separately fenced, although outdoor play equipment is limited.
37. The school has suffered from limited investment in resources over past years. Governors and the current headteacher are working hard to rectify as many shortcomings as they can. Those resources that had been purchased previously have not always been directed to where the need lies. Computers resources (hardware and software) are inadequate and particularly limited to support pupils with the most complex needs. There are few resources that are colourful and exciting to reinforce learning across subjects. They are not easily accessible and

are often stored untidily making them difficult to locate; these weaknesses discourage pupils' independence. There are no specific areas to ensure pupils with autism can focus on targeted work in order to establish a work pattern.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and health and safety of pupils are unsatisfactory, mainly because of the lack of attention to health and safety. The support, advice and guidance the pupils receive are insufficiently based on adequate monitoring. There is no formal opportunity for pupils to express their views and make decisions, and this is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between most adults and most pupils are good; they have trusted adults they can turn to.
- The school health adviser's expertise is well used.
- The quality of bilingual support for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- There are improving relationships and collaboration with external agencies.
- A large number of health and safety concerns were notified to the school during the inspection.

Commentary

38. The headteacher, teachers and support staff provide caring and thoughtful personal support to pupils; they are accessible and responsive to pupils' pastoral needs. Pupils enjoy good relationships with the adults within the school, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Arrangements to ensure that the youngest children settle quickly and well are satisfactory, and support for parents when these children enter the school is good.
39. The school health adviser (school nurse) plays a valuable role in monitoring pupils' health and medication, together with participating in hydrotherapy sessions and contributing to the health education programme. Physical care, especially for those pupils with complex medical conditions/PMLD is good.
40. The speech and language therapist, the physiotherapists and the Social Services Learning Disability Team all confirm that a good working relationship is now in place, with the school welcoming their input, which was not previously the case. The advice and support from these external agencies, though not as extensive or frequent as the school or the parents would wish, are now well used. In the past the school has not always sought advice and support from external agencies, for example with pupils whose behaviour has been deteriorating.
41. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education has been introduced, and when fully in place throughout the school, should have a positive effect on pupils' personal development. However, the monitoring of pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory due to a lack of assessment information, and targets for pupils to attain being too generalised.
42. There are no formal procedures in place for consulting pupils. A school council is planned, but not yet in place. In some classes pupils are able to contribute their views and experiences in circle time.
43. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. A deputy headteacher is the designated teacher with overall responsibility, and both he and the school health adviser have been suitably trained. There is regular updated training for all members of staff. Child protection guidelines are in all classrooms, and the school is aware of the additional vulnerability of pupils who have little spoken language.

44. Although regular safety checks are now carried out, and systems are meant to be in place to ensure that items identified are rectified, a large number of concerns regarding health and safety were reported to the headteacher during the inspection. This was also the case in the last inspection. Although a deputy headteacher has had long-standing responsibility for overseeing health and safety matters, the work undertaken in this area has been grossly ineffective. Risk assessments are carried out, for example for the swimming pool and when pupils go out of school on educational visits. Risk assessments are starting to be carried out on individual identified pupils, to assess the risk of harm to themselves and to others. Improvement in this area, however, has been far too slow.
45. Careers advisers attend transition reviews when pupils are aged 14, and are appropriately involved in supporting pupils when choices are made with regard to college placements.
46. The overall support for pupils whose home language is not English is satisfactory. The actual quality of it is good, but there is not enough of it. A bilingual assistant is well able to support pupils, but is only available for two days per week for the whole school. The support is well targeted by the support assistant working closely with the headteacher. It is mainly aimed at the younger pupils, who are generally the ones most in need of additional help. The support is also good in that it also extends to families, with home visits, translation of documents, and attendance at meetings with family members.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and its parents and carers is good. The quality of links that the school has developed with the community is also good. The quality of links that have been developed with other schools is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents now feel welcome in the school and those whose first language is not English are well supported.
- Information about pupils' progress is beginning to improve but the quality of reports still has some way to go to be acceptable.
- A small group of enthusiastic parents is helping the school to improve its resources.
- Links with other schools are improving.

Commentary

47. After a period when parents felt unwelcome in school and ill informed, the school is being increasingly successful in creating a good working relationship with parents and carers. Parents report that they now feel welcome in school, and can approach the school if they have problems.
48. Following a consultation questionnaire last year, which confirmed parents' mainly very positive views of the school, the school has responded well to parents' requests for more information regarding the progress their child has made and more parental contact with the school and other parents.
49. The introduction of 'P' scales, which record very small stages of progress, is beginning to provide parents with the additional information they have requested. Parents are able to support their child's learning when reading and library books are taken home regularly. There is regular telephone contact between school and home, which is augmented by home-school communication books. Parents are being increasingly involved in setting pupils' individual targets.
50. Pupils' annual reports of their progress mainly conform to requirements and are generally satisfactory. They give parents information about the work covered, some information as to

what pupils know and can do, and a little about progress made. However, there is insufficient information as to the next step forward or how parents can help their child. The reports of the Year 1 class children relate to Foundation Stage areas of learning, rather than the required subject areas and it is not possible to identify the progress in relation to the National Curriculum programmes which should have been taught. Reports prepared for pupils' Annual Reviews are scant, giving minimal information regarding previous targets and progress made towards them. Targets then set are not sufficiently specific or measurable.

51. The school prospectus gives parents a good range of useful information. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now conform to requirements. Parents are increasingly taking advantage of regular coffee mornings; as well as providing a most useful opportunity to meet and share experiences and problems, parents are given information on aspects such as literacy, and are consulted on matters such as personal, social and health education, including sex education.
52. A small group of parents meets regularly and, having reorganised the library, they are currently making and providing some very high quality resources to support literacy in the school. The Parents and Friends Association is in the process of being re-formed to assist the school's fund-raising and social events.
53. The school provides a good range of visits into the local and wider community, which effectively extend the range of pupils' experiences. These visits, which have included one to the Houses of Parliament made primarily by pupils in Years 7 to 9, and the impending acquisition of a second minibus, should enable more children to share these valuable experiences.
54. After a period when links with other schools lapsed, links with other schools remain under-developed. However, the school has now established a very valuable link with a local high school, where more able older pupils have the opportunity of working on simple computer research projects alongside Year 9 pupils from this high school. Old Park pupils look forward to these sessions, and have increasingly been accepted and welcomed into the high school. Pupils from the high school undertake community service and work experience placements within Old Park.
55. Older pupils regularly attend courses at Dudley College, and are currently undertaking courses in design and technology, video production and fashion. They work alongside pupils from other special schools, and have a good opportunity to work in a proper workshop facility. There is satisfactory liaison when the oldest pupils transfer to college courses, primarily at Dudley and Halesowen Colleges.
56. The school is expanding its links with other special schools, and some subject co-ordinators have met their counterparts from these schools. In addition, the personal social and health education programme has been formulated through the Dudley Health Promoting Schools initiative.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school, overall, is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory and she has a clear view of how the school needs to develop, but has much to do with too few experienced staff. She is supported well by governors, and especially the chair. However, governance is only just developing and is unsatisfactory. The headteacher has faced many barriers to improvement and to raising pupils' achievements. She is working hard to overcome these, although progress is slow. The work of the senior management team is unsatisfactory. The management of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection has been poor and has left the school in a very weak state.
- The headteacher is taking decisive action to enable improvement to take place.
- There is an inadequate senior management team; too much work is given to the staff who are successful in their roles and too little support is provided by others.
- The roles of co-ordinators are under-developed.
- The chair of governors provides much needed support for the school's work and is aware of the substantial issues facing the school.

Commentary

57. The school has suffered greatly over past years from a lack of investment and development in nearly all aspects of its work. Some inappropriate decision making has left the current headteacher with some complex issues to resolve. Although day-to-day management of the budget has been adequate, long-term strategic financial planning has been unsatisfactory. This lack of investment has been especially in quality staffing, in resources for learning and in the school's accommodation. It has also failed to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of staff, especially in relation to the more complex needs of pupils now being admitted to the school and for the requirement for a greater range of ways of teaching. The headteacher's assessment of the school, when appointed a year ago, was of a school in urgent need of development in all areas.
58. The school has failed to sustain the many strengths identified in the last inspection and to adequately address the key issues, resulting in a workforce which has been demoralised and disaffected. Fourteen staff have left since 1998 and six within the last two years. The lack of experience of staff, and the recruitment of staff generally, has proved a major barrier, although the headteacher's approach to appointing some teachers with good National Curriculum knowledge from mainstream schools is beginning to pay off. Expertise is being developed through support provided to new teachers and a broader range of opportunities is being provided for pupils.
59. The headteacher has had much to do and still has a considerable amount to do further. As a teacher in the school for many years, and for a short time as deputy headteacher, she has a good working knowledge of the deficiencies of the school and its potential strengths. Her recent training in school leadership has helped her deal effectively with many of the issues. A significant stride has already been in the building of staff morale and investment in resources and accommodation.
60. The headteacher, like so many staff, is relatively inexperienced but has a strong determination to make things work. She has, since her appointment, produced two adequate strategic school improvement plans in broad terms. These do accurately identify the crucial issues the school faces. For instance, the management of challenging behaviour is clearly identified as well as the need to improve pupils' communication skills. The plan addresses short-term goals, as well as long-term aspects in outline. However, the plan is insufficiently prioritised, resulting in some aspects rolling on from one year to the next. There is sometimes insufficient detail in the actions to be taken and the outcomes the school intends to achieve. In addition, the way success is measured is more about 'things done' and not about the quality of what has been put in place. The current plan is not costed. The headteacher recognises that much external support is needed for actions to be successful. This was also a barrier initially, as the school had previously 'closed its doors' on this kind of help, but through developing stronger relationships with external agencies, support is now being provided.
61. The headteacher is working hard to develop the senior management team, although two members are not charged with sufficient responsibility and do little to support development. The responsibilities they do have, such as for health and safety, are undertaken

unsatisfactorily. Their workload and roles are 'historic' and the headteacher is planning to establish change through a range of mechanisms. The result of these weaknesses is that some senior staff have too much to do, although they are enthusiastic and willing to take on more responsibility.

62. The role of subject co-ordinators is under-developed. They have little strategic involvement in developing their subjects. Many are inexperienced. Although some are beginning to develop their areas of responsibility, such as in English and in science, most have little oversight of standards in their subjects or of the quality of teaching. This is a considerable difference to the judgement in the last inspection, where great improvements had been made in curriculum co-ordination. Some development work in English, mathematics and science has been undertaken and aspects of planning have been monitored. However, in many subjects the co-ordinator has little influence of the subject he or she is responsible for. In ICT, for instance, there is no oversight of pupils' achievements, what is taught and how well is it taught. There is little strategic view of the subject development or of the crucial resources needed for learning the skills in ICT, its use across the curriculum or how it might support access for learning.
63. Governors have a high commitment to the school and are now beginning to give practical support to the headteacher to enable her to achieve the substantial improvement needed in the school. The chair of governors has achieved much in involving governors in the school's work and helping them understand their roles and responsibilities. For many years they were unaware of their roles and received little information in important areas of the school's work. They are now starting to be in a position to help the school move forward, but are at a very early stage in their own development. For instance, they help review the school's progress in relation to the objectives in its improvement plan, although they are unable to assess cost effectiveness. They have also very strongly supported the school at LEA review consultation meetings. There is still a lot to learn and, although they have undertaken training, much more training is needed in many areas. However, there are many areas which governors are responsible for which are weak and do not meet statutory requirements. These include provision of the National Curriculum and religious education, aspects of health and safety, performance management and school target setting. Performance management is now beginning to be implemented although there is little impact on improvement at this stage. The school does not set whole-school targets for improvement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,339,700
Total expenditure	1,388,049
Expenditure per pupil	9,774.99

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	76,275
Balance carried forward to the next	27,926

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in the Foundation Stage or on the children's achievement. Only two children of Reception age were in the Foundation Stage at the time of the inspection. These children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils in the school's Foundation Department. It is not possible to report in full on the areas of the Foundation Stage work, because insufficient lessons were observed and planning and record keeping, although improving, are not yet detailed enough to give a clear picture of all children's experiences. The curriculum for the Foundation Department is planned and linked into all areas of learning and these are generally identified on timetables. However, planning needs to be more systematic to ensure children have sufficient experiences over time within each area of learning.

Although teaching in lessons observed was always satisfactory and sometimes good, the day-to-day experiences that each child has are not yet tracked carefully enough to ensure that all children take part in all learning experiences offered over a week. At times, because of the complexity of children's needs and the number of staff available, some children wander aimlessly or engage in repetitive behaviour, whilst staff attend to others' learning needs. However, some good examples of staff providing for children's individual special educational needs were seen, for example in introducing a Moon symbol programme to one child with visual impairment and in the support for children's physical needs.

The Foundation Stage accommodation is poor. The department is housed in a large temporary classroom whose design limits pupil independence and which is poorly maintained. For example, the lack of easy wheelchair access to cloakrooms means children wash their hands after activities in a washing up bowl in the classroom itself. There is a strong teaching partnership between the teaching assistants and the new Foundation Stage teacher but the lack of resources, poor accommodation, inappropriate organisation of the classrooms and satisfactory but, at times, limited curriculum mean that the sound teaching does not have the impact on achievement that it could. There are, however, strong and trusting relationships established between adults and children and these support children's engagement in their learning well. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to establish communication with children and use appropriate technology where this is available. They work particularly well with visiting specialists to ensure guidance given is followed through.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 4 and in POST 16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is unsatisfactory overall; the use of signs and symbols for supporting communication for the development of early literacy skills is weak.
- The relatively new co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be achieved.
- There is now a strong partnership with visiting professionals such as the speech and language therapist and this supports staff awareness and skills.
- Strong story telling by all staff and the use of role-play foster a love of books, but a wider range of early reading and writing experiences needs to be in place.
- Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve unsatisfactorily, because of limited resources, such as technological aids to support learning and communication.

Commentary

64. The school has made too little progress in its provision for English since the last inspection. The use of sign and symbols and objects of reference continues to be inconsistent. This limits the achievements of many pupils in communicating, speaking and understanding. It also limits their achievement in early literacy skills, particularly early writing. Achievement in all aspects of English is currently unsatisfactory throughout the school because of this. It is also limited because of the inconsistent quality of teaching, the lack of planning to build on what pupils' already know in some classes and the lack of a detailed enough programme to support less experienced staff's teaching of the most complex pupils. Although staff establish good relationships with pupils and pupils demonstrate pleasure in their communications with them, there are missed opportunities for extending this further in almost all lessons, because of these shortcomings.
65. Although the majority of teaching of English is satisfactory or better, it is highly variable and unsatisfactory overall. Poor and unsatisfactory teaching was mainly observed in Years 10 to 14. Most such teaching was from temporary staff, although other lessons in the school also had limitations. Weaker and poor teaching lacked challenge for pupils and students and was poorly planned. It demonstrated limited awareness of techniques for teaching English to pupils with learning difficulties and communicative needs. It did not fit clearly into a coherent programme of study that would support pupils' or students' progress.
66. Pupils enter the school with very delayed communication skills. By Year 2 most are demonstrating more interest and involvement in the world and make their needs known through the use of simple switches, eye contact, gesture and a small number of signs. A few use spoken language and have a growing number of words and phrases. They use pencils, crayons and paints to make simple marks. The highest attainers in Year 2 recognise a small number of letters and enjoy joining in a favourite story, identifying objects with it. Teachers and teaching assistants in the primary departments have expressive story-telling skills and, with some good use of visual aids and props, this means that most pupils enjoy story times tremendously and try to join in. However, even in these sessions, the small size of the classrooms and the lack of experience of some teachers mean that some pupils are inappropriately positioned to enable them to join in the lesson easily.
67. Pupils do, however, make strongest progress in their early reading skills, because their interest in books is well supported and staff use and print out symbols to support recognition of words or pictures. The lowest attainers in the secondary department are happy to settle to look and share books but could do more to improve their reading and writing skills. The highest attainers read and write a simple sentence with only a little support. Children who have the highest ability make satisfactory progress over time, because they follow spoken English more readily and their reading skills are supported through regular reading sessions and an ICT program. In addition, the award-bearing course that they follow from Year 10 means that they try very hard to apply their reading and limited writing skills. They are very proud of their achievements. However, the lowest attaining groups in the secondary department and those in the further education department make limited progress. Staff do not have sufficient understanding of how to adapt the opportunities and the work in English for them. These pupils spend too much time on handwriting, colouring and sticking exercises when better use could be made of objects of reference, symbols and technological aids. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good use of the local library on a weekly basis and this supports well their interest in books and in reading.
68. The school's response to the National Literacy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 initiatives is not yet fully in place; this is very late and means that some pupils' English experiences do not have the breadth that they should. Lower attaining pupils in the further education department have a practical curriculum which is not geared towards extending their English and communication skills. Not all pupils in this department receive the amount of literacy and communication support they should for their age and stage. Teachers' planning throughout the

school is highly variable and not underpinned by detailed whole-school longer-term plans that guide teachers in planning lessons.

69. Assessment has improved because the 'P' levels are now in place, but staff are not yet used to taking these into account and adapting their teaching plans accordingly. However, recent changes in the school mean that English is now well led and managed by a strong practitioner who is determined to improve provision. The co-ordinator has drawn up a suitable action plan and staff training has resulted in some individual teachers and teaching assistants gaining confidence in their use of signs. However, this is not yet widespread enough to improve standards. Previously, joint working with the speech and language therapists has been limited, but since the new headteacher's appointment there has been strong collaboration and some very good joint teaching.

Language and literacy across curriculum

70. This is unsatisfactory. The school does not currently have a system for ensuring that pupils' literacy skills are systematically planned for and supported in other subjects. Generally, individual education plan targets in communication are followed up in lessons, although the lack of signs and symbol use and, in some classes, objects of reference, means that this is not consistent. Books and objects of reference are appropriately used to promote pupils' interest in topics and direct their interest towards pictures and events. In the further education department work experience and other college courses provide good support for pupils' application of literacy skills, although less so for lower attaining pupils.

Modern foreign language

71. A modern foreign language is not taught. Pupils are deemed to be disapplied from the subject at the end of Year 6, although the subject was taught to some groups at the time of the previous inspection. However, in the pupils' statements or annual reviews there is little evidence of disapplication. This was an issue for the school to address following the last inspection. This has not been done and pupils' opportunities are now even more limited.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of subject expertise and knowledge of the needs of pupils with SLD, PLMD and autism impacts negatively on teaching, learning and pupils' achievement; the result of all this is that pupils' achievements are limited. .
- There are limited systems in place to provide consistency of approach for managing challenging behaviour.
- The time for pupils to learn the subject is limited.
- There is very little ICT to support mathematical development, skills are not taught and resources are poor; teaching is unsatisfactory overall.
- The appointment of new staff is providing a more secure approach to teaching and learning the skills from the National Numeracy Strategy for Years 1 to 6.
- Whole-school co-ordination of mathematics is very new and there is no monitoring to ensure that numeracy is promoted through work in other subjects.

Commentary

72. The most effective teaching occurs mainly in Years 1 to 9 where it is satisfactory, although this is not the case in every class. Where there is good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants pupils are on task, engaged and know what they have to do. A few teachers are new to the school. They generally have good subject knowledge but require additional training

for their knowledge about pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. The numeracy strategy has been implemented in Years 1 to 6 and staff have used the principles well in their lessons. It has not yet been introduced for most of Years 7 to 9, however. Where the strategy is used, planning is more thorough but is not always linked to individual education targets. Time is used effectively, lessons are lively and the approach to learning in small steps involves most pupils. For example, young pupils enjoy matching scarves and hats to pupils and putting pairs of shoes together to develop an idea about 'one' and 'two'. Other pupils enjoy songs where they count and use actions to reinforce numbers. Where relationships and pupil management are good, achievement is usually satisfactory in lessons. Achievement would be higher if pupils had access to appropriate software, computers and switch access to reinforce mathematical learning and independence. Opportunities for pupils are limited by a lack of use of signs and symbols to promote communication skills.

73. Where there are low expectations and poorly planned lessons, work is unclear and poorly presented, resulting in very restless behaviour and low achievement. The most significant weakness in the teaching is the management of some pupils' behaviour, which results in some pupils not being attentive, not taking a full part in the learning, and distracting other pupils from learning. Pupils with more complex needs are included in games and songs; a few are encouraged to make choices by eye pointing and tracking but often little appropriate work is given to engage them in learning. The small classrooms, the lack of appropriate resources and a shortfall in staff with expertise contribute to this.
74. Teaching and learning for pupils in Years 10 to 14 (the further education department) are unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to teachers' lack of knowledge of how to teach mathematics to pupils with SLD. It is also due to far too many pupils taught at the same time with high levels of noise and lack of appropriate work. Records of work fail to show progress. There is a heavy reliance on worksheets; they are not annotated to inform students how to improve their work. Temporary teachers are not informed about the knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils, or supported to provide stimulating and appropriate work. Pupils with more complex needs achieve very little in lessons although the teaching assistants try very hard to engage them. Teachers are more confident using mental mathematics where students enjoy, for instance, adding small amounts together. A few students achieve simple addition and write numbers to ten, but worksheets are poorly presented and most students need individual support. More appropriate work is evident in displays and work files, where the most able students are engaged in practical work and college work that supports mathematical learning. For example, pupils sequence the preparation of packed lunches, cut wood to the correct length with support in technology and practise travel and shopping skills in the community.
75. Co-ordination of mathematics across the school is unsatisfactory. A good start had been made by the previous co-ordinator to improve planning and provision but there has been a gap in provision with the new co-ordinator a very recent appointment. There is good liaison between new teachers to support each other and share resources. However, the lack of leadership and management giving a clear direction to the development of mathematics limits the cohesion of the approach to the subject. Where there is good practice, daily assessment is emerging, supported by the recently introduced 'P' scales.
76. Procedures for assessment and moderation are new and not yet embedded in the curriculum. Assessment in Years 10 and 11 and in the Post 16 department is more secure, where students follow accredited courses. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection where progress in all areas was satisfactory. Recent developments, linked to the appointment of new teachers, implementation of primary strategies and the setting by ability for Years 7, 8 and 9, are bringing about improvements in performance. Teachers of young pupils make appropriate resources but resources to support learning are generally poor.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. There is no planning or monitoring in place to promote numeracy across the curriculum. This is unsatisfactory. The support for numeracy across the curriculum is limited and little specific numeracy was promoted in lessons during the inspection. Evidence taken from display work, photographs and incidental comments in observations show a few examples. For instance, pupils are supported to measure in science but struggle to recognise the numbers; they swim lengths at the pool and a few know they have achieved 25 metres. In physical education pupils are encouraged to count steps.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable because they have not been taught well enough in the past
- The teaching is now satisfactory, and is improving sufficiently to raise pupils' learning.
- A new subject co-ordinator is bringing a satisfactory level of organisation and direction to the subject.

Commentary

78. Much of the work has been unchallenging, and pupils have had little to do that has encouraged them to think scientifically. Throughout the school, pupils' progress has been too slow in all aspects of science, and their work in many lessons has been in the form of colouring, and cutting and pasting. Pupils' understanding of even the most basic scientific ideas is very limited, and they often do not recall very simple facts about what they have been doing earlier in the lesson, or in previous weeks. However, more recent teaching is satisfactory, and was good in some lessons during the inspection. Pupils are now beginning to learn satisfactorily. The best part of this subject is the good scientific approach through investigations that interest pupils. Teachers are beginning to challenge pupils more. Pupils are building up their understanding of what a fair test is, how to carry out a basic experiment, such as which surfaces are best for toy vehicles to run over, and how to make a simple record of their findings. It is rare, however, for teachers to expect pupils to do any written recording of their work, or to practise their numeracy skills, and it is virtually unknown for pupils to use computers in any way to support and broaden their learning. The major weakness in the teaching is the management of some pupils' behaviour, which results in some pupils not being attentive, not taking a full part in the learning, and distracting other pupils from learning.
79. A new co-ordinator has recently temporarily taken over responsibility for the subject and is proving to be effective in introducing a new plan of what should be taught throughout the school. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject to plan challenging lessons. However, they do not directly link their plans either to the National Curriculum or to the commercial scheme that has been introduced. This means that the co-ordinator and senior managers in school cannot easily check whether or not teachers are teaching all of the required topics. Too little effort is made to observe teachers in lessons in order to judge, and hopefully improve, the standard of teaching. The lack of a specialist room limits the range of topics that could be taught, especially to the older and more able pupils and students.
80. There has been too little improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is still not fully in place, despite the recent introduction of the 'P' scales. Teachers are not yet modifying their lesson plans in relation to what they learn about pupils' achievements or responses in lessons. The subject is again undergoing a period of re-organisation that has disrupted learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The opportunities to learn a wide range of skills in ICT are limited.
- Teachers lack expertise in teaching the subject; as a result, pupils learn and achieve very little.
- Resources are inadequate and do not fully meet pupils' needs.
- There is little use of ICT to support pupils' learning and communication.
- The subject is inadequately led and managed.

Commentary

81. Pupils' achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory overall. Too little opportunity is provided for them to develop their skills during their time in the school and younger pupils demonstrate 'basic' ICT skills similar to students in the further education department, some who are as old and 18 or 19 years. This is because staff do not know how to plan activities in ICT for pupils with SLD or PMLD, and give them insufficient work to do. Teaching is unsatisfactory, although teaching assistants do much to support pupils. They mostly help pupils well although, occasionally, too much support is given.
82. In many lessons, pupils with PMLD sat and did little. Often equipment was provided which was inappropriate or the pupils were incorrectly positioned, such as a mouse provided for a pupil who clearly could not use it or pupils working resting a keyboard on their knees. The school does not have specially adapted resources to aid positioning of switches, for instance, and the range of software for the most disabled pupils is limited; it does not enable them to build their skills in very small steps.
83. Many pupils with SLD follow an 'independent learning program' in mathematics during their ICT lessons which assesses their number skills as they use it and provides activities to move them onto the next step. The only ICT skills required were using a mouse to select and drag objects. Pupils using this software demonstrated they were familiar with the routine of this and could mostly work by themselves. However, the actual mathematical content was also limited in challenge and some pupils pressed keys at random to complete an activity. In too few lessons did the pupils learn any ICT skills. Although some may occasionally follow work from the programme of study, this is often only for a short while during a lesson and the work fails to challenge most. In a few lessons, older pupils were asked to explore the Internet to find things out or to create a picture using the tool icons on the screen. However, this is often not sustained and pupils are allowed to 'wander' into other programs, or to sit passively doing nothing.
84. Pupils are taught in the school's ICT suite, which is also part of the library. This sometimes is problematic for other groups in the room and pupils in the library part can be a cause of distraction for those learning ICT. The room is poorly laid out with no specific teaching area. Virtually no use was made of the interactive whiteboard and although some teachers attempted to demonstrate a particular skill on the PC itself, this was soon abandoned once they realised that most pupils were unable to see what they were doing when crowded around a small monitor.
85. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although the scheme of work contains all that it needs to, there is insufficient detail to help teachers who lack expertise in teaching the subject to pupils with SLD or PMLD. Most teachers do not follow the programme as laid down and parts are missed out because of lack of expertise or resources. Support is provided by the co-ordinator to those who request it, although she does not oversee planning, monitor teaching or strategically plan for the development of the subject in order to raise standards. Computer resources are largely in the hands of the LEA which decides, in

consultation with the school, what the school has. This has resulted in equipment in the past which has been inappropriate. Equipment is to be renewed in the future although there is a long way to go to ensure that hardware and software will fully meet the needs of the pupils at Old Park. Software to support the learning needs of pupils is inadequate and that which the school has is little used, except in the lower part of the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. This is unsatisfactory. Computers are used in a limited way to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Although some higher attaining pupils can write with support using a word processor or create text and graphics using desktop publishing, not all are provided with ways of 'typing' their own text or graphics. Pupils' writing is mainly supported by staff recording for pupils rather than them doing this for themselves.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Very little evidence was gathered for these subjects. They were sampled, with only one lesson able to be seen in geography. It is therefore not possible to report on these subjects.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory** and progress since the last inspection is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements are not met.
- The personal, social and health education programme is combined with religious education with the result that the religious education subject content is significantly reduced.
- Pupils have a good range of visits and activities.
- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Year 10 and Post 16.
- Subject leadership is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

87. At the time of the last inspection, provision for religious education was judged as good, but the quality has now declined to become unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the lack of leadership and the lack of development of an appropriate programme to help pupils learn and make progress.
88. Religious education is not taught to students who are 16 years and above, and it is not taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11. This means the school fails to meet its statutory obligation to teach religious education to all its pupils and that provision in the subject and pupils' achievement overall are unsatisfactory. The subject leadership is also unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not met.
89. The curriculum and teachers' planning, where the subject is taught, are sound, and help pupils to build on previous knowledge and experience. There are many good opportunities for pupils to take part in festivals and rituals of different events in the religious calendar, and resources are adequate to enable teachers to present lessons effectively, although the lack of ICT limits pupils' learning. The school manages and records visits well, using the school minibus, taking photographs and using pictures and pamphlets. For example, pupils have visited a mosque and there are good displays with suitable information. The school links religious education satisfactorily to other subjects, such as design and technology, English and art and design, where pupils talk about their work, make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, act out events and make collages.

90. Sometimes, personal, social and health education takes the place of religious education and, during the inspection, more than one lesson marked as religious education had no religious education content. Teaching, judged from planning and the limited amount seen, is satisfactory and enables pupils who receive it to make satisfactory progress in learning and achievement in those lessons. Teaching is linked to a sound curriculum with satisfactory assessment procedures, but it is not clear that these assessment procedures are used effectively for planning work for individual pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Insufficient teaching was seen during the inspection to make a judgement on provision as a whole. Pupils' achievement over time is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient development of subject-specific skills based on prior achievement throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

Displays around the school are neat and colourful and show that pupils have access to a reasonably broad curriculum. The work of students who are 16 years of age and over who go to the local college shows that they have the opportunity to experience and take part in more varied artistic activities, such as making designs for glass. However, while pupils' achievement is satisfactory for the youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2, lesson planning for older pupils indicates that teachers' expectations of pupils are too low; work is not planned in enough detail to help pupils expand their skills and knowledge. For example, pupils in Year 5 capable of using a stencil do not go on to make more complex patterns or use a wider range of colours

The curriculum, while broad and balanced, has not been updated for several years and does not emphasise subject-specific skills on which to base pupils' achievement. It does not help teachers plan in enough detail. Basic resources enable the subject to be taught, but the lack of ICT and budgetary restrictions make resources unsatisfactory overall. The subject leader has a good knowledge and understanding of what is needed, and recognises the weaknesses in resources and the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11. However, it has not been possible to overcome the barriers to raising the profile of the subject and the standards of management, and as a result, leadership is unsatisfactory.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory** and improvement since the last inspection is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils like design and technology.
- The curriculum does not build upon subject-specific skills adequately.
- Working space for practical work is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities for pupils to make visits are good.
- Teachers' expectations are too low.
- Subject leadership is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

91. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. This is because teaching does not build consistently on subject-specific skills and pupils' prior achievement, and assessment is not thorough enough. The curriculum has not been brought up to date for several years and does not address pupils' independence and thinking skills well enough. Weaknesses in this area make

it more difficult for teachers to plan their work in enough detail and the lack of attention to building upon pupils' prior knowledge means that teachers' expectations are too low.

92. Leadership is unsatisfactory because the subject is not developed well enough through budget and curriculum planning, and the conditions and resources make teaching and learning difficult. Teachers have not received enough subject-specific training. Pupils enjoy design and technology and are eager to take part. Usually they wait patiently for their turn to take part, but sometimes lose concentration. Teaching is sound because teachers plan activities and resources carefully, but often expectations of what pupils can do is too low, and because pupils often have one turn, they do not have opportunities to develop their work, and their time is not used well enough.
93. Pupils have some good opportunities to go out on trips. For example, pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 went to the Pizza Shop to learn how to make pizzas and receive practical experience to help them understand better.

Music

Not enough lessons were observed to make a judgement about teaching and learning. The limited amount of work available and the few observations made indicate that, although pupils enjoy singing and taking part in musical activities, they make unsatisfactory progress and achieve little. The school recognises the need to move forward to ensure entitlement with a subject that is a high priority for pupils with special educational needs. A temporary appointment of a specialist music teacher has been made.

The scheme of work is out of date and does not meet the needs of such as diverse population. Work completed previously shows pupils have listened to a range of music and placed instruments into the correct family. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to listen and repeat patterns by clapping out beats to words. Girls particularly liked this exercise, especially when listening to a recording of their work. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught together. The lack of planning and structure for a lesson with older students who have complex needs results in little time spent on achievable activities. As signs and symbols are not used, and there are few exciting resources, the content does not engage the students to recognise different sounds of pitch and rhythm.

Various musical experiences have involved pupils in the Dudley Dance Festival and an interactive musical drama with visiting musicians. There are photographs to show how much they have enjoyed this. Good opportunities to sing together are provided in assemblies where pupils join in actions with enthusiasm. Three pupils are able to practise the violin with a visiting teacher. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection when music was very strong.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the good teaching is challenging and well structured.
- Staff have good knowledge of the subject and the pupils, and this is brought into lessons effectively.
- Swimming is a particular strength for all pupils, as are the outdoor activities for the older and more able pupils.
- The overall organisation is good.
- Sometimes, too much time is spent getting changed long before the lesson is due to start.

Commentary

94. Pupils make good progress across a wide range of physical activities. These activities vary from term to term, but they cover the required aspects of the subject. All pupils take part in a full range of activities, but the emphasis varies according to their capabilities. All pupils have swimming lessons in school. Other activities, such as games, dance and gymnastics are well matched to their physical needs. The least able pupils have additional physiotherapy and swimming, while the more able pupils have the chance to go camping, canoeing, and walking outdoors when they are older. All pupils, irrespective of their disabilities, are able to go sailing. These regular and challenging sessions are very good for broadening pupils' physical experiences, building their skills and confidence well. Pupils also have regular swimming lessons at a nearby leisure centre as their skills increase. The swimming, both in and out of school, is a strength of the subject, as are the outdoor activities.
95. Teachers know the subject and their pupils well. Lessons are planned to be a well-structured series of related activities that are more and more challenging for pupils. Support staff are particularly effective in helping individual pupils; their encouragement motivates and guides pupils very well as they try to improve their skills. Pupils enjoy the lessons, and respond to the challenge positively as a rule. Many pupils make good gains in physical skills, learn to be co-operative in teams, listen to the staff and do as they are instructed.
96. The subject is generally well co-ordinated by two keen and well-qualified members of staff. They are well supported by teachers and other staff throughout the school. Teachers satisfactorily assess how well their pupils are progressing, keep a record of achievements (especially for swimming), and change future lessons accordingly.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good for personal, social and health education.
 - The subject manager has had too few opportunities to monitor the subject.
 - Leadership is good.
 - The school's aims for teaching citizenship are not clearly defined.
97. The school promotes the personal development of pupils satisfactorily through its new curriculum and in the use of well-established routines. The curriculum as a whole is broad enough to make a useful contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A wide-ranging collection of opportunities to learn is central to the timetable of each pupil and is delivered through daily routines in class and through separate lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good examples. Targets are linked to individual education plans but arrangements for checking progress and their use to plan teaching are not yet effective enough. This means that teaching does not always build on what pupils know, understand and can do, and so sometimes expectations are too low.
 98. Pupils are taught and encouraged to take care of themselves, and are co-operative and keen to learn in response to the firm but friendly and caring attitude of all staff. The school has made the improvement of systems at lunchtime a particular priority, and pupils manage and understand procedures well and are very co-operative. Helping pupils to become independent has been an aim of the school and progress towards this is clear in such activities as eating and managing coats. Pupils wait their turn when they have drinks and crisps, and know and keep the rules. Sometimes a lack of use of signs and symbols as well as ICT, reduces teachers' and pupils' ability to communicate quickly and easily with each other and so pupils do not learn as much as they could. Younger pupils learning through play to bathe a doll and pretending to iron clothes, show they are able to recognise and imitate the purpose of actions.

These activities are set for pupils depending on their abilities, but sometimes there was too little intervention to help pupils to make good progress. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn through regular and purposeful visits connected with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 9 learn about recycling waste in a series of lessons culminating in a visit to the recycling area after collecting and sorting waste. They develop a sense of responsibility and sequence of events through this work. Other pupils in Years 5 and 6 go to the local pizza restaurant and learn to eat together and travel to a new environment. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn about personal hygiene, while others continue to develop their knowledge of learning how to manage litter and the responsibility of each individual to play a part.

99. Older pupils are taught about sex sensitively. This helps them to be properly informed and to know what is and is not appropriate behaviour, and to treat each others with respect. However, this needs to be consistently reinforced in lessons when some pupils inappropriately kiss and hug adults. Students in the further education department learn to recognise healthy and unhealthy food. They have good opportunities to go out into the community and to work at Dudley College where they make choices in their work and are taught by different tutors. They develop their independent and social skills in the Merry Hill Shopping Centre where some pupils with the greatest barriers to learning practise using escalators and lifts.
100. The subject is well led and the new co-ordinator has introduced an effective curriculum through links with the Dudley Health Promoting Schools initiative. Assessment arrangements are linked to the school's emerging use of 'P' levels. In the secondary and further education departments, external accreditation systems set targets and define areas of learning. The subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of the procedures necessary to deliver the curriculum, but has had time neither to monitor teaching and learning nor to develop resources and in-service training for staff. There is recognition of the need to improve resources and there is a newly appointed governor with responsibility for monitoring the subject.

Citizenship

No lessons in citizenship could be seen, and so it is not possible to make a judgement. Parts of what should be taught to pupils in Years 9 to 11 are taught in other subjects, particularly in personal, social and health education. The contribution made by other opportunities and the work carried out in history, geography and religious education suggests that the curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced. However, the curriculum for citizenship exists only in an informal state and is under-developed. It does not yet meet statutory requirements. Pupils have too few opportunities to debate and make choices at an age-appropriate level and are not made aware enough of ways to help others and to take more responsibility. There has been too little emphasis on this area of work by senior managers, and so decisive and effective action to improve provision has not been taken. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

POST 16

The provision for students in the further education department is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A poor standard of teaching results in students' learning being slow, and their achievements being very limited.
- Poor leadership and management have resulted in a curriculum that does not meet statutory requirements, and is not sufficiently separate and distinctive from that of younger pupils.
- Subjects that are approved and certificated by national organisations are a good incentive for the more able students.
- There are too few well-qualified and experienced teachers and support staff to fully support all of the students in a full curriculum.
- Out-of-school opportunities are good for the most able students, but are not fully open to the less able students.

- The accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory for such a large number of students.

Commentary

101. The high level of unsatisfactory and poor teaching is the result of unclear planning for lessons; little effort is made in some lessons to stretch students to do their best. Teachers often do not have the skills to manage students' behaviour, or to motivate them to be really interested in the content of many lessons. The result is that students who were achieving at a low level when they came into the unit continue to achieve unsatisfactorily because the teaching is not good enough to raise their standards. Students' achievements remain unsatisfactory in all of the principal subjects, including English and mathematics. Although the number of staff may seem to be high, in practice many of the students need close help in many activities. Students often do not have an equal opportunity to learn because of this. Often, the more able, higher attaining, pupils take more of the staffing for their out-of-school activities, leaving the pupils with more complex needs with inadequate levels of support.
102. The teaching of communication skills, numeracy and ICT is unsatisfactory. The work is frequently too easy for many students. Sometimes the planning is too vague for students to know what they are expected to do, and they achieve little in a lesson. In computing lessons, where some teachers lack good skills and knowledge, students merely work through a series of activities with little challenge or clear purpose, and they consequently achieve little. The teaching and learning are better on occasions when there are good links between one subject and another. However, teachers rarely plan to include literacy, numeracy and computing skills in other lessons. The support given by classroom assistants is generally good, especially in lessons that they have planned and taught themselves.
103. In personal and social education, students make satisfactory progress and achieve soundly through their lessons in school, and out in the community, especially with the support of classroom assistants. Relationships between staff and students are mainly warm, and are helpful in motivating some students to behave better, and to pay attention. These lessons are mainly planned well, and are successful in building students' confidence and helping their preparation for leaving the school. The standard of teaching varies, but frequently lacks a good level of challenge for students to do their best, resulting in little new learning in a lesson. In lessons at the college, students are well engaged in activities that make them think, co-operate with each other, and try hard. A further good aspect of the curriculum is the outdoor activities that are open mostly to the more able students when the weather permits. This includes regular sailing (available to all pupils) and canoeing experiences, camping, distance walking and taking part in residential weeks away each year. Some students have had the great confidence-building experience of sailing to France, and others will shortly be completing the final leg of a round-Britain relay sailing event. The more able students have good experience of work places, such as spending two weeks in a factory, shop, warehouse or another school. These experiences add to the sound preparation that students have for when they are ready to leave the school. This involves good advice on possible future options, including their continuing education, possible work in supported situations, and help with different options for where to live.
104. Students do not have access to a full and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. This is because poor leadership in the unit has decided not to include the compulsory subject of religious education, and poor management has neglected the development of some other subjects. Little or no checking is carried out to see what is being taught, or how well it is being taught. Some other aspects of the curriculum are good: several courses are approved by national organisations such as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), and Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (OCR). These include literacy, numeracy and computing skills at appropriate levels for the most able students, but only for some of the less able students. Not all have equal access to external recognition of their achievements. However, all students leaving school have done so with some form of certification in the last eight years.

105. The courses also include modules that help students to develop their skills in the community, with shopping, finding their way around the town, and ordering a snack at a café, for instance. The more able students attend good practical and work-related courses at a nearby college each week, and some students take part in a two-day 'taster' at another college each summer.
106. The accommodation is unsatisfactory because there are too many pupils and students to fit comfortably into the rooms available. Groups are often too large to give good attention to individuals, and so their learning is slowed down. Part of the problem is the mixture of older students with pupils from Years 10 and 11. Some effort is made to create a different curriculum for each of the two age groups, but there is inevitable overlap, and the older students do not have a curriculum that is sufficiently different. The school has plans to separate the provision in the future.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	6
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	5
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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.*