

INSPECTION REPORT

ROYAL SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Liverpool

LEA area: Liverpool

Unique reference number: 104735

Headteacher: Mr. J.P. Byrne

Lead inspector: Michael McDowell
Dates of inspection: 17th - 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 264794
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: Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils: 2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 58

School address: Church Road North
Wavertree
Liverpool
Merseyside
Postcode: L15 6TQ

Telephone number: 0151 733 1012
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Susan George

Date of previous inspection: 5th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Royal School for the Blind, Liverpool, was founded in 1791 and it is the longest established school for the blind in the world. It is maintained by an independent charity. The school has a board of governors some of whom are also the trustees of the charity. The school provides day or weekly boarding places for up to 66 pupils aged between 2 and 19 years, all of whom are visually impaired and have additional learning difficulties. Most have severe learning difficulties and many have other sensory or physical disabilities, including hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, and autistic spectrum disorder. Because of these special educational needs, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low. Pupils are drawn not only from Merseyside and the North West of England but also from further afield in England and Wales. There are 58 pupils on roll, 19 girls, and 29 boys. Two of the pupils attend part time. Presently, 14 pupils make use of the boarding facilities. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, including British African and British Asian, Pakistani backgrounds. English is not always the language most spoken at home for a small minority of pupils. Many pupils are in the early stages of acquiring language and communication skills but the fact that English is not always the home language does not have a significant effect on this. In its mission statement, the school expresses its ambition to provide an environment that is caring and stimulating and in which all individuals are valued. It strives to offer a high quality of education and support to its pupils so as to promote their personal development to the fullest possible extent.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Lead inspector	Geography, modern foreign language, personal, social and health education
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, 4 and post-16	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	36

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Because of good teaching and learning, pupils in all groups, including those who have other significant special educational needs in addition to their visual impairment, achieve well. They make good strides towards independence by improving their mobility and communication skills. The leadership of the head teacher is very good, the school is well managed, and governance is satisfactory. **It provides very good value for money.** This is because fees charged to the local authorities are comparatively low and the actual cost of each pupil's education is subsidised by the charity.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It is a very happy community and there are very good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Because of very good support and guidance, the personal development of pupils, particularly in social and moral understanding, is very good and they behave very well.
- Teaching is good with much that is very good. Teachers are very successful in capturing the interest and attention of pupils so that they fully engage in their learning.
- The nature of pupils' visual impairments, other disabilities, and the effect that these have on learning are very well understood and very well catered for.
- The opportunities for learning that are provided both within the classroom and outside the school day are good. For those beyond the age of 16, these opportunities are very good and occasionally excellent.
- The head teacher provides very good leadership that has enabled the school to continue to improve and develop.
- In some subjects, the role of subject-leader is under-developed.
- Governors know much about the provision made by the school but they do not analyse information to discover the strengths or weaknesses in the performance of pupils. They do not set targets to improve performance.

The school has improved well since it was last inspected. The weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. There have been significant improvements in the curriculum. Where provision was inadequate, it is now at least satisfactory. Leadership and management overall are now good, as is the quality of teaching and learning. Governance was inadequate and it is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement, overall, is good. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start as they work towards the goals children are expected to reach before the end of reception. Pupils across the age range, from Year 1 to Year 11, including those with additional disabilities, achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Achievement in English is consistently good. There is also good achievement in science and information and communication technology. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils of all ages achieve very well in music and in personal, social, and health education. In most cases, pupils achieve the targets for improvement that are set for

them. Students in the post-16 class have their work externally accredited and they achieve well. **Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are very good.** They become more independent because of very good provision for social and moral development. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is good. Pupils are eager to attend and do so, punctually, whenever they can.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good. In the majority of lessons, teaching is good and a significant proportion is very good. None is unsatisfactory. Teachers assess their pupils thoroughly and accurately. They closely match the tasks they set to their pupils' capabilities. Arrangements to include all pupils fully are very good. As a result, **pupils learn and achieve well.** They enjoy their lessons and try very hard. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively. The curriculum is good. It is well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, stimulates their interest, and provides well for their personal development. The children in the Foundation Stage are given a good opportunity to develop their basic skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Those beyond the age of 16 have their learning accredited by external examination agencies. They gain experience of work and of life beyond school. The pupils' learning opportunities are broadened and enhanced by the residential provision and the many opportunities to go on visits and residential trips. Accommodation and resources support learning very well. The school takes effective steps to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of its pupils. Pupils' achievement and personal development is closely monitored and they are given very good guidance and support. The school seeks the views of its pupils and it takes good account of these in developing what it offers to them. Residential provision is good. Most standards were met when the school was inspected in November 2003 by the Care Standards Commission and any shortcomings have since been addressed. The school works very well in partnership with its parents. It is strongly embedded in its local community and supported in its work by very good relationships with local people, businesses, institutions for learning and a wide range of supportive agencies. It has good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is good overall. The head teacher leads the school very well and the effectiveness of management is good. Overall, the leadership of staff in key roles is good. In a number of areas, such as the provision for the teaching of mobility, the residential provision and the bursary, leadership is good, and at times, very good. However, leadership in some subjects of the curriculum is not yet as effective as it should be. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The governors know some of the strengths of the school but do not analyse information to discover strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. Consequently, targets to improve performance are not set. They make very careful use of resources and strive hard to achieve the best value. They have not, however, put in place a rigorous system to evaluate the effect of expenditure on pupils' achievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting or completed the questionnaire had few criticisms to make. Pupils show by their attitudes and ready attendance that they like the school and enjoy coming to it. Where they were able to do so pupils and students spoke highly of the school and what it provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the roles of the subject-leaders.
- Establish processes to analyse pupil performance and set improvement targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good**. From the Foundation Stage through to Year 13, children, pupils, and students, including those for whom English is not the principal language spoken at home, achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been significant improvement in achievement since the last inspection for all groups irrespective of capability, gender, or ethnic background.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- Achievement in personal, social, and health education and progress towards the individual targets set in education plans are very good.
- Standards of achievement in English, especially in communication, are enhanced by the language groups.
- The work of the post -16 group in accredited courses and units is often very good.
- Achievement in mathematics has shortcomings.

Commentary

1. When the school was last inspected in 1998, achievement, overall, was satisfactory. There were no children under five, so no report at the Foundation Stage was made. In music, achievement was very good and it was good in art, but, for most, achievement in English, mathematics, and science was steady rather than good. Progress was also just satisfactory in much of design and technology, history, geography and physical education. In information and communication technology and modern foreign language, achievement was judged to be insufficient. The school was successful in enabling pupils to develop their personal and social skills well and to enhance their mobility skills and independent movement about the school. Pupils' achievement has improved well. The strengths previously identified in music, art and English remain, but these have been added to. For children in the Foundation Stage, achievement is now good in relation to all of their Early Learning Goals. As they get older and move through the school, pupils continue to achieve well. Achievement in English by pupils across the age range is good. Communication skills are developed well. Achievement in science, information and communication technology, history, and physical education is now also good. In the small amount of geography in which it was possible to make an assessment, achievement by junior age pupils was good. Because of well-planned individual learning experiences in all classes, those pupils with the most significant physical and cognitive disabilities in addition to visual impairment, also achieve well in relation to their capabilities. The meticulous records kept by teachers show that the rate of progress for most pupils is better than expected. Pupils and students develop their mobility and independent movement skills very well.
2. Children in the Foundation Stage respond very well to the very good provision made for them and make good and occasionally very good progress towards their Early Learning Goals. A number of the children in the Foundation Stage class are, by age, Year 1 pupils, but because of their significantly delayed development, they are rightly regarded and taught as under- fives. They make a very good start in developing mobility and the confidence to promote independence. Progress in personal and social education, physical development, and creative development is very good. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in improving their knowledge and understanding of the world.

3. Over their time in school, children, pupils, and students develop their personal and social skills very well. They do this because of the very good programme of personal, social and health education that is provided, because of the incidental learning that arises from the very good example given by adults, and the very positive and inclusive ethos of the school. Ambulant pupils learn to move about the school independently, making use of the trailing skills that they have been taught. They carry out jobs that benefit others, such as returning class registers to the office. Those in the post-16 class have developed the confidence to venture beyond the school as they take up the challenging targets set for them in their externally accredited personal development and life-skills courses. With some supervision and assistance, they visit shops and purchase items, or they gain experience of work in a sheltered environment. Individual learning targets are set for all. These are based on the careful, accurate assessments that teachers make of progress in each subject or area of learning. In most cases, pupils achieve their targets within the time envisaged and move on to further learning.
4. The development of communication skills is good across the age range and achievement in English, overall, is good. For many who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, use of oral language is very limited. However, their listening skills and their ability to take in information through other senses, especially touch, progresses well. In the daily language groups, pupils rehearse their preferred means of communicating. These may include electronic media, such as switch-operated devices that play recorded messages, or gesture, facial expression, or sign. In these sessions, listening skills are greatly extended by the very good use of sensory stimuli. The minority of pupils who are capable of doing so develop their reading and writing skills using Moon, a system that employs raised letters and symbols to make reading by touch, and writing with the aid of a computer, possible.
5. Students in the post-16 group work towards externally accredited awards in personal development and life-skills. They are on course to successfully complete the unit, "Towards Independence" set by ASDAN, (the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) that is, for these students, at a suitably challenging level. The work focuses on the development of essential communication and independence skills and in the very positive learning atmosphere that prevails, students enjoy their work and significantly improve their communication, confidence, and understanding of the world beyond school.
6. Standards of achievement in mathematics remain, as they were at the time of the last inspection, satisfactory. In lessons across the age range, use is made of several techniques to convey number concepts. These include the use of audible beats to count, the singing of counting songs and the use of tactile markers and counters. Pupils are introduced to money and the denominations of coinage, but by the end of Year 11, many are still not confident in this area. Pupils' experience of shapes in two or three dimensions is also more limited than it should be.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, are **very good**. Their behaviour is also very good and their attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well and show very positive attitudes to work and play.
- Pupils are free from all forms of harassment. There is no bullying.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Commentary

7. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has been very successful in maintaining a very high standard in this aspect of its work. The school's ethos is very positive. Each individual who is taught at, or works within, the school is valued for his or her unique gifts. This attitude underpins the very good relationships between staff and pupils and results in a caring, warm, and friendly atmosphere. Staff consistently implement the school's 'Gentle Handling' behaviour management programme. As a result, most pupils' behaviour throughout the day is very good. For those pupils whose additional special educational needs include behaviour problems, the support they receive enables them to cope well with their frustrations. Pupils are polite and courteous. They work hard in lessons and approach new challenges with determination and enthusiasm. This has a very positive effect on their level of personal achievement. Within their own capabilities, they enjoy taking responsibility for what they learn. They express a high level of satisfaction about their school and enjoy playing a full part in the activities provided. Pupils who are resident at school enjoy the range of activities that they can undertake in the evenings.
8. There is no bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils are nevertheless confident about what to do should any such incident occur and are sufficiently confident to approach adults for help. Parents also express very high levels of satisfaction in terms of the quality of support the school provides in helping their children fulfil their potential. Pupils relate to each other well and are patient and helpful when the needs of others have to be met before their own.
9. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The school has very strong links with the community and these are utilised very well in order to promote pupils' awareness of citizenship and the wider environment. For example, older pupils regularly visit the local supermarket to shop for the ingredients they are going to use in food technology. Pupils have a very clear idea of right and wrong and they show this in their attitudes. They believe strongly in "fair play" and in helping others. They do this on an individual level in relation to their classmates and as a group in relation to charitable giving. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. However, at times, opportunities are missed, for example, during assembly, where time for reflection is sometimes too brief. More could also be done during religious education lessons to enhance further pupils' spiritual development, although good attempts to create a quiet and reflective mood were seen to be made on occasions, as when a candle is lit at the start of a session. In music lessons, some very good examples of cultural development were observed when pupils listened to and played a range of music from the Cook Islands, Australia, and Ireland.

Attendance

Attendance is good; pupils miss school unwillingly and there is no unauthorised absence. There are no exclusions and punctuality is good. Parents report that their children are eager to come to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	9.4%
National data:	9.6%

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0%
National data:	0.1%

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

Exclusions

10. The school does not exclude pupils and there have been no fixed period, temporary exclusions in the last school year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**, as is assessment. The curriculum is **good** with very good extra-curricular provision. Care, guidance, and support are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good and very good use is made of it in planning teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is much improved since the last inspection and this has led to better learning.
- The management of pupils is very good as are relationships with pupils. They are very successfully engaged by their lessons and high standards of behaviour are achieved.
- The individual needs of pupils are very well understood and teaching is very well matched to pupils' needs and capabilities.
- Good steps are taken to ensure that all pupils, of whatever capability, are included in the lesson.
- Assessment is thorough, accurate and used very well in preparing lessons.

Commentary

11. When the school was inspected in 1998, the overall quality of teaching was good but more than one in ten lessons was satisfactory and a small proportion of lessons were unsatisfactory. There was some very good teaching but there were no excellent lessons. The quality of teaching has significantly improved. The strengths that characterise effective teaching are now more generally apparent. As a result, pupils' learning is good in many of their lessons, and in a significant proportion, they respond very well to excellent or very good teaching. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils respond positively to the effective teaching with which they are provided and they learn well. They try hard to maintain attention and to contribute their own ideas within lessons. They take pleasure in learning and in the praise they are always given for their efforts and their successful remembering and understanding. The high quality of teaching in music previously reported has been maintained and pupils' achievements in music and enjoyment of it are notable features of the life of the school. The high standard of teaching in English and communication skills has also been maintained. There has been improvement in the overall quality of teaching and learning in art, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. In each of these, the quality is now good. In all other subjects in which teaching and learning were judged, standards have been maintained.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2.1%)	16 (33.3%)	30 (62.5%)	1 (2.1%)	0	0	0

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

12. Because of their special educational needs, which include physical and sensory impairments and emotional difficulties, pupils sometimes express their frustrations and anxieties through behaviour that is harmful to themselves or others and that would, if unchecked, lead to learning being disturbed. Teachers and all who work with pupils within the classroom and beyond the school day have a very good understanding of these individual traits and are extremely skilful at

anticipating the possible onset of challenging behaviour. They know how and when to change elements within the pupils' situation so as to avoid an outburst. They work with distressed pupils to minimise the impact on others and to restore equilibrium. Teachers are very good at capturing the interest of their pupils and getting them to participate wholeheartedly in lessons. A major factor in all of this is the high quality of relationships between pupils and those who teach and support them in the classroom. Pupils have a great deal of trust in their teachers and helpers. The success of the teachers in engaging their pupils is seen in classes across the age range. For example, in the Foundation Stage, children develop their physical prowess and strength by being encouraged to move in time to music, whilst in to the post-16 class, students laugh, and cheer one another as they play a game designed to improve and reinforce their self-knowledge and their knowledge of one another. Because possible behavioural difficulties are so well understood and the consequences of these are minimised so effectively, the climate for learning is good in most instances and pupils' behaviour is very good overall.

13. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach and are very good at devising learning experiences that are both well matched to pupils' capabilities and calculated to move learning forward. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils have sufficient time to use their sense of touch when handling objects relevant to the lesson and to think about and form a response to the teacher's questions. Teachers and learning support assistants talk to the pupils constantly, informing, questioning, challenging and guiding them. Because of this very good support, individual pupils experience each lesson in the manner that best suits them. For example, a pupil with some usable vision will be encouraged and helped to use this and share what is seen with others. On the other hand, pupils who have no vision will be helped to touch, smell and taste stimuli relevant to the lesson and they too, will share what they find with the group.
14. A significant number of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. As well as their visual impairments, their learning difficulties are very severe and their physical disabilities are such that they are not ambulant. Many are unable to grip any object. In some cases, habits of self-harm or continuous noise making have developed. Despite the enormous challenge posed by this array of difficulties, teachers always plan to fully include such pupils in their lessons. Individual helpers are assigned in many cases and care is taken to see that as much sensory input as is practical and relevant to the lesson is given. The measures taken by the teachers to make sure all pupils are fully included are consistently very good.
15. Teachers keenly observe the reaction of their pupils to the lessons that they provide. They come to know the learning characteristics of their pupils very well. The school as a whole is in the process of moving over to the use of a published assessment scale that is very well suited to the recording of the small gains in attainment that the pupils tend to make. In some cases, this scale is already in use while in others, a less fine-grained scale is used that still, however, allows for the recording of pupils' gains over time. By either one of these methods, teachers come to know and accurately record the progress within subjects and areas of learning that their pupils make. This knowledge is used to set individual targets for each pupil and these are recorded in individual plans. Reference to pupils' learning characteristics and to the individual targets of pupils is consistently made in teachers' lesson plans. This helps to ensure that what is taught is relevant and at a level that is attainable but challenging.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. Extra curricular provision is very good. Accommodation is very good and used well and resources support learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved. It stimulates and encourages pupils to learn and provides well for their personal development.
- There is a very good curriculum for the post-16 students.
- Provision for additional special educational needs and mobility is very good.
- The language groups are effective and there is a good cross-curricular approach.
- Good standards of teaching and learning are promoted through the careful planning of lessons.
- Accommodation is very good.
- Some subjects and areas of learning are effectively led but co-ordination of others is under-developed.

Commentary

16. Curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. There has been good development in ICT, and in teaching a modern foreign language in an appropriate way. Religious education is now satisfactory and work with resistant materials is now included as part of the design and technology curriculum. The school uses nationally provided guidance, including the 'P' scales, to help in judging the levels at which work is set. It has revised the planned work it offers in each subject in the light of this guidance. What is taught is now well adapted to the pupils' capabilities and needs. This improvement owes much to the efforts of the head teacher and the deputy head teacher in the first instance, but it has been sustained by the recent appointment of co-ordinators for each subject. To move forward and to ensure that provision in all subjects is as good as it is in the best, the role of co-ordinator needs to be further developed. Pupils' successes in the secondary classes are marked by an external accreditation agency, AQA, (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance), that awards certificates for modules of work. Regular staff meetings have resulted in the curriculum being reviewed and its organisation is now clear and well ordered. Within each subject of the National Curriculum and religious education, a common range of appropriate activities and topics is planned. Through using these, teachers ensure that pupils of similar ages in different classes all have equal access to the curriculum, and their progress through the 'P' scales and towards Level 1 and beyond is well monitored. The children in the Foundation Stage are given a good opportunity to develop their basic skills and knowledge and understanding of the world. The pupils' learning opportunities are broadened and enhanced by the residential provision and the many opportunities to go on visits and residential trips. They visit local shops, Camelot, Deva, and are able to have horse riding. They camp in the school's grounds and take part in appropriate and challenging team games.
17. The curriculum for the post-16 students is very good. It draws from three models, but mainly from the EQUALS curriculum, a commercially produced programme for pupils with learning difficulties, that centres on the development of key learning skills. It is well adapted to the students' needs and is extended to include mobility and orientation. Students are able to consolidate their previous learning and have it accredited by external examination agencies. There are opportunities for careers education and advice and for work experience. Students undertake a supervised work placement. Each student has a Record of Achievement. The curriculum prepares them well for their lives after school. The good provision for post-16 students owes much to its effective co-ordination.
18. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good. Most pupils have additional needs that, without specific support, would be barriers to their learning. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and understand their needs. All staff have been trained to manage pupils' additional disabilities. Mobility is taught very well with pupils, under supervision, learning how to find their way round the school, touching the objects of reference to identify their location. This activity is sensitively undertaken, giving pupils opportunities to develop confidence in free movement in a secure environment. Older pupils have individual

sessions in the community with the mobility officers. They have very high expectations and they encourage pupils to become confident with the use of the “long cane” and to make good progress.

19. Lesson plans are good. Interesting lessons meet the needs of the pupils and stimulate them to respond and learn. Plans are succinct, outlining both group and individual learning outcomes. The content is well matched to pupils’ abilities and it reflects the targets on their individual education plans. A strength of the lessons is the way special communication techniques, such as sensory stimulation, the picture exchange system, (PECS), Rebus symbols, objects of reference and, when appropriate, the use of the “Moon” tactile approach for letter and word recognition are used. Teachers and support staff work hard as a team and have established appropriate and relevant techniques to enhance pupils’ development.
20. The language groups are effective because they are well organised, with pupils being grouped according to ability. This ensures that they are challenged and have additional opportunities to develop speech and language. Planning is thorough, with sensory activities well matched to pupils’ capabilities. Teachers take charge of groups that are dissimilar in age and capability to their tutor groups. This exchange works well and both pupils and teachers enjoy the stimulation provided by this change. There is a good cross-curricular approach. For example, music is well used during language group sessions, and at every opportunity references are made to activities undertaken in other subjects such as English, mathematics, design technology, and art, with a focus on pupils responding in their own time and making meaningful connections between activities. This is also supported by good provision for personal, social and relationship education alongside the positive behaviour management skills.
21. Accommodation is very good. The recently built school includes classrooms that are bright and welcoming and there are specialist rooms for the outside agencies. The swimming pool is much enjoyed by the pupils. The school is fully accessible. Resources are of good quality.
22. There is strong and effective co-ordination for some subjects and courses such as music, the Foundation Stage, the post-16 course, and English. Personal, social, and health education is also well co-ordinated. In other subjects, co-ordination has brought some benefits, such as the ready availability of well-chosen resources to help the teaching of the agreed topics. However, long term plans to ensure progression of learning in the key facts and skills, and folios of pupils’ work to illustrate ongoing achievement, are insufficiently detailed and annotated. Consequently, they are not as useful as they could be. Where a subject is taught by more than one teacher, and usually, by teachers who are not specialists in the subject, the co-ordinators do not yet have procedures by which the quality of teaching and learning can be monitored. They have insufficient involvement in drawing up suitable schemes of work to meet the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum across the range of age and capability.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health, and safety of pupils is good. They are given very good support, advice, and guidance. The school seeks pupils’ views and takes good account of these in developing what it offers them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships with all staff make pupils feel cared for and safe in school.
- There is very good support and guidance for pupils’ personal development.
- Communication skills are developed very well.
- Pupils are fully involved in school life and their views are taken into account.

Commentary

23. Relationships between pupils and adults and among pupils themselves are very good. Pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy lessons and other activities and are helped to succeed because of the support they are given. Pupils respond well to daily routines and the teachers' expectations. Pupils are friendly and polite to adults and to each other, showing a genuine interest in visitors to the school. Indeed, many of the pupils could only be described as delightful in their conversations with the inspectors. Pupils respect adults and those who are able, talk about their school and the staff with great admiration and affection.
24. Very good behaviour management by staff and the formalised 'gentle handling' enable all pupils, including those with challenging behaviour, to make the most of their learning opportunities. Pupils learn to use objects of reference to move around the school and those who are ambulant do so confidently and independently. The mobility officer works very well with pupils to develop their ability and confidence during walking sessions around the local area. Arrangements at meal times and break times promote pupils' independence in eating and drinking. Staff know pupils extremely well and respond to their individual needs with great sensitivity. Two members of staff are now qualified trainers for moving and handling. This enables the school to ensure all staff know what to do, for example, when using hoists or attending to pupils' personal care. All staff are regularly trained in child protection matters and first aid.
25. The ability to communicate is of paramount importance to pupils' learning and from the first time that they arrive in school, daily routines are planned to support pupils' communication skills. For example, during a lesson in the soft play room, a Class 1 pupil clapped hands to tell staff he wanted them to continue with rolling or sliding movements. The language groups develop pupils' skills to talk with staff and each other, whether by using speech, intelliboards or signs and symbols. Pupils' social skills and friendships are encouraged as they share their weekend activities with others in their group. These sessions are supported by the very detailed information supplied by parents in the home-school books.
26. A good deal of emphasis is given to developing pupils' personal qualities and skills and enabling pupils to be involved in school life. Staff talk to pupils throughout the day, asking their opinions and helping them to make decisions, such as choosing what they would like for lunch. Although pupils are regularly consulted, this is not done through a formal process. During conversations with older pupils, it is clear they enjoy responsibility. They recall considering what colour they would like their classroom painted or where they would like to visit. They are very proud to be responsible for delivering sandwiches to staff, returning registers or collecting milk. Practical learning, such as laying tables for lunch, preparing for special assemblies, or doing work experience in the water garden, gives those pupils who can do so a good chance to contribute to the school community in this way.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good communication with parents keeps them very well informed on how well their children are doing
- Home school contact books are used very well. However, parents of residential pupils would prefer to use only one book for contact with staff.
- Very good links with the community enable the school to provide very well for the pupils

Commentary

27. Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children. Pupils' annual written reports sent alongside their annual reviews are very informative and cover all areas of pupils' learning. Parents can formally meet teachers each term to discuss pupils' progress and targets for development. Parents know they can telephone school at any time and their queries or concerns are answered. Regular letters and newsletters let them know about events in the school calendar and share pupils' achievements and experiences through photographic evidence. Parents appreciate the support the school gives them through training sessions, on topics such as mobility or epilepsy. Home visits are done by the head teacher, to support, for example, the management of pupils' challenging behaviours through sharing consistent routines and expectations. These aspects of the school's work are among its strengths and they contribute to the happiness and continued personal development of pupils.
28. Partnership with parents, and continuity for pupils, is very effectively maintained through the use of home-school books. Most parents use these to help them support their children at home. For example, a parent asked if school could provide 'Moon' labels for her child's home video collection to further improve his independence. At present, parents of residential pupils use two books to communicate with school staff and residential care staff and would appreciate not having to duplicate information, by using only one book for both. The head teacher and head of care agreed this seemed a good idea that was easily achievable. The school now intends to implement this suggestion.
29. Links with the local and wider community are very good, particularly the financial support that the school receives through fundraising and donations. This money enables the school to provide very good facilities to meet the needs of the pupils. Pupils' use of the community helps them to develop good and useful life skills, such as shopping at the local supermarket where they choose and pay for ingredients for their domestic science lessons. The oldest pupils in school gain valuable work experience, through the link with LVSB, (Liverpool Voluntary Society for the Blind), while supporting a community group by packaging news cassettes for the blind and addressing the envelopes. Links with other schools and colleges are good. Senior pupils from a nearby secondary school work regularly with those attending the Royal School for the Blind. The social development opportunities and chances for friendship that such links provide are very good for the development of social learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management, overall, are **good**. The leadership of the head teacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. The school is well managed and governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very high aspirations of the headteacher and his effective leadership, together with that of the deputy headteacher, inspire and motivate staff and pupils.
- Management is good, overall, and financial management is very good.
- Subject co-ordination is being introduced.
- The work of the governors, whilst satisfactory, is not yet fully developed.
- The school's practice in obtaining best value is excellent.

Commentary

30. The leadership of the head teacher is very good. He has successfully communicated to the trustees of the maintaining charity and to the professional staff of the school his understanding that the school must adapt to provide for pupils whose needs are far more profound and complex than those of pupils who attended the school a decade ago. He has worked effectively to develop professional expertise among the staff that enables them to work successfully with multi disabled visually impaired children. He has also worked rigorously to

promote more general recognition of the relevance of training courses specifically for meeting the needs of those who have these disabilities. Throughout his headship, he has promoted and brought about significant change that has benefited pupils' learning opportunities. Extensive remodelling of the school premises to best meet the pupils' needs has taken place and further plans are about to be implemented. Through careful selection and good in-service training, a staff group has been built up that has a very good understanding of pupils' needs and a shared philosophy about how to meet these needs. All are committed to ensuring that there is equality of opportunity for all and this is reflected in the practical steps taken to make certain that all pupils, however profound their needs may be, are fully included in the learning and leisure activities of their group. The position of head teacher as a recognised authority on the education of multi disabled visually impaired pupils and as an ambassador for the maintaining charity, puts a great deal of pressure on the time he has available. He has responded to these demands skilfully. While he keeps an oversight of all aspects of the school, responsibility for some aspects has been delegated to senior members of staff who carry out these roles with integrity, skill, and enthusiasm. The deputy head teacher, for example, has charge of the curriculum and its development. She has been effective in bringing about the good improvement since the last inspection and is clear about priorities for further improvements. Teachers and other classroom staff and those who work in caring or supporting roles have confidence in the leadership of the head teacher and the deputy. A very clear indicator of the extent to which a common vision prevails is to be found in the absolute consistency throughout the school in the way in which children, pupils and students are managed. They are guided gently, without raised voices and great patience is frequently seen in the resolution of difficulties. This consistent approach has paid off in the evident decrease in the incidence of unco-operative or challenging behaviour since the last report.

31. Management in the school is good overall and some aspects, such as financial management, are very good. Because the school is not maintained by a local authority, it is under no obligation to implement any legislation relating to the appraisal of staff or the management of performance. However, because of the benefits that might accrue, especially in helping to manage change, the school, through its governors, has produced a strategy for performance management that is helpful to teachers in targeting areas for their professional development. This is leading to good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff work well together as a team and express satisfaction with their jobs. The school is a more complex organisation than many others that cater for pupils with a similar range of needs. This is because it draws its pupils from a wide geographical area and offers both residential places and respite care. Communication with carers, therefore, together with co-ordination of transport arrangements, management of residential facilities and resources, and the school finances are all significant additional demands that must be effectively managed if the school is to function. Good systems have been evolved to respond to all this. The school works very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the administration required to bring this about is unobtrusive. As a result, transport for the pupils arrives and departs on time and residential care staff know well in advance the names of the pupils to whom they will be offering respite care so that they can prepare to meet their needs well in advance. The vital arrangements to ensure that parents are kept informed and are able to pass on information to the school, work very well in most cases. Arrangements for financial management are exceptionally strong. The bursar has a thorough understanding of the finances of the school and there are robust mechanisms to ensure that available funds are used as intended and are fully accounted for. A development plan has been put in place to prioritise school improvement and this has proved effective in keeping on track the many and extensive improvements to accommodation and resources over the last few years. The plan serves to link the educational priorities of the school to planned expenditure.
32. To ensure that the curriculum continues to evolve to meet pupils' needs and to provide an effective means of monitoring the quality of both teaching and learning outcomes, curriculum co-ordinators have been appointed. A mechanism to give co-ordinators some non-contact time has also been introduced. Curriculum co-ordinators are gradually assuming more

responsibility for their subjects. Those who have been subject leaders for sufficient time have worked assiduously and effectively to build up resources in their subject and to put in place effective programmes that help pupils to continually build on what they have previously learned. This is particularly the case for music and for English. All subject leaders are willing to assist colleagues in planning activities, but a formal process by which the work of pupils or teaching is overseen by co-ordinators is not yet in place. The senior management are aware of this and are planning to facilitate co-ordinators in drawing up schemes of work for each age group and in carrying out monitoring and support activities.

33. At the time of the last inspection, the Trustees were responsible for undertaking the role and responsibilities usually undertaken by school governors. Since then, governors have been appointed and have been successful in a relatively short time in beginning to help shape the vision and direction of the school. They successfully ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties and that it provides a curriculum that is broad and suitable for the pupils. The improvements in the curriculum since 1998, including the provision of religious education and clearer arrangements for learning a modern foreign language, suggest that it is having a positive effect. The head teacher recommended to the governors that they develop a policy for performance management. They have adopted this proposal and have begun to implement the performance management strategy. They have not yet, however, put in place a system for appraising the work of senior managers, including the head teacher and the deputy head teacher. The usual system, by which precise, measurable targets are set, the achievement of which is the trigger for annual pay increases, is not yet in place. The governors have a good understanding of what the school does well. Their perceptions of what it could do better are less clear. This is partly explained by the fact that, overall, because of their profound and complex needs, pupils' gains in learning are not easily measured. Now that a very precise, finely grained scale is being adopted to measure the learning gains of pupils across the age range, data will become available that should illustrate achievement very clearly. At present, information about strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance is not analysed and performance targets for pupils are not set. The governors do, however, make strenuous demands on the professional expertise of the head teacher to inform them of where improvements are needed in the fabric of the school and in its running. They have, for example, requested that he formulate a twenty-five year projection as part of the school's development and improvement plan.
34. The bursar is very efficient in making sure that day-to-day operations are carried out effectively. The check kept on the school's income and expenditure is meticulous. The annual deduction made by the charity towards the planned maintenance programme and building projects is carefully monitored. Financial expenditure and investment are evaluated against planned benefits in the provision made for pupils and, as a result, the school is exceptionally clear about the value it obtains for its expenditure. Because it makes use of funds drawn from the charity to supplement income from fees supplied by the State, the school is able to offer a higher standard of provision than fee income alone would allow. This leads to very good value being obtained for the State funding that secures the places for pupils at the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,868,173	Balance from previous year	-241,380

Total expenditure	1,895,816	Balance carried forward to the next	-269,023
Expenditure per pupil	34,894.46		

Note: An indicative budget based upon the known number of pupils is drawn up at the start of each year. The number of pupils actually recruited almost invariably exceeds the forecast and, because of this, a shortfall is avoided. Nevertheless, the charity always accepts responsibility for deficits in the school budget.

Residential provision

The residential provision is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care standards are met.
- Members of staff have a good understanding of the individual needs of the pupils and students and relationships between all of them are very good.
- The quality of the accommodation is good.
- Management of the provision is good but recruitment and retention of staff pose difficulties.

Commentary

35. When the residential provision was inspected in November 2003 by the inspectors of the National Care Standards Commission, they concluded that the school had made good progress in addressing the National Minimum Standards that had been introduced in 2002. It met many of the standards and was likely, if progress continued at the same rate, to achieve beyond the minimum standards in the future. The strong features of provision were said to be good communication between staff, and continuity of care. There was consistent management and good relationships with parents and the local authorities who placed pupils in the school. The shortcomings noted were that the school did not always fully document the positive work that it did, that training of staff, although it was in progress, was not fully complete, and that an appraisal and personal development policy for staff needed to be implemented. Since that inspection, the school has produced an action plan to correct weaknesses. In areas where standards were not met, they now appear to be met.
36. The relationships between pupils and those who look after them are very good. They are firmly based on the good understanding that staff have of their charges and their individual needs. Staff are skilled at anticipating the reactions of each pupil to what is provided and they take steps to tailor the routines that they establish to the requirements of each pupil. For example, they know that one or two require a period of quiet solitude when they first come up from the school at the end of the day and they take steps to always provide this. The pupils have a great deal of trust in their carers and show that they like them. This has a very positive effect in promoting practical personal development. Pupils trust their carers and are therefore willing to try out new experiences.
37. The quality of the residential accommodation is mostly good and in some cases, very good. In the older part of the building, rooms are well adapted to pupils' needs. There are spacious lounges and cheerful bedrooms that the pupils personalise with their belongings. A new accommodation block has been finished to a high standard. Unfortunately, because of a change in use from "respite" provision to weekly boarding, it cannot all be fully used at present. Steps are being taken to liaise with the Care Standards Commission on how this accommodation that was designed for respite use can best be used for this purpose.
38. The residential care staff are well led. The deputy head of care, temporarily in charge because the head of care is indisposed, provides good leadership, and has a very clear grasp of the

strengths of the provision and about how it can be improved. A significant difficulty presently encountered is in the recruiting and retaining of care staff. This is, in part, related to the conditions of service. These are less favourable than those that apply to classroom support staff. Because potential care staff are drawn from the same pool as classroom staff, this creates difficulty.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are very few children in the Foundation Stage. They are included in a class with a small number of pupils in Year 1 whose special educational needs make it appropriate that they also follow the Foundation Stage curriculum.

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made a good start in making provision for children in the Foundation Stage and it assesses their needs very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and expectations of success are high.
- Achievement in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and creative development is very good.
- Achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Commentary

39. At the time of the last inspection, there was no specific reference to Foundation Stage children. The practice of admitting such young children has only recently developed and is a challenge that the school has met well. The school works closely with parents to ensure that children have a smooth start to their education by, for example, offering part time places so that children and parents have time to gently adjust to the changes in both life styles. The deputy head has taken a lead in the development of this enterprise and, together with the very skilled, enthusiastic, and imaginative class teacher, has created a good provision for these children. Activities in all areas of learning are addressed through a multi sensory approach that is correctly pitched so that children achieve well and sometimes very well in relation to their capabilities. There are very good assessment systems to enable staff to track the children's progress and attainment, and to enable them to match work closely to the children's needs when planning the next stage of their learning. A six monthly review is held with parents and local education authority representatives to monitor each child's placement and the outcomes show that children achieve well. There is a strong drive for developing children's potential in the Foundation Stage class. Teaching is never less than good and often very good in all areas of learning. A strong, well co-ordinated, and unified team of adults, who are ambitious for the children, set high expectations and provide a good and imaginative curriculum, which meets the children's needs well.
40. In the area of personal, social, and emotional development, the children achieve very well and teaching is very good. Relationships with adults are very good. Lessons are very happy occasions with children gaining in confidence and trying their utmost to achieve because they feel secure in their surroundings. There are very good routines, for example, to let the children know that morning school is starting. All are part of the group. They hear the names of other children and are encouraged to react to the scent of the day, and the musical instrument of the day, which are all linked to the day of the week. In a drama lesson, pupils were co-operative because they were well looked after and supported by staff who ensured that individual children were given specific and appropriate tasks, which were within their capabilities. Mobile children enjoy meeting and touching others. They take turns and watch others taking part in the activity while less mobile children acknowledge their pleasure by smiling and moving their hands.

41. Overall, children achieve well in communication, language, and literacy, and teaching is good overall with some very good teaching taking place. Younger children achieve very well, benefiting from the early start to the rich language environment offered to them by staff. Songs and rhymes are used very well to encourage the children to use their senses. Children show pleasure as, together with staff, they explore the actions to songs, keeping, for example, to the rhythm of boogie-woogie music. The music encourages a happy atmosphere. When left to themselves, children who are more mobile continue dancing and jumping on a padded mat, keeping to the tempo of the music, sheer pleasure showing on their faces. Those who are not mobile wait their turn, either listening to the music or attempting to take part for themselves by continuing to tap their feet, move their legs, and also keep to the beat. The songs encourage comprehension of basic vocabulary through the use of verbal language, on-body signing, facial and voice expression by staff. The children's participation in the songs and rhymes enables them to communicate in their own way as effectively as possible. At the end of each lesson, each child is individually informed that it is time for the lesson to finish and what the next activity will be both verbally and through on-body signing. Because of this, children have a very good knowledge and understanding of the daily routines of the class.
42. In terms of their mathematical development, the children achieve well and the quality of teaching is good. The children listen to number stories, poems, and rhymes presented through the 'book in the box' method devised by the staff. These provide the added interest of real objects for the children to explore and to associate with the words in the story. Work is carefully matched to individual children's learning programmes, which include, for example, opportunities for children to experience simple mathematical concepts, such as 'take away', as they make simple reflex movements to push away various materials. Children who are more mobile show some understanding of 'take away', as they take part in singing 'Five Green Bottles'. They make good attempts to push a bottle away and repeat 'take away'.
43. The children achieve well in knowledge and understanding of the world, which is taught through topics. These give the children opportunities to work on multi sensory activities when, for example, exploring ingredients used to make fish cakes. They use their sense of smell and touch as they investigate items, such as cooked and uncooked potatoes, smoked fish, crushed crisps, and cheese sauce. The children are encouraged to take part in a variety of activities to explore through their senses the immediate and wider environment. When moving around school, they are constantly exposed to directional and descriptive vocabulary and landmarks. Taking part in lessons throughout the day helps to develop the children's sense of time in terms of ordering events on a daily basis. Children show enjoyment when they hear their own voice when using 'Big Mac' switches, and are encouraged to use switches to access equipment in the light room and to operate the computer. Through the topic 'Global Celebrations', children have been introduced to different cultures and religions, such as Taoism and Christianity. They have made attractive friendship chains with decorated hand and footprints.
44. In terms of their physical development, all children achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. In the soft play area, they experience movement in a safe environment. Working with one to one support, they achieve co-active movement, with the more mobile climbing, sliding, and rolling. Children stretch arm and leg muscles with one child clapping to let staff know to continue the movements of rocking, rolling, and sliding. Praise is used very effectively to encourage children and to boost self-esteem and confidence. Health and safety is very good. Socks and shoes are removed for each child and the hoist is used safely for those who need it. The very well equipped room enables all children to have safe and free movement, including a warm up session. The children are very dependent on adults but make very good progress in moving confidently. The lesson seen was a wonderful experience for children who are also encouraged to acknowledge others in the class and to interact with them.
45. In the creative area of learning, children achieve very well. Lessons are very well planned so that all children, through the use of their senses, can experience a range of materials found, for

example, on the beach. To background music incorporating sounds of the seaside, the children explored a selection of materials found on the beach. They delighted in the tactile contact with feathers, sand and the gentle spray of water, but are not so sure when encouraged to smell seaweed. They investigated the various shapes and sizes of pebbles, with one child trying very hard to repeat the sound of the seagulls heard on the tape. Later in this lesson, they took turns placing their material in a plastic bottle to create a classroom display and this reinforced their learning. Musical instruments are constantly used and the children are developing a good understanding of how to care for them. They demonstrate a developing awareness of activities and experiences as they touch the buffalo drum, attempting to strike it and clap the claves together.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3, 4 AND POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection through the extensive use of sensory stimuli to reinforce verbal means of communication and also through improved target setting.
- The special educational needs of pupils and their capabilities are well understood.
- Teaching is overall good with some very good teaching seen and this promotes good learning.
- Pupils who are capable of doing so achieve well in their use of adapted systems to read and write.
- English is well led and well resourced but the co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor the work of those who teach it.

Commentary

46. The achievement of pupils across the age range, including those beyond the age of 16, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The reasons for this include improved individual target setting and the consistent use of a range of special communication techniques that enable pupils to gain access to the curriculum. Those who do not have speech, for example, are enabled to make their own response to questions by the use of short, recorded messages that they are able to activate by means of the "Big Mac" device. By using this, they are included in questioning and discussions and their understanding of the purpose of language is reinforced. All pupils have their enjoyment and understanding of the stories they hear enhanced by the very good use made of "objects of reference" that "illustrate" their text. Pupils are encouraged to touch and smell carefully chosen items that are connected to the narrative. They are good listeners and try their best to answer questions. A few who have limited speech simply echo words or phrases from the question in their answers but most respond with words and phrases of their own choosing. As each pupil achieves the communication targets that are set, fresh targets to reinforce performance or to advance it are put in place. A minority of pupils and students have developed their skill in speaking and listening sufficiently to be able to hold their own in social conversation. In responding to others, they speak in sequenced sentences. When asked, they explain the meaning of words. They contribute to class news readily and listen to others with interest.
47. Teachers and support staff know how best their pupils learn. There is thorough evaluation of pupils' achievements and their level of attainment is recorded using the 'P' scale. Teachers'

good planning reflects pupils' achievements and lessons help pupils to consolidate and develop their knowledge.

48. The quality of teaching has improved since the school was last inspected and is good with some very good teaching seen. The curriculum has been reviewed and there is clarity about what is to be taught. Speaking and listening are highlighted across the curriculum and pupils are praised and encouraged to develop their communication skills at every opportunity. Staff are patient and wait for pupils to think and respond to questions, giving them confidence and this adds to their good achievement. A well-established feature of teaching in English is the use of language groups that are ability based and challenge pupils' speaking and listening. These have been reviewed and they now work well. Thorough lesson planning ensures that the delivery of the lesson meets pupils' needs. Good use of the "Book in a Box" method, created by teachers, helps to illustrate texts with sensory stimuli. The nature of pupils' special educational needs requires teachers to frequently repeat stories. Sometimes music is used as a focus for discussion, with percussion instruments played. Pupils enjoy their performance being recorded and this stimulates further language. Teachers work energetically and stimulate pupils to respond to words and the sequencing of stories.
49. Older pupils, who are capable of doing so, are supported to use "Moon" on the computer to write their name and label objects. Good use is made of the Moon rooms that contain appropriate materials, including embossed letters and books. This helps pupils whose lack of vision requires them to read in ways other than print, to have access to reading and writing.
50. The English co-ordinator is conscientious and is knowledgeable about the subject, particularly in how it has been adapted to meet the special educational needs of the pupils. The role is currently under-developed as there are no opportunities to monitor English across the school by visiting other classes and sharing good practice. The resources for learning have improved and they are good. The library continues to be developed and includes a range of materials that are well used.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in other subjects across the curriculum. During food technology, for example, pupils have opportunities to discuss what they do and learn new words, sometimes in a modern foreign language, for example, pizza. Throughout the school, every effort is made to use and develop language at all times with good levels of success.

Modern foreign language

Italian

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 and also those in Years 10 and 11 have access to a range of experiences that introduce them to the language and culture of Italy.
- Learning is given a boost by the planned Italian week.
- The short-term focus on a range of languages limits continuity in learning and co-ordination of the subject is at an early stage of development.

Commentary

52. When the school was last inspected, the provision for, and standards of achievement in a modern foreign language were unsatisfactory. The school now makes provision that is consistent with the needs and capabilities of its pupils. Most pupils in Years 7 to 11 have major communication difficulties. Through the hard and skilful work of its teachers, the school enables them to achieve well in developing communication in English but their standards of attainment in speaking, reading, and writing remain very low. In this context, the decision to enable pupils to experience the language and culture of Italy through a topic that is centred on planned learning experiences across a range of subjects is a sensible one. Pupils are patiently and effectively taught a few words of greeting and a little social language that they take pride in remembering and assimilate well. In some classes, pupils answer their name at registration with “buon giorno.” Achievement is satisfactory.
53. In their lessons in food technology, pupils explore Italian food, and pizza has become an established favourite. Teachers carefully structure their lessons to include the Italian language and culture element. The success of teaching is seen in the fact that, when pupils in Years 10 and 11 go shopping for ingredients for their food technology lesson, they understand that pasta is to be found in the Italian section in the supermarket. They are able to purchase their requirements, and then cook a pasta dish to an Italian recipe. An interesting link between the present theme in history, which is “The Romans,” and Italy is being explored. Teachers find ways of giving pupils sensory experiences connected with Roman foods and artefacts and help their pupils understand that Rome, while now very different to the Rome of the ancient world, is still the capital of Italy.
54. The pace of learning about Italy and the Italian language accelerates during the Italian week that is planned for later in the term. During this time, a strong effort is made to link most daily classroom experiences to Italy. This will extend to themes in assemblies, aspects of music lessons, and work in communication and design and technology.
55. Because the school introduces its pupils to a taste of many languages and cultures, of which Italian is but one, they have only a limited opportunity to further develop what they might initially learn. The movement from one country and its language to another is arbitrary at present. The co-ordinator for the subject, who has only very recently been appointed, is not therefore enabled to build up resources or to make well-founded plans to help the teachers to offer the chosen language and cultural experiences to their pupils in any depth. She is aware of this and is committed to changing the unhelpful elements in present practice.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision and pupils’ achievement are satisfactory, as they were at the last inspection.
- Systems to assess pupils’ learning are good and well used.
- Not all teachers know how to plan and teach suitable work and there are weaknesses in the quality and range of learning opportunities.
- In good lessons, pupils respond and achieve well because of good teaching.
- The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of what needs to be done to improve provision, but lacks time to monitor the teaching of others and to put training in place for those who need it.

Commentary

56. Since the last inspection, provision has remained satisfactory. In relation to their prior achievements, the standards pupils achieve are satisfactory. There have been improvements in some areas, particularly in teachers' understanding of what pupils know, understand, and can do. Overall, the emphasis placed on mathematics, especially within other areas of the curriculum, is insufficient to significantly boost achievement. An exception to this is the provision in the Foundation Stage, which is good.
57. Within teaching, a significant strength is the thoroughness and constructiveness of teachers' assessments. The information is detailed and it provides evidence of even the smallest steps pupils make in gaining new knowledge and understanding. Individual pupil records are well maintained and provide comprehensive data about what they know, understand, and can do, as well as what they need to do next.
58. The weaknesses in teaching are within the teachers' own subject knowledge and confidence. This also results in a lack of clarity in what they plan to teach. For example, in a session in which pupils were selecting goods from the tuck shop, opportunities were missed to develop pupils' understanding that sums of money can be made up of various permutations of coins, and that 10p does not have to be made up of 10 1p coins. Whilst the subject appears on each class timetable, there were occasions during the inspection when the subject was not being taught at the time indicated. Because mathematics learning is viewed as a high intensity activity, the amount of time actually given to it within a lesson period is quite short and, on occasions, there are no planned activities to consolidate what has been taught. The school has been aware of the need to raise the profile of the subject and has already taken steps to ensure that it is taught for a greater amount of time. Nevertheless, because it is often subsumed into other subjects, pupils are still not being taught an adequate range of basic skills.
59. During the inspection, some good teaching was observed. For example, in one lesson where a pupil was working on his own with the teacher, he was given challenging, but relevant learning tasks. By the end of the lesson, he was able to count back in twos from twenty to zero. The teacher evaluated progress in relation to individual targets and adapted them to ensure future learning extended his knowledge and understanding. The work was well focused on the promotion of independence by the application to real life situations.
60. A scrutiny of the additional evidence provided by the subject co-ordinator indicates that mathematics is too often taught as an aspect of another subject. There is too little focus on teaching mathematical skills, knowledge, and understanding through selecting programmes of study that will be most effective in maximizing pupils' independence and personal development. In discussion with the co-ordinator, she has a good understanding of the improvements already made and also what still needs to be done. Resources have been increased and organised into topic boxes, and this has been a significant development. However, although staff expertise has been found to be inconsistent, training has yet to be arranged. It is understood by senior management that opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching, learning, and standards that pupils achieve should be provided. In this respect, the role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped. However, colleagues do approach her for advice and support.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Unlike language, literacy, and communication skills, the development of which is focused on in all curriculum areas, mathematical skills are reinforced incidentally and mostly in an unplanned manner. In the development of personal and social skills, post-16 students learn to count money, to compare prices and to calculate change. In food technology, pupils are involved in measuring or

weighing ingredients or timing cooking. Numeracy is well reinforced in science. However, such opportunities need to be systematically extended to work in other subjects if mathematical gains in number recognition, comparing size and similar activities are to be exploited to the full.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Achievement is good because teaching is lively and activities are interesting, challenging, and well matched to the learning abilities of all pupils.
- Pupils enjoy science and are well motivated and interested.
- Provision has improved since the previous inspection because the subject is well led.
- Too little use is made of computers and other aspects of information and communication technology.

Commentary

62. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning in science are good. Occasionally, in some lessons, teaching is very good. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives. Planning, support and resources take account of the diverse learning needs so that every pupil is included. There are opportunities for all pupils to achieve well. For example, in a Year 8 class investigating taste, pupils were given the opportunity to taste a wide variety of different foods. Some were able to identify the various tastes but all were able to indicate which they liked or disliked. In a Year 10 class, pupils enjoyed working with magnets as they used teacher-made magnetic fishing rods to fish magnetic and non-magnetic fish from a "pond." When questioned at the end of the lesson, more verbal pupils were able to explain that magnets only work on items that contain iron. This was a clear indication that teaching was successful. Support assistants made a considerable contribution to the quality of learning. They modelled appropriate behaviour and kept pupils working with timely interventions and prompts. They ensured that pupils in wheelchairs or standing frames were comfortable and fully included in all activities. Good use was made of the digital camera to record pupils' experiences and achievement. Literacy, communication, and numeracy skills were reinforced well and at regular intervals.
63. Pupils have positive attitudes to science because lessons are invariably interesting and planned to enable and encourage the pupils to use their senses to explore materials. As a result, pupils achieve well against their science targets. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils used their senses well when making pot pourri. They had previously collected various flowers and leaves and were now taking the opportunity to feel and smell the flowers with good discussion initiated by the teacher. Some were able to identify, for example, a bluebell, and all managed with adult support to grate nutmeg to add to their selection of flowers, leaves, and fir cones. Most lessons are reinforced by poems or singing and this adds to the pupils' enjoyment and recall of vocabulary.
64. Science is well led and managed. Pupils' needs are carefully analysed and their progress is carefully assessed. The good management, coupled with the good curriculum and teaching by all adults, enhances the progress pupils make and has made possible the good improvement that has occurred since the last inspection. However, the co-ordinator is not yet able to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning.
65. In the lessons, there was little evidence of information technology being used to support the pupils' learning. On one occasion, at the end of the lesson, a pupil successfully managed to

reach out and use the computer touch screen to make patterns. However, the potential of computers and ICT to add impact to learning and to improve accessibility is not fully exploited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology, (ICT), is **good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection and pupils respond to good teaching and learn well by accessing technology through a range of adaptations.
- Pupils, including those with additional special needs, achieve well.
- ICT is well led and managed throughout the school and teachers have completed relevant training.

Commentary

66. The school has improved the quality and quantity of learning resources since the last inspection. All rooms have computers with touch screens and they have recently purchased a large interactive whiteboard. Pupils use a wide range of switches, "Big Macs," (which are easy-to-use devices for recording and playing voices and sounds), talkers, and sound beams to access the curriculum. Younger children are encouraged to explore the equipment and they show enjoyment when, for example, using the Big Mac to hear other children's voices. Teaching is good as judged by records of work and the one lesson seen. In this, there was good teamwork, and management of pupils. Individual pupils worked very successfully with the class teacher, using the computer to help them in early reading and writing activities. Other pupils visited the sensory and light rooms where there were good opportunities to practise switch work. Older pupils, with support, produced their own newspaper "The Wavertree Star," and they were beginning to appreciate the part that ICT has to play in gaining information and also in communication. Good assessment enables teachers to match what they offer to pupils' needs. Achievement is good across the age range and pupils build up their skill and confidence over time. Those who need to use adaptive technology make effective use of this.
67. By the time pupils reach Year 11, a good number are using touch screen programmes independently for an increasing length of time. Some can use a talking word processor to record personal news items, and use the "intellikeys" board to input two identified commonly used words. With adult assistance, they find information about a chosen topic, for example, about organisations that help starving people. These pupils enjoy using the computer and exploring the use of the touch screen to try out new programs. They work very well together in pairs.
68. The subject is very well managed. Overall, ICT is used well throughout the school and in many subjects. However, in science, more use could be made of computers. As all staff become more confident, the potential of information and communication technology to enhance the curriculum becomes more marked. The school has ensured all teaching staff have completed their New Opportunities fund training. Support staff have yet to receive training. However, the coordinator has this in mind. Since arriving in the school two years ago, he has moved the subject forward and developed staff expertise with a variety of further workshops planned. He does not yet have time to monitor the quality of teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum but more could be done in science. In English, some pupils use a computer with an interactive voice to complete a class diary. They co-operate well, say their names, and they volunteer information for the teacher to enter into the computer. Older pupils use Power Point with adult support to explain how to make a sandwich. Digital photographs are used well across the school to record pupils' experiences, and these build up into commendable Records of Achievement.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about the effectiveness of provision.

70. It is the present custom within the school to alternate the teaching of geography with the teaching of history on a termly basis. It was, therefore, possible to observe only one geography lesson. This was provided for a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 of whom half are non-ambulant and all of whom have severe learning difficulties or physical disabilities as well as visual impairment. The well-chosen theme of the lesson was "The World Around Us", and pupils were given a carefully planned opportunity to travel and learn a route around the school with which they will need to become familiar. The lesson was appropriately introduced by encouraging pupils to touch and listen to the noise made by a bag of shells, the object of reference that signifies geography. Pupils were given very effective support as they explored by touching and trailing the route they were learning. In this instance, they tried hard to learn, co-operated with their teachers, and achieved well. Teaching was effective. Teachers' records show that pupils make good gains in their orientation skills over time and become more confident in their environment. A photographic record illustrates that over time, pupils in Years 1 to 11 have many opportunities to experience being in places that contrast with the locality of their homes or the school. There is, however, no body of pupils' work because of the nature of their special educational needs.
71. A co-ordinator for geography has recently been appointed who has begun to develop the subject. There is a satisfactory range of resources, including raised maps and globes for those who can benefit from these.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers carefully match the level and nature of the activities to their pupils' capabilities, make learning active and promote pupils' understanding through the good use of simple resources.
- Leadership in the subject is good.

Commentary

72. In the previous inspection, inspectors found that the subject was unsatisfactory because too little was attempted. History is now firmly established on the school timetable. The curriculum is now good. It is planned on a three-year cycle and includes many outside visits to, for example, the Deva Museum in Chester, Quarry Bank Mill, and Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. Pictorial evidence shows that the subject plays an important role in topic work. Teaching is good and pupils learn well as a result. They try very hard to listen to what they are told and to take a full part in the activities in lessons. Some voice their interest and enjoyment whilst others show that they like their history lessons by their expressions and body language. The work of learning support assistants is vital in ensuring that all are engaged in learning.
73. During the inspection, the pupils were studying the life of the Romans. Because teachers know the learning needs of their pupils very well, they plan their lessons to develop their tactile, auditory, and sensory experience through studying aspects of Roman culture. These lessons reinforce the skills taught in other subject areas well, for example, drama and art and design, because pupils are encouraged to make and colour "Roman" artefacts. Good use is made of simple resources, in particular, those that pupils can taste and smell. A good example of this was in a Year 8 lesson, when, with adult support, the pupils took part in a Toga Party and dressed in simple Roman togas. The lesson was planned to enable the pupils to experience the way that some Romans enjoyed their free time and included tasting grapes and grape juice and experiencing a scented foot and hand massage. In another lesson, pupils were helped to glue and to use foil to wrap around polystyrene shapes to make Roman swords. They were encouraged to make comparison between these weapons and those of today. This helped to strengthen the concept of then and now. Similarly, when making Roman sandals, they made comparison between Roman footwear and present day footwear and considered that maybe the warm climate of Italy had some influence on why sandals were worn. Learning is fun for these pupils, a fact well illustrated by the photographs that are taken with the digital camera that record the activities. In a Year 9 lesson where the teaching was very good, pupils made clay pots as part of their study of Roman religion. All were engrossed in their work because teaching was enthusiastic and planned to challenge, stemming from very good knowledge of the pupils. There was a very good atmosphere, chatty but purposeful, with activities sensitively supported by all staff so that all achieved as well as they were able.
74. The co-ordinator has worked hard since the previous inspection to raise the profile of the subject throughout school. He has plans to develop resources further and arrange for more visitors into school to help bring the subject alive and make it meaningful for the pupils. Assessment of what pupils can do and what they know and understand is clearly recorded and lessons are evaluated but there is some inconsistency in the format used. There are plans for co-ordinators to be given time to monitor teaching, and this will strengthen the subject further.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of provision has improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- The curriculum is not yet sufficiently developed.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

75. At the time of the previous inspection, religious education provision did not meet statutory requirements and the work provided did not reflect that recommended in the locally agreed syllabus. These weaknesses have now been addressed.
76. The quality of teaching is good. This stimulates in pupils a positive attitude and interest in what they are being taught. Pupils are provided with a good range of sensory stimuli. For example, pupils in Years 4 to 6, when learning about people who care for us, each selected a person who was special to them and made them a gift. They selected their favourite ingredients to make a pot-pourri. This activity was effective in developing their appreciation of the world around them and the people in it, as it prompted discussions about the most special person in the pupils' lives. This dialogue was maintained well during the making process. Pupils demonstrated great care and did their best to produce attractive objects by the end of the lesson. Assessment is made of pupils' achievement in each lesson.
77. The curriculum for religious education is satisfactory. However, there is still too little variety in the areas covered within the subject throughout the school at any one time, and time is not always used well enough. There is presently a strong emphasis on learning from religion but this is insufficiently linked to learning about the major world faiths.
78. Photographic evidence shows that good use is made of visits to places, such as Liverpool's China Town and the cathedrals, to enrich pupils' learning. Artefacts are also used to provide good, tactile stimuli and there are links to work planned in other subjects to broaden the relevance of what is taught.
79. The subject does much to promote the pupils' personal development, particularly by giving them opportunities to visit significant sites, including local churches and cathedrals. There are extensive photographic records of such visits that show how pupils' awareness of the world around them is stimulated by these.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision in design and technology.

80. Within plans and records, there is evidence to show that the curriculum has been well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils, particularly in food technology. The National Curriculum areas are covered, including resistant materials. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
81. There is a policy that is currently being updated and a scheme of work that has already been reviewed and re-written. There is now a three-year topic cycle for primary and secondary pupils. The subject is timetabled consistently and pupils have opportunities to develop their skills over time.
82. In the single lesson seen in food technology, the work was well organised and pupils in Year 7 were interested and motivated to take part. All pupils were included and given appropriate support. They enjoyed kneading dough and showed real interest when it rose to fill its container. They were keen to offer comments. Pupils recognised and talked about pizza and knew some of the ingredients. In this lesson, they made very good gains in learning and continued to develop their language skills, learning new words, and offering their own opinions and comments.
83. The evidence file shows that throughout the school, pupils have a broad range of making experiences, not just in food, but also in work with compliant and resistant materials. Resources are good and careful records are kept of pupils' achievements. The subject is led

satisfactorily but the co-ordinator has insufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school.

Art and design

There was insufficient work seen to form an overall judgement about provision for art.

84. The evidence file and displays throughout the school show that many different art activities are undertaken and that art and design is a prominent feature in other subjects of the curriculum. In art lessons, there is a suitable emphasis on tactile and three-dimensional projects and a wide variety of materials is used. In a project linking art with design and technology, and history, for example, younger pupils have built a model of the sailing ship "Mary Rose." Photographic evidence showed that a wide range of stimulating and sensory activities had been undertaken. These included painting on corrugated cardboard, making collages of leaves, painting with fingers and printing on fabric, using fruit and vegetables. The work appeared well suited to the pupils' needs and capabilities and achievement was good. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 6 made collages, with support, using pasta shapes and herbs to add to the sensory experience. Pupils were interested and improved their skills as they did the work. Staff were patient and understanding, helping each pupil, but not to such an extent that they did the work for them. Resources were plentiful and they were well used. The pupils' work that is on display adds to the positive ethos of the school. At present, there is no subject leader for art.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As at the time of the last inspection, pupils achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The curriculum has been adapted well to meet the very diverse needs of the pupils.

Commentary

85. Since the last inspection, the very high quality of provision for music has been maintained. It is a strength of the school. The standard of achievement is very good. Pupils' work is enthusiastic but is also sensitive to the requirements of musical form. Some pupils build up an impressive knowledge of sounds and they come to know the names of the instruments that make the sounds.

86. The quality of teaching is very good. The specialist teacher is very knowledgeable and uses an interesting range of modern equipment that pupils are keen to use. The recently acquired 'sound beam' has proved to be of particular interest. Lessons are very well planned and are based on clear assessment of the achievement of pupils. They include good opportunities for all classes to listen to a wide range of music from different cultures, countries, and eras. Pupils' knowledge of the work of composers, such as Handel, Greig, and Copland, is impressive. Planning is very effective. Day-to-day lessons are planned to not only build systematically on the pupils' existing musical knowledge, but also to address the targets for their personal development. Musical knowledge and personal development are further promoted through very good use of visiting performers and well-planned visits to concerts. The pupils were delighted when their own composition, 'The Long and Short of It' was selected as the winner in a recent regional competition. Pupils also benefit greatly from individual tuition provided by the music teacher and, if appropriate, visiting specialists. All these aspects make a valuable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Some older pupils are keen to volunteer to play the piano in assembly, or to entertain visitors. During

the inspection, one pupil thoughtfully selected 'O Danny Boy', as he had discovered the visitor had Irish connections. Good links between music and other subjects of the curriculum make learning vibrant and stimulating.

87. The specialist music teacher has adapted the curriculum well and has linked the recommended programmes of study to the experiences of the pupils. For example, pupils learn to play a steady pulse through using instruments, such as the buffalo drum, cymbal, and snare drum. Pupils also learn to recognize musical cues through listening to well known pieces of music, such as Scott Joplin's 'The Entertainer'. Those pupils who are able to communicate verbally enjoy the opportunities they are given to sing familiar songs, such as 'The Sun is Shining'. They are sufficiently confident to use a microphone to sing solo or as a group. As a result, pupils are very well motivated and demonstrate excitement and enthusiasm throughout their lessons. The subject leader teaches music to all classes and thus the issue of monitoring other teachers does not arise.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Good teaching leads to enthusiastic learning.
- The subject is well led.

Commentary

88. Pupils respond positively to a broad range of opportunities to develop their body awareness, co-ordination, and experience of competition. In their lessons in the gymnasium, they take up the challenge to move as much as they can. They listen to instructions carefully and make great efforts to take part in team games, such as hockey or rounders that are adapted to allow for their disabilities. In the swimming pool, they take the chance that being supported in water gives them to increase the range of their movements. They enjoy this experience, are confident in water, and over time, learn to float with minimal support.
89. Teaching is well planned and is of good quality and, as a result, pupils learn well. Teachers brief support staff very clearly, so that their work will be of maximum benefit to the pupils. They assess pupils thoroughly and carefully choose activities to meet the needs of individuals. Some, for example, take much of their physical education in the protective environment of the soft area, while others are given the chance to flourish through adventure and competitions. The planned experiences include outdoor and adventurous activities when the pupils "camp" in the school grounds. There is a very high degree of understanding of how best to develop pupils' awareness of their limbs through the use of tactile materials.
90. The subject is co-ordinated well and best use is made of some very good resources and accommodation. However, the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the work of all other teachers of physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

There was insufficient work seen to form a judgement about provision for citizenship, which is taught as an aspect of personal, social and health education. Topics, such as “Living and Working Together” and “Rights and Responsibilities” are addressed at a suitable level.

Personal, social and health education

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A mixture of timetabled lessons and structured learning within daily life experiences improves pupils’ social skills and promotes their independence.
- Within many lessons in subjects of the curriculum, there is a focus upon pupils’ personal and social development.
- Older pupils have access to experience of work and they are helped to consider their options when they leave school.

Commentary

91. Pupils achieve very well in personal, social and health education. In lessons across the curriculum, a strong emphasis is placed on developing those skills that will help pupils to get on with others and to recognise that others have needs. They are enabled to gain an understanding of what is about to happen. This is exemplified by a frequently observed facet of very good teaching in which skilful use is made of sounds or objects to signify what is about to happen. Pupils, including those with the most profound difficulties, are enabled to participate fully. For some without speech, effective use is made of switch-operated devices that deliver an appropriate recorded message. Over time, pupils learn the social conventions and incorporate these into their behaviour. Older and more confident pupils or students are sensitive to the presence of visitors and take pleasure in greeting them. The conventions around meal times are also learned well. Pupils become as independent as their disabilities will allow, and, by the end of Year 13, a number successfully reach targets, such as visiting a shop and purchasing specific items. This represents very good achievement.
92. The need for pupils to understand that they are part of a group and that they need to engage with others is a strong feature of most lessons. In the language groups that meet each morning, for example, the emphasis on social communication is very marked. In many of these, each pupil gives his or her news and listens carefully to that of others. Turn taking is understood and is very well respected. The pupils’ developing social awareness is very impressive.
93. By arrangement with a charitable organisation, students in Years 12 and 13 undertake some experience of work. Presently, this consists of putting documents in envelopes and the students do the work together and greatly enjoy it. Through the local agency, guidance and teaching about options for life after school are given. Students have begun to form clear ideas about their next step by the time they reach their final school year.

Example of outstanding practice in the teaching of personal, social and health education

A life skills lesson enabled pupils beyond the age of sixteen with visual impairment and

additional special educational needs to respond with enthusiasm when undertaking tasks of daily living.

Students were relaxed and cheerful as they prepared for the lesson. They chattered to the staff team, eagerly anticipating the start of an activity that they have always enjoyed. The teacher subtly guided them to use all their senses to identify each of a range of cleaning products. They smelt, touched, and squeezed the containers as they used all the means open to them to identify each product and its use. They were all keen to develop their abilities to discriminate, using senses other than sight. They clearly understood that they needed to have these abilities if they were to become more independent. The students, having identified their products, were very enthusiastic in their use. They cleaned and polished surfaces energetically and, through careful dialogue, the teacher got each to venture an opinion on how effective their cleaning had been, and how, if necessary, it might be improved. The teacher and the support staff were extremely successful in using all the time available to get the best from their students and their high expectations were evident.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

