

INSPECTION REPORT

BAGINTON FIELDS SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103765

Headteacher: Simon Grant

Lead inspector: Michael McDowell
Dates of inspection: 20th – 24th September 2004

Inspection number: 268532
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	101
School address:	Sedgemoor Road Coventry West Midlands
Postcode:	CV3 4EA
Telephone number:	024 7630 3854
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Raine
Date of previous inspection:	28th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Baginton Fields School is a day, secondary, special school in the southeast of Coventry for pupils aged 11 to 19. All pupils have severe learning difficulties and about a third have complex learning needs including autistic spectrum disorder. A small, but increasing, number of pupils have physical and mobility difficulties and there are also a small number of pupils who have visual or hearing impairment. There are 101 pupils on roll, 64 boys, and 37 girls. Most live in the City of Coventry but a minority is drawn from neighbouring counties. Two thirds of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with most of the remainder having either mixed heritage or coming from British Asian or Black British Caribbean families. For about a fifth of pupils, English is not the language chiefly spoken at home. On entry to the school, pupils' attainments are very low for their age because of their special educational needs. Many have very limited oral skills or no speech at all so that widespread use of signing, pictures, and symbols to aid communication is essential.

The school employs a total communication strategy to ensure that all of its pupils have the chance to be included in the full range of opportunities that it offers.

The school has extensive links with other schools and providers to enable as many pupils as possible to benefit from integration opportunities and receive good quality work related learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Lead inspector	Citizenship, religious education, personal, social and health education
13746	David Russell	Lay inspector	
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, geography, history, modern foreign language
7994	Pam Weston	Team inspector	English, music, physical education
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The achievement of pupils and students, including those from minority groups or those who have more complex special educational needs, is good, overall. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is very strongly enriched by support for learning outside the school day and excellent partnerships with other schools, colleges, and agencies. It meets the needs of the pupils and students well. They benefit from the very good opportunities for personal development that the school provides. They receive very good care, guidance, and support and their views are sought and taken into account very well. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and, overall, leadership and management are good. Governance is also good and the school gives good value for money. The major barrier to raising standards of achievement still further is that there are more pupils than the buildings can properly accommodate.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers and support assistants have a very good understanding of the individual needs and capabilities of pupils and students and very good relationships with them.
- Achievement in English, the development of literacy and communication skills, personal, social, and health education and music is very good.
- Pupils and students respond very well to very good provision for personal development and their attitudes, behaviour and spiritual, moral social and cultural development overall are very good.
- Provision for the care, support, and guidance of pupils and students is very good and arrangements for induction of pupils into Year 7 and transition of students in Year 14 to their lives after leaving school are excellent.
- The school is very well led.
- Pressure of pupil numbers prevents the accommodation being used as effectively as it might be.
- Whole school performance targets are presently unchallenging.

Improvement in the school's effectiveness since the last inspection is good. The school has successfully dealt with the weaknesses identified in the last report. The needs of autistic pupils are now clearly understood. They are well managed and the teaching they receive is of good quality. Subject leaders carry out their work effectively and assessment is accurate and used well. Taught time is now sufficient and there are sufficient support assistants. The weaknesses identified in resources have been rectified and statutory requirements in respect of the teaching of information and communication technology and religious education are now met. Travel arrangements for pupils are monitored to ensure safety and to avoid excessive journey times.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very Good
Year 11	Good	Very Good
Year 14	Good	Very Good

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

Overall, **achievement is good**. Excellent induction arrangements help pupils in Year 7 get off to a good start. Pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 achieve well overall and very well in English, literacy and communication across the curriculum. They achieve well in mathematics and science. In personal social and health education and music achievement is very good. Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory overall but better for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who gain

external accreditation for their work. Students in Years 12 to 14 consolidate their learning in English and mathematics very effectively and do well in a broad range of courses focussing on independent living, leisure use and work related learning. These lead in many cases to certificates awarded by external bodies. Their achievement overall is good. **The personal qualities of pupils and students including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, overall, are very good.** Attitudes and behaviour are very good and there are no exclusions. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good. Its strengths include the secure and effective planning of the teachers. Assessment is good and leads to the very good understanding that teachers and support staff have of pupils' and students' individual needs. They reach out to each one of their pupils and students to engage them in learning. As a consequence, pupils come to trust those who teach and support them and they are willing to try their best. They learn to sustain concentration in lessons and to share their ideas with others. **Their learning is good.**

The curriculum is good. A particular strength is the very good enrichment that arises from the many opportunities that are provided for learning beyond the school day and the classroom. The number of pupils and students is now higher than the building can comfortably accommodate and this prevents the school from working in the most effective way with some of its pupils. Care, guidance, and support are very good. Excellent arrangements are made to ensure that pupils' first entry to the school is smooth and stress-free and that the transition of students to adult life is thoroughly prepared. This transition is helped by the excellent and productive links that the school has with other schools, colleges, and agencies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He sees clearly the educational direction that the school must take if it is to continue to improve and serve its pupils well. Good leadership is provided by the deputy head and others in posts of responsibility. Management is good overall, and financial management is very good. However, the process of setting whole school targets for improvement in pupils' performance is not yet used to full effect. Governance has improved and it is now good. The governors comply with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school and with the support and information with which it provides them. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They show in their attitudes and behaviour that they feel that they belong in the school and are safe there. Those who were able to express an opinion said that they liked the school very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To address the difficulties arising from overcrowding so that the needs of pupils with complex needs, including autistic spectrum disorder can be met more effectively.
- To refine whole school target setting so that it provides a stimulus for school improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **good**. Pupils and students from Year 7 to Year 14, including those with profound and complex needs and those for whom English is not the principle language spoken at home, achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement, across the age range, especially for those with more profound and complex needs, is higher, overall, than at the last inspection. The school meets its targets.
- Achievement is very good in personal social and health education and pupils achieve the individual targets set for them in their statements of special educational needs and individual education plans.
- Achievement in English language, literacy skills, and communication is much improved.
- Achievement is very good in music and good overall in mathematics, science, art and design, RE and PE.

Commentary

1. In 1999, when the school was last inspected, achievement overall was satisfactory. It was good in religious education, for pupils in Years 7 to 11. It was also good for pupils in Years 10 and 11 in art, mathematics, and music. Students in Years 12 to 14 did well in geography and in design and technology. Achievement in information and communication technology was unsatisfactory but there was good achievement across the age range in personal, social and health education. A particular weakness was the achievement of pupils with more complex learning needs especially those with challenging behaviour arising from autistic spectrum disorder. Achievement is now significantly better and, overall, it is good. The difficulties in enabling those with autistic spectrum disorder to achieve as much as they are capable have been addressed by specialist teacher training and by revising the programmes that are offered. This has been successful and such pupils make good strides in communication and social interaction. In English and the acquisition of communication skills, there is now very good achievement both from Years 7 to 11 and for students in Years 12 to 14. Across the full age range achievement is now, also, very good in PSHE and in music. In mathematics, including the developing and refinement of numeracy skills in post-16 groups, achievement is good. Pupils and students in their lessons and within their cross phase and option groups achieve well in art, religious education and physical education and activities. The school has begun to set broad targets for the overall performance of its pupils and students. These relate to the progress made by pupils in relation to the national P-Scales or to gaining certificates for externally accredited courses. In 2004, these were achieved.
2. The school has a well developed, unique, programme for personal, social and health education that includes well thought out assessment criteria against which pupils' and students' achievement can be measured. These criteria are also used in setting the targets for them in their individual education plans. Records show that they make very good progress towards becoming more independent and develop very well both socially and as learners. They attain the individual targets set for them very well in most cases. The only exceptions to this occur when a pupil's needs are so profound that progress towards reaching a set target is almost immeasurable. In these cases, and reasonably, individual plans tend to repeat the same desirable target year on year.

3. Achievement in English, literacy, and communication skills is now very good. The school has developed a total communication strategy to ensure that all pupils, especially those who are hardest to reach, develop both their desire to communicate and their skill in doing so. Much use is made of signing, computer generated symbols, pictures and objects of reference to supplement the spoken and written word. In all subjects, this has paid off because pupils and students have a clearer idea of what is expected of them. In English, this has led to improved achievement. Pre-reading skills and early reading skills are very well developed and pupils come to enjoy books. Higher attaining pupils and students develop their vocabulary impressively and acquire increasing confidence in reading and writing. Those for whom reading and writing are not feasible propositions also achieve very well as can be seen by their involvement in lessons, their facial expressions or their signs and gestures.
4. In several subjects where achievement was formerly satisfactory or good only in one or two of the Key Stages, it is now good or very good across the board. This is especially so in music where the teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and expectations are very high. The timetabled lessons are strongly supplemented by the optional and cross-phase activities that bring excitement and joy to the learning of the pupils and students. A lunchtime choir is now flourishing and music is used effectively as a therapeutic tool by a visiting music therapist. Standards of achievement have also moved on in mathematics, art, religious education, and physical education. Achievement in mathematics is now good. Lessons are well planned and pupils and students are skilfully managed so that they maintain a positive view of the subject and their own ability to succeed. Good achievement in art, religious education, and physical education, has resulted from rigorous planning, very good use of resources, including the classroom support staff, and the teachers' very good understanding of the pupils' needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall, are **very good**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good, they lead to very good behaviour and attitudes to learning, and they have a positive impact on achievement.
- Opportunities for personal development are very good.
- Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is very good, overall.

Commentary

5. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and staff contribute in a significant way to the homely ethos of care and purpose that pervades the school. Because of the strength of these relationships, pupils and students are accustomed to sharing their feelings and experiences with adults. All the adults in the school are skilled in using these opportunities to help pupils and students feel good about themselves. Consequently, many have developed high levels of self-esteem. This has a very significant effect upon their attitudes to school. It is clear that almost without exception they are happy to be there. Teachers build on these positive attitudes during discussion at the beginning and end of lessons when pupils are invited to consider their progress towards their individual attitude and behaviour targets for the lesson. Staff, also, take every opportunity to celebrate the positive contributions made by individual pupils and to share this achievement with the group. The pride shown by pupils when they are awarded a merit sticker for their work is a joy to experience. All of these measures work together to produce a positive impact on achievement. Pupils and students who because of their complex learning needs are difficult

to manage gradually respond to the gentle and carefully thought out strategies that the school develops to meet their needs and to modify difficult behaviour. There is no bullying or oppressive behaviour, including racism or sexism. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months - the school does not believe in excluding pupils.

6. Very good opportunities for personal development are provided for pupils. The school council offers a chance for pupils to show enterprise and responsibility and to influence school practice and routines. There is good practice in the allocation of a range of whole school responsibilities and class monitor roles for pupils, all of which are willingly accepted and undertaken with vigour and obvious pride. Progress against social and behavioural targets in pupils' individual education plans is very good and signifies increasing personal development. An outstanding feature of the very good work done by the school in enhancing the personal development of its pupils and students is found in the opportunities that its links with the community and the Riverside Consortium provide. Through these, older pupils and students have many chances to work alongside their contemporaries who have very different levels of need or who are from mainstream schools. Very good chances to learn useful skills are provided and to come to an awareness of the personal requirements associated with entering the world of work and life beyond school.

7. The moral and social development of pupils is very good with many opportunities provided for pupils to reflect upon and think about the impact of their actions on others. Pupils know right from wrong and they collaborate well with each other in their learning and play activities. Teachers and support staff provide very good role models for pupils, show respect for them all and encourage them to think about each other. Pupils have very good opportunities to work in a variety of group and social situations. There is a very good range of out of hours activities, including many opportunities for residential experiences. All this makes a positive contribution to their social development. In particular, the cross phase arrangements for pupils to engage in a subject of their choice provide excellent opportunities for social interaction. Provision for spiritual development is good with opportunities being provided for pupils to marvel at the wonder of living things and to think calmly and quietly during lessons. There are very good opportunities within religious education lessons and assemblies for all pupils to learn about world faiths and experience the customs and traditions that feature in religions and cultures. During the week of the inspection for example, a member of the Performing Arts Service explained and performed some of the songs and dances used in India to celebrate their harvest. Overall, pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities have improved well since the last inspection.

Attendance

8. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils and students arrive at school on time, except when the transport provided by the local authority is unavoidably delayed. There has been a downward trend in attendance levels over the last three years but attendance levels are broadly in line with national standards for this type of school. The school is diligent in maintaining an acceptable level of attendance and ensuring pupils arrive punctually. Levels of attendance have been adversely affected by a few pupils taking extended holidays against school advice and by holding on roll, at the request of the local education authority, a pupil who was living too far away to attend.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.1	School data	0.0
National data	9.9	National data	0.6

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

Exclusions

There have been no permanent or temporary exclusions from the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers assess their pupils thoroughly and constructively and make good use of assessment to respond to individual needs. The curriculum is also **good** and there are very good opportunities provided by the school to enrich the curriculum. Provision for the health, safety, and welfare of pupils is very good. Accommodation is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good and well used to ensure that individual learning needs are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning has significantly improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers know their subjects well and their planning is thorough.
- Teachers and support staff are very successful in engaging the attention of their pupils and encouraging them to learn.
- Great attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils regardless of their capability are given equal opportunities to benefit from lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	20 (44%)	18 (40%)	6 (14%)	-	-	-

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.

9. The last inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory overall with some pockets of very good practice and some areas in which teaching was unsatisfactory. There has been a significant improvement since then. The quality of teaching is now much more consistent and the proportion that is very good or excellent has risen. In the majority of lessons teaching is good and promotes learning well. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The greater consistency and higher quality in teaching has been brought about by steps the school has taken since the last inspection. A common approach to lesson planning has been adopted and subject leaders have ensured that clear, progressive schemes outlining the work to be taught for each age range are in place. These measures have led to all lessons having a common structure that the pupils have come to expect. Lessons start with an outline of what is to be done and with the setting, for each pupil, of an individual target for the session. Likewise, lessons end with a review of what has been achieved and the extent to which individual targets have been reached. This element of predictability helps pupils to understand what is expected and to settle more readily to their learning. In most subjects and in the cross-phase and option sessions the quality of teaching is good but in English, PSHE and music it is very good. Amongst the factors that lead to the high quality of teaching in English is the constructive use that is made in lessons of a full range of communication strategies that enables all pupils and students to respond at their level of capability. In music, very good expertise in the subject and a full understanding of the

needs of each individual ensures that lessons are lively, active, and enjoyable. The clarity of the curricula for PSHE helps teachers plan very effective lessons in which the contribution of the support staff and the quality of teamwork is frequently outstanding.

10. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Subject leaders make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching in their subjects, teaching a proportion of lessons in each key stage. They also give guidance and advice to others who teach the subject and make well-planned schemes of work, based on the National Curriculum, available. Subject leaders also collate and manage the resources for their subject. Teachers add to their awareness of the requirements of the curriculum a very good understanding of the individual learning characteristics of their pupils and students. In planning their lessons, they take account of these so that learning tasks are accessible, at some level, to all. Use is made of the P-scales, an assessment system that enables the small gains made by pupils who learn slowly to be accurately recorded. For many pupils, however, an even finer scale is necessary. Using such a scale would help to build up a clearer picture of the progress that they make.
11. Because of the nature of their special educational needs some pupils and students are sometimes very difficult to engage or to manage. They are not always capable of sustaining concentration or they may be beset with concerns or fears that arise from no obvious immediate cause. This is especially true for those with autistic spectrum disorder, (ASD). At the last inspection criticism was made of the school for lacking expertise in managing and teaching such pupils and students. This is no longer true. Teachers and support staff have very good understanding of the nature of their pupils' needs and make use of appropriate strategies to reach them and engage them in learning. While overcrowding has led to the loss, to other uses, of the bases specially designed to help in meeting the needs of those with ASD, much competent work is still carried out in the general classrooms. Teachers constantly look for means to include such pupils and students within the lessons, by, for example, allocating individual support to them or through exploiting all available channels of communication. In addition, teachers have sufficient confidence to allow them to have their own space and, where necessary, seek reassurance and comfort in familiar objects or non-threatening established behaviours. Teacher and support staff are very good at gentle persuasion. One or two younger pupils who have been moved to unfamiliar classes are disturbed by this and opt out in various ways. However, time and resources are always found to manage these situations gently and without fuss. In some instances this measured approach was seen to pay dividends when a pupil who had opted out extensively began at last to join in a lesson with enthusiasm.
12. There is a strong presumption in favour of including all pupils and students in each lesson no matter how complex or profound their needs might be. The beginning of lessons might, for example be slightly delayed to wait the return of a pupil with profound and multiple difficulties from physiotherapy or, again, a plenary session at the end of a lesson might be persevered with even though students with complex difficulties are involuntarily "disturbing" it by the noises that they make. At a later stage in the lesson, the class may split into groups for activities that match need but at the lesson's end, all will come together again to share their experiences. This careful attention to inclusion helps to build up a bond between pupils and helps to ensure that there is equality of opportunity.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment and staffing are **very good**. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved, it is now good, and parents are pleased with it.
- The curriculum supports personal development very well.
- A broad range of relevant activities is provided and the curriculum is accessible to all.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by opportunities provided outside the school and beyond the school day.
- Shortcomings in accommodation affect opportunities for pupils with complex needs and for learning in science.

Commentary

13. Overall, the curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. It is now good. The strengths identified then such as the work related learning offered at post-16, the broad range of extra-curricular activities, the excellent links with local schools and colleges, and the accreditation of pupils' attainment have all been securely embedded in provision and are an integral part of school life. The weaknesses have also been addressed where it has been possible to do so by school managers. The amount of teaching time no longer falls short of recommendations for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Religious education is now taught at post-16. Resources were unsatisfactory; now they are good. However, there is still pressure on space despite new rooms having been built. The school has worked hard to achieve external validation for its work and it has been awarded the Artsmark, a School Achievement Award, the Sport England Sportsmark, and Investors in People. Overall, parents are right to be pleased with the curriculum.
14. The school has developed means of supporting and encouraging personal development through the curriculum by providing physical and creative activities beyond the school day and investing in a programme of work-related learning in collaboration with other schools and colleges. A heavy emphasis is placed on Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE). The subject is taught effectively in all lessons and during planned activities at registration time, break, and lunchtimes. Sex education with personal relationships and drug misuse is skilfully included in the programme. There are many visitors into school such as one during the inspection who during an assembly through music, art, and performance involved pupils in experiencing how rice is grown and harvested in less economically developed countries, contributing to pupils' cultural awareness. The school has evolved a counselling programme and has developed an English scheme specifically for pupils with severe learning difficulties. Specific programmes to meet the needs of pupils on the autistic spectrum have also been put in place. Overall, the curriculum has a very positive impact on pupils' personal development building pupils' interest and self confidence.
15. A good range of learning activities is provided for all pupils and students. The schemes of work for subjects meet National Curriculum requirements and the needs of those with severe and complex needs are understood and, largely, met. The timetable now allows for an appropriate range of options for those in Years 10 and 11, and at post-16. The Wednesday afternoon 'cross phase' dimension is a real benefit to all, contributing to the development of social competencies and building up confidence. In physical education, pupils in Year 7 work with mainstream pupils and students at community sports centres. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from careers advice and guidance, sensitive options in PSHE and a work related programme. By the end of Year 11 all pupils have a 'transition' plan that focuses well on arrangements for preparing for post school provision, academic, social and vocational work. At post-16, students continue with literacy and numeracy but

they also follow a programme that leads to accreditation in aspects of independent living skills, leisure use, and creative activity as well as access to colleges of further education (FE) and participation in work experience placements. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and all the pupils have equal opportunities. To help with this, the school has adopted 'Total Communication'. In practice, this means the use of sign (MAKATON), and symbols and pictures (PECS). The National Numeracy and Literacy strategies are used effectively and the Key Stage 3 strategy has been extended to include the behaviour intervention strand. Provision for ICT has improved considerably and it is increasingly taught through subjects. The closer involvement with the innovative consortium of 'Riverside Schools' is proving beneficial to the whole school community. As a result, some pupils are able to work alongside others in sports, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, performance, and drama, and take part in the 'Riverside Senate'.

16. There is a well structured approach to social learning at lunchtime with drama, music, choir, drumming, reading groups, computers, basketball and cricket offered at various times. The school also works in collaboration with other providers to offer a range of challenging activities beyond the school day. For example, the Youth Club structured programme of activities include games, cooking, swimming, art/craft, bowling, and a film night. Parents are pleased with the opportunities that the school provides.
17. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has some good features such as the swimming pool, which provides good opportunities for pupils to have regular sessions promoting their physical development. There is also a well used 'club room' and 'flat' for the post-16 students. The school grounds provide a variety of stimulating play areas for all ages. However, there is no specialist subject accommodation for science. The school acknowledges this and there are advanced plans to provide this during the present academic year. The building is cramped with inadequate facilities for those pupils who have more complex needs. Staffing is very good with high numbers of support staff who are making a very significant contribution to pupils' achievement throughout the school. Resources are good overall, having improved for sensory work.

Care, guidance and support

Provision of pupils' health and safety is **very good**. They are given **very good** support, advice, and guidance. There is a **very good** involvement of pupils in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an excellent induction programme to support pupils coming to the school in Year 7.
- Health and safety are given a high priority.
- The work of other agencies is very effectively co-ordinated to help provide support, guidance, and excellent transition arrangements.
- Pupils are actively involved in the school's development.

Commentary

18. Through working with its partner school for primary age pupils, the school has developed an excellent induction programme. This enables pupils coming to the school in Year 7 to get off to the best possible start. From the outset, parents of a child starting at Baginton Fields are encouraged to be involved with their child's learning and to understand the learning environment. Headteachers from the school from which the pupils are drawn feel that pupils are extremely well prepared for entry to the school. During the year before they come to Baginton fields, pupils are given the chance to meet and work with their new teachers and to become familiar with their new classmates. As a consequence, pupils are less anxious,

more willing to try out new experiences, and ready to form strong relationships with their teachers.

19. Provision to ensure health and safety is very good. There are sufficient fully trained first-aiders. Since the school has a large hydrotherapy pool, a high number of staff have life saving awards. Child protection procedures are effective and the school follows locally agreed arrangements. Risk assessments are meticulous and cover both daily school life and out-of-classroom activities.
20. There is very effective liaison between the school and external agencies to fully meet the pupils' needs. For example, speech and language therapists have worked with the school to develop the total communication strategy that is so effective in ensuring that all pupils are included in the learning experiences provided. The Connexions youth service has been very active in developing work related learning and work experience opportunities for pupils and students. Beyond this, liaison with the Youth Service has resulted in the provision of a club for older pupils and students and the Service has provided great support for outdoor activities on residential trips. The Riverside partnership and the close working relationship between the school, colleges, Connexions and The Youth Service, ensure that those in Year 14 have a very broad experience of other learning and working environments beyond the school classroom. Through this extensive network of service providers that it has assembled, the school gives school leavers the best possible chance to move on successfully.
21. The School Council gives pupils the opportunity to be involved in the school's development. They listen to advice and act accordingly. Key statements on the School Council notice board aptly show their understanding of such an important role. For example, "We have asked everyone to save electricity" typifies their approach in energy saving initiatives and environmental requirements. A school barbeque organised by Council members shows their awareness of the need to involve everyone in their activities. The visit to the School Council Conference was a rewarding experience for everyone involved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **very effective**. Links with other schools are **very good** for pupils in Years 7 to 11, and they are **excellent** for post-16 students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents view the school very positively.
- Partnerships with other educational establishments and the community help pupils and students to develop their full potential.

Commentary

22. Parents are very pleased with the service the school is providing for their children. The response to the questionnaires shows a very high level of support for the school. Information sent to parents is of a high quality. The school is always willing to provide assistance to parents if they experience difficulties in understanding any parts of reports or other communications.
23. The school has many effective links with local schools and the community that enhance their pupils' learning and develop their understanding of the outside world. Through these, pupils and students have opportunities to be included in classes in other schools, to learn skills at local colleges and skill centres, and to have a chance to experience and try out life in a range of workplaces. About three years ago, the school, another local special school and two secondary community schools, formed the Riverside partnership. This now offers academic, leisure-related, and work-related learning opportunities to students aged 14 to 19.

The Riverside partnership has proved to be extremely effective in helping with the personal development of many students. Through it, many of them have had the chance to travel, to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities, and to join with others as part of a senate of students. All this is excellent preparation for life beyond school. Pupils under the age of sixteen are able to gain invaluable work related learning at the Construction Industry Partnership Centre. Pupils learn basic bricklaying skills and the terminology used within the construction industry. Pupils also follow courses in painting and decorating; glazing and tiling; carpentry and joinery and plumbing and guttering. These activities and initiatives are a very effective means of developing pupils' self confidence and social skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Governors give both support and challenge to school managers.
- Management is good.
- School targets need to be further refined.
- The school has raised standards by improving communication but pressure of numbers is a barrier to raising achievement further.
- Day-to-day finance and administration are very good.
- The school has improved and it gives good value for money.

Commentary

24. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He fully understands the need to continue to move the school forward to achieve higher standards. He inspires confidence and loyalty in both staff and parents. He has established a very able senior management team that shares his determination that all pupils will make as much progress as they can both academically and in broader areas of personal achievement. He delegates responsibility effectively to senior managers and uses their strengths well. Staff appreciate this and take their responsibilities seriously. As a result, they are working extremely hard and to good effect.
25. Governance of the school is good. The school is fortunate in the high quality, experience and expertise of the governors and it is well supported by parent governors. All statutory requirements are met. Governors make an effective contribution to the direction of the school and show a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They support the management well, but are sufficiently confident to challenge where necessary. The chair of the governing body visits school on a regular basis. His visits are always focused and he feeds back the findings of his visits to his fellow governors at full meetings. The governing body is well organised and uses its committees effectively to monitor and support the school.
26. The management is effective. School targets have been set and these are monitored to ensure they are achieved. Staff performance management is effective and individual targets have been identified which support improvements in teaching and learning well through lesson observations and constructive feedback. Teachers and support staff form very effective teams across the school and this has a beneficial effect on the progress that pupils and students make. They have very good opportunities to take part in a wide range of appropriate training opportunities. In an excellent example of staff development, a staff member who began work as a nursery nurse has, over five years, completed a degree in education and will soon qualify as a teacher. This has been achieved through her hard work

and excellent support from the school. Staff induction is very good. It is well structured and it ensures that new staff get to know about the school and pupils as quickly as possible. The latest addition to the teaching staff, a very experienced teacher, confirms this and she was very grateful for the support and encouragement that she received. The process of setting school targets relating to pupil performance needs to be further developed and refined if it is to become a more useful means of driving the school forward. The present assessment processes are rather too broad to accurately track the small gains that pupils characteristically make. These need to be refined so that reliable data about the performance of each pupil cohort can be built up and realistic, challenging targets for further improving performance can be set.

27. One of the most significant aids to raising standards is the school's programme of total communication and the excellent team of external professionals who are involved in the work of the school. This ranges from doctors and nurses, therapists, respite teams, Connexions careers and youth workers. The number of pupils in the school is excessive for the limited accommodation. This restricts the opportunities to make best provision for those pupils on the autistic spectrum and with complex needs.
28. The school follows good practice in the purchase of resources and the appointment of contractors for work on the school premises. Careful consideration is given to the outcomes of its spending decisions. Administration staff keep all accounts well and provide very good quality support and information for the headteacher and governing body. The last audit report although some time ago in 2001, confirmed the very high quality of practice and made no recommendations for improvement.
29. Overall, leadership and management have made good improvements since the previous inspection. The shared commitment of staff ensures that pupils' and students' needs are met. High morale and a very good ethos in school have been key factors in this improvement and the raising of pupils' and students' achievements. Taking into account the high levels of achievement, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,636,593
Total expenditure	1,677,776
Expenditure per pupil	16,611

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66,328
Balance carried forward to the next	25,145

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4 AND POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The overall quality of provision for English, including literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection, pupils and students of all abilities achieve very well, and use of signing and symbols to aid communication is very good.
- Teaching and learning have improved and are now very good.
- Literacy skills are promoted very well.
- Students in Years 12 to 14 achieve very well in developing relevant language and literacy skills.
- Very good leadership has brought about improvements since the last inspection.

Commentary

30. The school has made good progress in developing its provision for English since the previous inspection when achievement was satisfactory. Pupils and students across the age range now achieve very well. There are no noticeable differences in achievement between boys and girls nor between the majority and minority groups, including those for whom English is not the language principally spoken at home. This improvement has been aided by the strong emphasis placed by the school on the importance of having a broad range of communication strategies. English, literacy and communication have become a constant focus for development and communication has rightly been identified as being at the core of all learning. The school has worked with interested professionals, including speech and language therapists, to produce a “total communication” strategy. Many pupils rely on signing and the use of symbols as their main avenue of communication. These skills are used and taught by teachers and learning support assistants very well. To a great extent, achievement within lessons has improved as much as it has because of the high quality of this support; it enables pupils and students to participate, fully, in all activities.
31. Teaching and learning, overall, are very good. They are better than they were when the school was last inspected. Teachers plan their work very effectively building into their lessons many opportunities to communicate in ways that are relevant to the capabilities of the pupils and students. There is good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Literacy Strategy and these are well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers motivate their classes with great skill using very good, relevant, resources and they set tasks and activities that are challenging but carefully matched to the capabilities of the individuals in the class. Effective use is made of techniques such as role-play, discussion, and drama. These prove to be particularly beneficial in promoting the pupils’ confidence and self-esteem. Simple games are used to develop and reinforce important skills. A good example of this was observed in a Post-16 group when the students were helped to sharpen their speaking and listening skills by playing Blind Man’s Bluff. This activity involved students in taking turns to guide a blindfolded student safely around the room and it focused very successfully on the need to listen, work together and concentrate. It also promoted confidence and leadership.
32. Teachers in Years 7 to 9 are especially effective in developing pupils’ pre-reading and early reading skills and they encourage a love of books within the pupils. Very good use is made

of Big Books, to reinforce the message that print conveys meaning and to extend knowledge of letters and the sounds they stand for. Pupils learn very well. They are happy to use the skill they are acquiring, in, for example, identifying the initial sounds of the toys with which they are familiar. Higher attaining pupils are able to link initial sounds to letters and to write these independently, with good letter formation, on the board. Others require support to write or they use play dough to form initial letters, but their achievement is still very high in relation to their capabilities. Staff in Years 10 and 11 very successfully use the characters from the school reading scheme to excite and interest the pupils in their learning, as a result all pupils are absorbed by their work and try very hard. Higher attaining pupils recall in the correct sequence events in stories that they have heard and they are able to write a simple sentence. Others order symbols as a sentence or recognize individual symbols.

33. In Post-16 groups, teaching methods are well selected and time is very well used so that all students benefit. Work is appropriately centered around the development of life skills and towards promoting independence by extending each student's vocabulary. Games are used very effectively to reinforce awareness of social signs such as "exit" or "entrance". Individual targets are set for the students related to these activities. Where story is used as the focus of a lesson careful choice is made of texts that illustrate a theme important for the students' social development. They have themes, such as helping others. Every opportunity is taken during teaching to promote each student's sense of self-esteem and confidence.

34. Leadership of the subject is very good. The subject coordinator has high aspirations for the subject and planning reflects the school's ambitions and goals. There is very effective planning with total commitment to inclusion and very good knowledge and understanding of how to develop English further. The subject leader has worked very hard to supplement the school's own reading scheme with additional books and a scheme of work to promote basic reading and writing skills. These materials can be adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and used in lessons, in one to one or small group sessions. The introduction of a finer method to measure pupils' progress to support the present assessment arrangements would assist teachers when setting targets in pupils' individual education plans, (IEPs).

Language and literacy across the curriculum

35. Teachers are very effective in the way in which they promote pupils' communication, language, and literacy skills across the whole curriculum, but in particular during the daily welcoming period. Here all pupils are encouraged to welcome each other by name, there is very good use of symbols and photographs to aid recognition. Opportunities are taken to count how many pupils are present, to draw attention to the days of the week, and to discuss the day's events. Pupils who have profound and complex learning needs are helped to develop their communication skills very well by consistent use of the school's total communication strategy. Objects of reference, pictures, symbols, and signing are used to replace or supplement the spoken word. This has particular benefits for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.

Modern Foreign Language French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy French and they respond well to the support of teachers and support assistants.
- Teaching has improved and good planning ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, learn well.
- French is well led and the curriculum is well matched to the needs of the pupils.

Commentary

36. Enthusiastic teaching and the effective use of resources and support from teaching assistants ensures that pupils achieve well. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Because of the very good relationships in class, pupils enjoy their work, behave very well, and rise to the challenge to speak French, improve their accents, and increase their vocabulary. They use French to greet each other and staff, and occasionally inspectors, as they pass in the corridor or reply in French when the register is taken. Each pupil is made aware at the beginning of each lesson of what he or she is expected to achieve. At the end of the lesson, the teacher checks to ensure each pupil has reached his or her target. This is done co-operatively to ensure there is self-assessment by the pupil.
37. Teaching is good. Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully included in lessons. Work is matched to the ability and need of each pupil and well supported by support assistants. As a result all pupils enjoy their French and learn well. Support staff provide good role models for pupils and continue to use 'signing' to complement pupils learning. Although staff and pupils speak in French they use 'signing' well to check for understanding.
38. Leadership in French is good. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements and it is pitched at an appropriate level to enable pupils to make progress. There is an emphasis on speaking and listening. This is appropriate to meet the special educational needs of the wide range of pupils. As a result, pupils show enjoyment and achieve well. French makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils take turns in role-play, support each other, encourage each other, and are quick to celebrate each other's successes, which enhance their social development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics for pupils aged 11 to 16 is **good**. Provision for students aged 16 to 19 is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned to ensure that the needs of all pupils and students, including those with additional special needs, are met.
- Classes are managed effectively so that behaviour is very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' and students' progress are developing well.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching and learning is good and occasionally very good at Post-16. As a result, pupils and students achieve well. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan their lessons well and incorporate the National Numeracy Strategy effectively into lessons. Staff know their pupils' and students' special educational needs well, including targets set in their individual plans. Consequently, all pupils and students', including those with additional special needs and those with autistic tendencies, are challenged to learn. In response, pupils and students work hard because they enjoy their lessons. Learning is made more exciting by the imaginative use of simple resources. In a good lesson in Year 8, for example, cardboard tubes of different lengths were used to illustrate the concepts "longer" and "shorter." Pupils showed that they had learned well by accurately applying these descriptions to other objects in different situations. Again, practical learning was to the fore in a very good lesson for post-16 students. They run a "grub club" in which they set up a shop, display goods, price them, and invite pupils from other classes to

come shopping. Students help pupils to select their goodies. They also use their mathematical knowledge to help them with the payment and they count their change. This was a very good practical numeracy lesson which also enhanced students' and pupils' personal and social development.

40. Teachers and classroom staff have positive attitudes towards pupils and students. They use their knowledge to ensure that difficulties that might arise from unrecognised needs are avoided. What each pupil is expected to achieve and how they are expected to behave is made clear at the start of the each lesson. To avoid confusion or frustration, teachers take care to build on previous learning and to avoid abstract teaching. Work is strongly related to everyday activities, such as weighing, measuring, or shopping. All adults have a calm manner that helps to set the tone within the classroom. At the end of each lesson, the teacher revisits the pupils' individual targets to see if these have been achieved. This effective management helps to ensure that behaviour is very good.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' and students' achievement and for record keeping provide useful information on pupils' and students' progress. The coordinator is establishing a database of pupils' and students' achievement. From this baseline it will be possible to measure pupil and student progress and set targets for all pupils and students for the next year. Pupils and students are rewarded for their hard work by achieving external modules of mathematics from Accreditation for Living and Learning (ALL).

Mathematics across the curriculum

42. Numeracy skills are consolidated well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils count to the beat in music. In the post-16 classes, students weigh and measure when making flapjacks in their food technology and develop their ICT and numeracy skills when shopping on the Internet in their ICT lessons. In art, pupils weave long and short ribbons, and use their knowledge of shape when working in batik and post-16 students show great skill and vision linking shape and size when reproducing Van Gogh's "Sunflowers."

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good because of the good quality of teaching and learning.
- The strong emphasis on practical work and investigation motivates pupils to learn.
- Leadership of the subject is good and this contributes to good quality learning and to improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

43. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and they are attentive and learn well. Sometimes it is very good. Pupils are encouraged to participate in effective listening and discussions using signing and symbols for support, where necessary. A good range of teaching styles stimulates learning and achievement. As well as learning scientific facts, pupils also develop well their investigative and enquiry skills. Pupils' interest in learning is enhanced by the attention paid to making the subject relevant. As a result provision in science is equally effective for all pupils regardless of their prior learning. Pupils are very well managed by very good teamwork between the teachers and the teaching assistants. By Year 9, pupils know that electricity can be dangerous. They use an electrical item and list other electrical appliances. By Year 11 they understand that water can be changed by heating and freezing. They have a sound knowledge of the differences between liquids,

gases, and solids. The more able pupils work at Level 2 of the National Curriculum in science showing good achievement. Pupils of all abilities enjoy the practical part of lessons where they are given good opportunities to use scientific equipment. Pupils listen well in all classes. They also behave well and interact positively with their teachers, assistants, and classmates.

44. With good support from the teacher assistants, all pupils are actively involved and find the activities stimulating. Lessons are planned well to ensure pupils' learning builds systematically. The enthusiasm of teachers challenges and engages pupils of all levels of ability. Teachers use the individual pupil targets to ensure that the work is well matched to individual pupils' needs. Opportunities are taken to use multi-sensory stimuli. Very good emphasis on speaking and listening enables all pupils to learn. However, there is a need to review how writing and reading could be more of a focus, especially for the more able pupils.
45. The subject is well managed by a subject specialist co-ordinator who has produced a curriculum and schemes of work that address the specific needs of the pupils. This has had a significant impact on the quality of overall provision. Teachers evaluate the successes and failures in teaching the different units of work and this feedback enables the co-ordinator to make adjustments where it is necessary. The detailed planning removes the risk of missing out important steps and enables building on previous learning. The portfolio of pupils' work shows the progress that they make over time, usually through photographic evidence. Assessment is well used and it includes the setting of future targets. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning in science needs to be improved.
46. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The leadership and management are no longer unsatisfactory. It is now good. In addition, resources are no longer unsatisfactory. However, there is still no science laboratory. This is the main factor preventing achievement from rising even further. Plans are well advanced to remedy this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for ICT is being developed well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teaching is well supported by objectives for pupils to achieve.
- Leadership is satisfactory and there is a strong commitment to professional development by all staff.

Commentary

47. The subject has been developed well since the last inspection. This is because of the priority given to new management, better resourcing and more technical support for teachers. The co-ordinator and technicians are available for individual sessions for staff, and they support them well. The school makes good use of sensory materials to complement ICT across the school and to enhance the development of pupils with the most profound learning difficulties. The ICT base is well equipped and it is used for a large proportion of the week by teachers who bring their classes to it, as well as at lunch times.
48. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most work is carefully planned to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Teachers usually know the pupils' ICT needs well and take into account individual learning difficulties when planning lessons. Lessons are focussed on enabling pupils to have hands on experiences and, as a result, all

pupils achieve well. Relationships in class are very good. Because of this, pupils trust staff, behave very well, and build up confidence and self-esteem.

49. Changes since the last inspection have been significant. There are no longer poor resources and accommodation. The assessment of pupils' progress is now satisfactory and as a result they make appropriate progress in lessons and over time. The new subject leader is getting to grips with the challenges faced. Leadership is satisfactory and schemes of work to support teachers have been put in place for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. They are being piloted for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers and support staff are keen to develop further their skills so that their teaching can become more effective. They have undertaken training since the last inspection and have worked hard to update their competencies. Pupils would make better progress if their ICT targets were more specific.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

50. Pupils are given many opportunities to gain an understanding of the power of ICT in many aspects of life. Digital and video cameras are used effectively to record pupils' progress, for inclusion as evidence in their Records of Achievement. Higher attaining pupils and students access the Internet in English to research topics, and this resource is also used in art and music. A course in ICT and photography is being offered to students in Years 12 to 14. Pupils gain an understanding of the power of ICT in many aspects of every day life such as in switches, televisions, and videos. Where they are available teachers are using interactive whiteboards effectively.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

51. Insufficient work was seen to form an overall judgement about provision. History and geography are taught as humanities to pupils in Years 7 to 9. There is a humanities option for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Presently, humanities for pupils in Years 7 to 9 appears as a timetabled subject on Friday afternoons. This half-term, only two of the six class groups in the key stage have access to it. Over the course of the year, however, all will have the opportunity to study humanities. The range of pupils' work in geography and history that was seen, as well as teachers' records, show satisfactory achievement by Year 9. There are schemes of work in place that are suitable in that they meet National Curriculum requirements and take account of the needs of pupils. There is at present no permanently appointed subject leader for humanities.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has been extended and improved since the last inspection.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Teaching is good overall and, on occasion, excellent and this leads to good learning and good achievement.

Commentary

52. When the school was last inspected in 1999, religious education was not systematically provided for students in Years 12 to 14. Resources for learning were limited and there were too few artefacts. On some occasions the lessons were unsuitable for lower achieving pupils

as they were unable to comprehend or complete the tasks required. While it was clear that most pupils were making progress, no suitable means of regularly, assessing and recording this was in place. Improvement since then has been good. Schemes of work, that match the requirements of the local agreed syllabus for religious education have been put in place for pupils and students across the age range. These are continually revised to ensure that what is to be taught is well suited to their capabilities. Resources are good and support teaching well. There are relevant collections of artefacts that help bring teaching about World Faiths to life. The achievement of pupils and students is good overall and they learn well.

53. The improvement in provision is due to the very good leadership that the subject now enjoys. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the benefits to social behaviour and understanding that a well planned programme of teaching and learning in religious education can bring. Topics are chosen that give a great deal of scope for active learning and for role - play. A good start has been made on the development of means to assess pupils' achievement and this enables teachers to build up a record of their pupils growing knowledge and understanding.
54. The quality of teaching is good. In the majority of lessons, where the teacher has a clear understanding of curriculum requirements, very good knowledge of the pupils' characteristics and capabilities, and outstanding relationships with the class, teaching is very good or, on occasion, excellent. In these circumstances pupils and students blossom. They grow in confidence when their responses are praised and they become much more ready to contribute further. This makes for a very positive climate for learning within which the management of entrenched challenging behaviour from one or two pupils is also very successful. In that minority of lessons in which teaching and learning were satisfactory, extraneous factors played a part in limiting the effectiveness of the well planned learning experiences that were to be provided. For example, in a lesson that was held in a classroom, formed within a larger room by a screen partition, the noise from the adjacent class was off-putting and unscheduled interruptions took place. All this made it difficult for the teacher to maintain the concentration of the class and provide continuity in learning.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has led to improvements in planning, use of resources, and assessment.
- Teaching and learning are good and they lead to good achievement.

55. Progress since the last inspection has been good because of the quality of leadership and management. This has improved since the last inspection. It is now good. The subject is now well structured with a scheme of work to support teachers. This incorporates effective use of information and communication technology. Evaluations are made about how successful the work is and pupils' progress is now assessed. Pupils' work is included in a portfolio, with photographic evidence of the work of all abilities. Resources were also unsatisfactory but are now much improved.
56. Teaching and learning is good and have many good features. Year 11 pupils each made a pizza, of an appropriate standard. There was a very good ethos in the lesson, which was brisk, purposeful, and very well organised. The teaching assistants give very good support and all pupils were very well behaved, listened well, and tried very hard. They enjoyed the lesson and paid very good attention to personal hygiene and safety. The Year 13 students

enjoyed the lesson on photography. The ethos was relaxed and there was a very strong emphasis on developing students' communication skills. Effective use was made of each student's targets, with work set to suit different abilities. All students enjoyed using a digital camera and showed an appropriate understanding of how to use it. Pupils respected the efforts of others and this lesson, as did the first, made a good contribution to encouraging responsibility and personal development. Achievement, overall, is good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy art and design and achievement has improved since the last inspection.
- Good teaching promotes personal development and learning in other subjects.
- There is good leadership.

Commentary

57. Throughout the school, pupils and students with a broad range of different learning needs achieve well. This is reflected in the very good displays of pupils' and students' work and in their lessons. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils and students enjoy lessons in art because they are active in their learning and fully involved in a rich curriculum that involves them working with many different materials. Their attitudes to their work are very good. They work independently and at times collaborate in small groups. The very good relationships that they have with teachers and support staff makes them confident learners who are prepared to experiment with their work.
58. Good teaching ensures pupils gain a wide experience of art and design. They become increasingly aware of colour, texture, shape, and size and learn to express themselves in a variety of ways. They achieve good results in a wide range of art activities. Teachers use artistic language well, thereby enhancing pupils' and students' understanding of their work. Very good relationships allow staff to challenge and stretch pupils and students to improve their work. This is the case even for those with additional special needs, those who are sensitive to touch and disturbed by non-routine activities. Art makes a very positive contribution to pupils' and students' spiritual, social, moral, and cultural development. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to be calm and thoughtful as they work. The playing of peaceful music helps this. The cultural heritage of the pupils and students is explored by considering images such as the stained glass of Coventry Cathedral and they respond to these in the art that they make themselves. Art is also well used in other subjects, such as science, to make displays showing plants, seeds, and leaves. In mathematics, they have made an attractive snakes and ladders board.
59. Leadership and management of art is good. The co-ordinator plans the curriculum well. This is enriched through visits to places of local interest, such as Coventry Cathedral and by studying famous artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh. Information and communication technology is used well by staff to help pupils find the work of famous artists and download images. Staff use the digital camera effectively to record pupils' work, which acts as an accurate informative system of recording and assessing pupils' work. Although the art room is an asset and enhances the provision for art in the school, there is a lack of adjustable tables and furniture to assist chair bound pupils and to ensure that they are positioned comfortably to carry out their work.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved and are very good.
- Achievement has improved substantially and it is very good.
- The subject is led very well and is important to the school.

Commentary

60. There has been notable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection when they were good. Teaching is now very good. It is strongly founded on a high degree of knowledge both of the subject and of the capabilities of the pupils, and thorough planning that fully recognises individual needs. The teacher's introductory activities set the scene very well and make clear her expectations. Individual targets are clearly explained to each pupil or student. Photographs and symbols are used very well to reinforce learning. Time is allocated during sessions to give pupils and students every opportunity to respond and communicate, and good account is taken of the physical effort that this might involve for some. In all lessons, the teacher is very well supported by learning support staff. All adults work as a team encouraging and involving every pupil and student in the activities. This presents them with the maximum opportunity to participate and achieve as well as they are able. Because of this, lessons are very effective and pupils and students learn very well.

61. Achievement is very good for pupils and students of all levels of capability, across the age range. Pupils and students work together in groups, and, using, mainly, tuned percussion instruments, compose and perform their own music. They gain in confidence as they practise. They follow instructions and show sensitivity in their playing. Higher achievers discern the pulse of recorded music and maintain it by clapping their hands. Those with more profound and complex needs enjoy and respond to the music by smiling and by simple body movements. Many enjoy the chance they are given to introduce themselves by singing their name and the attempts by the more able to sing back in reply to a greeting are very good.

62. The subject leader though new to the school has a very clear grasp of what is required to maintain and improve achievement in the subject. In the short time that she has been in post, she has completed a thorough audit of the subject and identified areas for development. Music has a high profile within the school and is used well in other subject areas, for example, to promote quiet reflection at the end of a gymnastics lesson. The school hosts and is a participant in a 'Morning of Music' schools' presentation. There are lunchtime clubs, including one for the choir, that are very well attended. A music therapist visits the school weekly to offer therapy to those who might benefit from it. Full advantage is taken of visitors from the Performing Arts Service, who lead very popular singing and playing lessons on one afternoon each week.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has improved for pupils and students of all levels of capability, and teaching is good and promotes enthusiastic learning.
- The curriculum is good and it is strongly enriched by opportunities for learning beyond the school day.
- Personal development is strongly promoted.
- Good leadership has led to better management of resources and enhanced opportunities for pupils and students.

Commentary

63. At the last inspection, achievement was satisfactory but the involvement of pupils with more complex difficulties was insufficient. Now achievement is good for pupils and students of all levels of capability. The range of learning activities offered to pupils and students is appropriate for their age and modified to match their needs. Pupils and students develop their physical skills well. They make good progress, and achievement as they move through the school is good. In swimming, there is a high level of attainment. This is because teaching is good. Teachers have a good grasp of the curriculum requirements and a very good knowledge of the individual characteristics and needs of their pupils and students. Lessons are planned well and the role of each member of the staff team involved is understood. Staff are enthusiastic and work together very well as a team. As a result, pupils work as well as they are able and join in, actively, in lessons. With the encouragement of their teachers, they develop increasing confidence. For example, in a gymnastics lesson, pupils in Year 8, showed their increasingly good awareness of space as they moved around the hall. More mobile pupils worked together independently exploring different ways of travelling across a mat using different parts of their body. They happily demonstrated to others the various methods of stretching and curling parts of their body. Pupils with far greater difficulties also participated fully in the planned activities, because of the very good support of all adults.
64. The planned range of activities meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and includes swimming, dance, games, gymnastics, athletics, trampolining, and outdoor pursuits. Sports Day is one of the highlights of the school year; this year the emphasis was given to the Olympics featuring events such as throwing the javelin with, much to their delight, pupils being awarded gold medals. Very good use is made of the school grounds for cycling, athletics, and football. Provision for out of school hours activities, for example, at lunchtime and on residential visits is very good and strongly enriches the curriculum. There are very good opportunities for pupils to work alongside mainstream pupils.
65. Pupils develop essential personal skills during their PE lessons. They learn to listen and to follow instructions, to work together with others for a common purpose and to increase their independence by dressing and undressing. These benefits were seen in a well-planned Year 9 swimming lesson in which pupils worked cooperatively when using floats as rafts. They followed simple instructions, for example a more able pupil responded to the instruction quickly/slowly when moving through the water showing control and coordination. Pupils listened to instructions and responded appropriately, for example when called to leave the pool to shower at the end of the lesson. Those who were able to do so made good attempts to dress and undress themselves. Pupils are invited to assess how well they have achieved

towards their individual targets. They show some independence making good attempts, for example, in helping to put equipment away.

66. The subject is led and managed well, and very good arrangements for clubs and residential visits enhance the curriculum. Resources have been carefully developed. They are good and attractive to the pupils, encouraging them to become more adventurous as they practise movement, for example across and through benches, mats, and tunnels. Since the last inspection, the school has endeavoured to address the issue of storage space for large apparatus by containing it behind a yellow line no go area. Pupils and students are aware of the rules governing this area and respect them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

67. Because it was not possible to observe more than a single lesson, no judgement can be made about the overall quality of provision. Citizenship is not yet taught, systematically, as a separate subject. A leader for citizenship has been appointed who has a good understanding of the curriculum requirements and of the difficulties that most pupils and students will face in trying to come to terms with the technical and abstract issues, especially in the programme for Key Stage 4. An audit has been carried out to identify whereabouts, within the other subjects of the curriculum, aspects of the programmes of study for citizenship are being addressed. The provision of discrete lessons in citizenship for every class is being considered. Presently the work of the pupils in PSHE, religious education, art, and modern foreign language addresses a number of the topics of the Key Stage 3 programme of study for citizenship but little from the programme for Key Stage 4. Because of the nature of their special educational needs, this is both understandable and appropriate.

Personal social and health education (PSHE)

Provision is **very good**.

- The subject is very well led and there is a strongly established programme for personal social and health education that has been developed by the school especially to meet the diverse needs of its pupils.
- The programme does much to develop the confidence, trust, and communication between pupils and students and enable them to take responsibility.
- Great use is made of linking agencies and community based facilities to promote work related skills, and outstanding opportunities are provided for pupils and students to join with those from other schools, including mainstream, to benefit from vocational, academic, and recreational activities.
- The school is innovative in its approach to teaching alcohol, tobacco, and drugs awareness to those with severe and complex learning needs.

Commentary

68. At the last inspection, no specific judgement was made on personal, social and health education and it was not reported on as a subject. The school has, however, been developing its own programme for personal social and health education for some time and it continues to develop and refine it. The structure of this programme is unique to the school. It is divided into four broad sections, or curricula, each of which reflects the priorities that arise from the nature of the individual special educational needs of each pupil. Thus, much of the content of the PSHE lessons offered to those with social interaction difficulties is derived from the "Curriculum for emotional, behavioural and social education," whilst for those with sensory disabilities and profound and multiple learning difficulties the work they

are offered is drawn from the "Curriculum for sensory and perceptual education." This method of organising and focusing work leads to a very good match being achieved between the requirements of the curriculum and the capabilities of the pupils and students. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the purpose of personal, social and health education and the very important position that it occupies in the whole school curriculum. Work in this area is, under her leadership, innovative and very successful. Pupils and students show in their very good personal development the benefits of the work that is done with them. There is very good assessment practice. This makes use of written criteria to record development in Key Skills such as communication, problem solving, working with others, organisational skills, and thinking skills on a four-point scale. Consistent recording of assessments makes it possible to track their emerging independence and personal development.

69. Amongst the pupils and students, those who have the greatest difficulty with communication and those who, because of their special educational needs, for example autistic spectrum disorders, find it hard to acknowledge others or join with a group. These pupils and students show noticeable improvements in these areas as a result of the very well judged work that takes place through the "Curriculum for emotional, behavioural, and social education". The willingness of these pupils to interact with others, through, for example, playing mimicking, or trust games, increases noticeably during sessions. Those who are more sociable and outgoing are given a broad range of opportunities to develop their living and independence skills. They use the school "flat" to practice independent cooking and they visit skill centres to gain experience in a range of trades including brick laying. The daily structures of school life provide many opportunities for pupils to take on small but significant responsibilities, such as for example returning class registers to the office. The school council extends further the delegation of responsibility to the pupils. The elected representatives of the students and pupils make decisions of some significance for the lives of those who attend the school. They have a budget voted to them by the governors and have used this to provide equipment for playground games.
70. The school has very good links with its community and the services, such as "Connexions" that work with it to provide work related learning and work experience opportunities. By this means, it is able to provide a very good range of experiences that are beneficial to the development of pupils' personal and social skills. The "Riverside" partnership, of which the school is a member, gives students aged 14 to 19 excellent opportunities for personal and social development. Through it, they are able to experience working alongside others, including mainstream students on leisure, work related, and academic options. They can aspire to be part of the student council or senate of the partnership and are able to take part in challenging residential activities. All this does wonders for their sense of personal worth and their social competencies.
71. Under sponsorship from the Department for Education and Skills, the school has developed, and taught as a pilot programme, lessons in awareness of the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. The pilot work is currently being evaluated before teaching in this area is added to the PSHE curricula. The school by taking part in this work, shows, yet again its commitment to innovation in this curriculum area.

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	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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