

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BRADSTOW SCHOOL**

Broadstairs, Kent

LEA area: Wandsworth

Unique reference number: 101095

Headteacher: Mr Albert Furze

Lead inspector: Mrs. Patricia Potheary

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 June 2005

Inspection number: 268537

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:	5 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	48
School address:	34 Dumpton Park Drive Broadstairs Kent
Postcode:	CT10 1BY
Telephone number:	01843 862123
Fax number:	01843 866648
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Murphy
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Bradstow is a community residential special school for 50 girls and boys aged 5 to 19 years who have autism with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and challenging behaviour. There are 48 pupils on roll and 9 are girls. The youngest pupils currently attending the school are in year 5. Those in the sixth form are called students. Over half the pupils and students are of white British heritage and just under half are spread broadly evenly between more than 10 other ethnic groups. Two pupils speak English as an additional language at an early stage of acquisition. Every pupil and student has a statement of special educational need for autism. All the pupils and students in the school have previously attended other special schools for pupils with SLD which could not cope with their severely challenging behaviour. This makes Bradstow an unusual and highly specialised special school. Attainment on entry is very well below national averages although socio-economic backgrounds are average. The school uses 3 sites, the main school and two off site hostels close by. Pupils are resident for 7 days a week during term time and go home for half term and holidays. This is a Wandsworth school, but located in Kent, resulting in long journeys for parents, pupils and governors. Pupil and student mobility is low, but they join the school in all age groups. The last childcare inspection was in February 2005 and care standards inspection was in February 2004.

The school is recognised by the DfES as a Regional Resource for Low Incidence Disabilities. The school is not involved with any local or national initiatives. It has Investor in People status from 2003 and won a Unified Guidance award and the Wandsworth Schools Charter award in 2003. Significant partners include Thanet College, local special schools and the Royal London School for the Blind.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9619	Robert Miller	Lay inspector	
8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education
22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English Design and technology English as an additional language
2512	Brian Emery	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Bradstow is a very good school**, which helps transform pupils' and students' daily lives. Pupils and students achieve well. The quality of education is very good, directed and supported by very good leadership and management. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make remarkable progress in the way they overcome communication and social difficulties and so become able to learn.
- The expertise and skill of staff in every aspect of the school's highly specialised work is exemplary, both in the school and the residences.
- Leadership, especially by the headteacher but also by key staff in the school and residences is excellent, ensuring commitment, enthusiasm and continual improvements in the work of the school.
- The innovative approach and unique relevance of the wider curriculum, including the residential provision, is particularly successful.
- Very good care is taken to ensure that each pupil and student is helped to be safe and make the right choices about their next steps and future placements.
- The curriculum, although successful in transforming pupils' and students' ability to learn, does not ensure enough time is spent teaching certain subjects, especially information and communication technology (ICT).
- The school collects very good data on what pupils and students achieve, but does not summarise the findings to help analyse where subjects or groups need to improve.

The school has improved well since the last inspection, resulting in improved overall achievement. There are now very effective procedures for successfully managing behaviour, which is a significant improvement. Teaching, learning and the curriculum have improved well and assessment to help teachers plan to meet individual needs is now very good. There has been improvement in all the previous key issues, but allocating more time specifically to subjects, although much better, is still not sufficient to improve achievement in some subjects or parts of subjects. Aspects of accommodation are greatly improved, especially the new teaching block and teachers' work base, but several improvements are still needed.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 13	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

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

**The achievement of pupils and students in all age groups, regardless of special educational need, is good.** They make outstanding progress in the ability to communicate, speak and listen. In English, achievement overall is very good, especially in reading, and in mathematics and science it is good. The targets set by the school based upon individual pupils' and students' goals are achieved very well. Pupils and students also show particularly good achievement in cycling, swimming and music. Very good achievement in vocational and life skills studies leads to successful accreditation through the ASDAN awards. Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is also very good. In some subjects, particularly ICT, progress is satisfactory rather than good despite good teaching, largely because too little time is given to them.

**Pupils' and students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Pupils and students enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes. During their time at the school, including the residences, the way pupils' and students'

behaviour is transformed and their social skills are developed, is excellent. There are many instances of remarkable change for pupils and students whose severely challenging behaviour meant that other special schools could not accommodate them. In school, and in the residence, pupils and students have many very good opportunities to learn how to look after themselves, their clothes and their rooms and take responsibility. Attendance is excellent.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is also very good.**

The most effective element of teaching is the way staff help pupils and students to overcome their challenging behaviour and begin to learn, often for the first time. In all lessons very high quality team-work and skilled teaching from teachers and teaching assistants alike, ensure that pupils and students learn very well in most lessons. A few lessons do not help the most able pupils and students to learn as much as they could, because the lesson plans lack sufficiently detailed objectives for them. Some activities remain too immature for the age and appropriate social development of the pupils or students. This is a problem senior staff are trying to address. Assessment is very good, with detailed analysis of how well a pupil or student has learned each target so that it can be built upon in the next lesson. The curriculum is good, with a highly effective focus on the links between communication and behaviour. It is thoroughly based on each pupil's and student's individual targets and close attention is successfully paid to personal and social development within a 24 hour residential curriculum. Some subjects lack sufficient time to build well on pupils' and students' learning, especially in ICT. The very good curriculum for pupils and students aged 14 – 19 prepares them very well for the next stage of their lives. The improved and generally high quality accommodation still lacks the facilities to raise achievement in subjects such as art and physical education. The care, guidance and support, to help pupils and students make the right choices, are very good. Links with parents, colleges, other schools and organisations are very good in helping pupils and students take their part in the wider community. The school, as a DfES regional resource, contributes very well to the specialised skills of local schools and teachers further afield.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** Excellent leadership by the headteacher and key staff has resulted in highly effective teamwork from a skilled and dedicated workforce in the school and in the residences. Very good management has helped to realise the strong inclusive vision based upon very good and detailed information on how well each pupil or student is doing. This means that the school is able to meet the needs of individual pupils and students very successfully. However, this information is not yet collated or analysed sufficiently well to help staff and governors decide where improvement is most needed in some subjects. Governors are highly committed and their work is of high quality. All statutory requirements are met. Financial management is very effective.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are very pleased with the school and feel very strongly that their children have been able to succeed and learn to communicate and be more sociable than ever before. They are very happy with the quality of care in the residences and the school and with the way they are included in the work of the school. Pupils and students feel equally positive. The inspection findings concur with the views of parents, pupils and students.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure enough time is spent teaching each curriculum subject, especially ICT, to raise achievement further.
- Summarise the findings on pupils' and students' achievement to help analyse where subjects or groups need to improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

The quality of achievement is good overall in all age groups.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Improvements in pupils' and students' ability to communicate is outstanding.
- Progress in English is very good and in mathematics and science it is good.
- Pupils show very good progress in music, swimming and cycling.
- The school targets based upon individual pupils' and students' targets are met very well.
- Work in vocational studies leads to very good achievement.
- Achievement in some subjects, particularly ICT, is slowed because too little time is given to teaching them.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils in all age groups achieve well and this means that standards are rising since the last inspection. As the school accepts a very specific group of pupils and students, all with severe learning and communication difficulties, autism and challenging behaviours, there are no significantly different types of special need to be assessed for inclusion and achievement. The school receives pupils and students at all times of the year and into all age groups, many of whom are learning at the very earliest 'P' levels. Many pupils and students arrive at the school when they are older, and this means that the eldest year group has the most students. The youngest pupils currently are aged 10 and there are only 5 pupils in the junior department altogether. This means that, with only 48 pupils and students in total, comparisons between year groups and key stages are difficult. For these reasons all judgements have been linked to individual pupils' and students' progress.
2. The school meets its targets for progress against pupils' and students' Individual Education Plans very well, averaging an 83% success rate. Pupils' and students' targets are relevant and appropriately challenging for them and are clearly achieved from one review to another. The school does not yet focus on individual subjects to produce whole school targets but recognises that this would help drive up standards in the subject areas even further.
3. The school is outstanding in the way it helps pupils and students to communicate. This is the crucial feature in enabling them to learn in other ways. Pupils and students arrive with little or no ability to communicate their needs or feelings. Gradually they are helped to show what they want through pictures, electronic voice messages and speech and so they begin to be receptive to learning and interaction with others. This is a remarkable change in their abilities to communicate, listen and learn in comparison to their skills before arriving at the school.
4. There is some variation in achievement between the subject areas. Pupils and students make very good progress in the key skill of reading and good progress in mathematics and science. They really enjoy books and gradually begin to understand how symbols or print can tell a story or give information. They learn about mathematics and achieve well in a practical way and are helped to shop, cook, grow plants, count and measure successfully. In science, pupils and students learn effectively about their own bodies and the plants and animals around them, mainly through practical investigation. Pupils also show very good achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education, music and some key physical skills such as cycling and swimming. However in ICT and religious education, achievement is satisfactory rather than good. This is because, although teaching and learning in lessons are generally good there is too little time spent on these subjects. In ICT pupils and students do learn enough skills to help them use the technology to make progress in other subjects, but these



are not sufficiently exploited. The limited time being spent on some subjects, affects the more able pupils most. In subjects such as art, geography, history, religious education or the use of resistant materials in design and technology there is no doubt that the few more able pupils aged 10 – 16 have insufficient subject time to learn as much as they could.

5. Vocational studies for students in the older groups lead to accreditation within the ASDAN awards and work folders show very good achievement in a whole range of activities leading towards more independent living and self help skills.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for the transformation of pupil behaviour and social skills are outstanding.
- The residential provision contributes significantly to pupils' and students' personal and social development.
- The opportunities presented to pupils for looking after themselves and their surroundings are very good.
- The school is very successful in ensuring pupils attend school during term time.
- There are missed opportunities to develop spiritual awareness within the curriculum despite some good examples.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils' and students' attitudes, both to learning and each other, are very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils and students join in well with activities showing a pride in being able to do things such as gymnastics or pottery. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils and students, where they are able, relate well to each other and are very helpful. In school and in the residence, pupils and students are taught to be independent with personal hygiene and tidying their own bedrooms, for example. Older students cook their own lunch and they all grow in confidence. One student, for example, is now willing to walk where previously he would only use a wheelchair. This growth in confidence and independence is a particular strength according to a number of parents.
7. Pupils' and students' behaviour is very good. All pupils and students have severely challenging behaviour and have been excluded or were close to being excluded from other special schools. The school specialises, as a regional resource, in helping pupils and students with severe behaviour and communication difficulties due to autism. It is exceptionally successful in transforming the way pupils and students behave. Parents gave the most eloquent testaments to this, one for example, describing how her son can now be taken to a restaurant for the first time and another telling how her son recently has been able to join in with others in the swimming pool, making family outings possible. The school's system for changing behaviour and monitoring the results is highly specialised. Staff receive weekly training in techniques for managing incidents and preventing them happening in the first place. Senior managers monitor the exact pattern of when, where and with whom pupils have difficulties and then alter the circumstances to prevent triggering more incidents. This system is also used to support changes in staff responses or mannerisms where necessary. This has resulted with one pupil, for example, in halving the number of serious incidents occurring since arriving at the school. Many pupils and students become far more able to cope with their environment and, by increasingly communicating their needs, experience far less distress. Behaviour and the way it is managed has improved significantly since the last inspection. There was one exclusion in the past academic year.

### **Exclusions**

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No pupils on roll	of	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	28		0	0
White – any other White background	2		0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1		0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2		0	0
Asian or Asian British – other Asian background	1		0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		0	0
Black or Black British – African	3		0	0
Black or Black British – other Black background	6		0	1
Any other ethnic group	1		0	0

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

8. The provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved well since the last inspection. The loyalty to the school and the trust the pupils have in their teachers and care staff and their open friendliness, indicate a strong identification with their own community. The school helps pupils and students understand the needs of others well through community activities, assemblies and religious education. They are helped to understand right from wrong very well, for example in knowing that the belongings of others are not theirs or that others have feelings and can be hurt. Pupils and students are enabled to make choices, to say 'no' or to keep to the simple rules that make the community a pleasant place in which to live and learn. Cultural and multi-cultural understanding is developed well through regular festivals and activities involving religion, art, dance, music and poetry. There are some occasions when pupils and students experience the joy of learning a skill or an amazement in seeing something for the first time, perhaps when painting, making food or contributing to assembly, but opportunities to strengthen spiritual awareness are not planned sufficiently well and are sometimes missed.
9. Attendance is excellent. It is well above that of similar schools nationally and with such small numbers each pupil or student counts for more than 2% in the figures. Punctuality for school and lessons is very good. The majority of parents are very co-operative in ensuring their child attends school and the school rigorously monitors attendance to ensure that pupils and students return to school after the holidays.

**Attendance****Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	1.2
National data	8.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.9
National data	0.2

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

### **Residential care**

10. The residential care home makes a significant contribution to pupils' and students' personal and social development. The strong and well-organised continuity with school systems ensures that social and behavioural change is paramount and highly successful. This is balanced by a less formal environment, where pupils are thoroughly at home and show remarkable maturity in the way they socialise, look after themselves and take responsibility for the daily chores. On at least two occasions it was difficult to recognise the severity of pupils' and students' autism when they were getting ready for school, or relaxing after a hard day, because they were behaving similarly to any group of responsible teenagers.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching, learning, care, welfare, health, safety and links with parents, other schools, colleges and the community are all very good. The quality of the curriculum is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and the way pupils learn is very good overall. Assessment is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Class management is very skilled so that pupils who find it difficult are able to learn.
- The work of teaching assistants contributes very well to the good learning taking place.
- Class team-work is excellent and ensures a consistently effective learning environment.
- Assessment is very thorough and is used well to plan activities to support further learning.
- Whole class lessons do not always challenge the most able pupils sufficiently and this is linked to a lack of detail in some lesson planning.
- A few lessons do not provide a sufficiently mature environment for the older pupils and students.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2%)	20 (45 %)	22 (49 %)	2 (4%)	0 (0 %)	0 (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.*

11. The majority of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, very closely followed by many very good and one excellent lesson. However, for the first time, pupils who have been unable to learn in other schools are sitting down, following instructions and feeling safe when they explore new things. This demonstrates exceptional behaviour management, which is highly significant in such a school. When the scrutiny of pupils' and students' work and evidence of learning in their records are taken into account, it is evident that the overall quality of teaching and learning in school and within the 24 hour curriculum is actually very good.

12. Teaching and learning is very good in English, particularly in helping pupils and students to listen, follow instructions, make choices and communicate their needs. In mathematics and science it is good. No full ICT lessons were observed during the inspection, although individual teaching of ICT for short periods is good or very good. Teaching is always very good in personal, social, health and citizenship education, in music and in art lessons and there is a high proportion of very good teaching in physical education and in the sixth form. All the satisfactory teaching is in religious education because the subject focus is far too limited. In every lesson highly skilled support, encouragement and individual tuition by teaching assistants contributes significantly to the very good learning taking place. Much of the learning goes on in very small groups and with individual pupils and students by taking advantage of the moments when they can focus on their work. This is a highly skilled response on the part of teachers and teaching assistants. It makes running ordinary conventional lessons very difficult and relies on exceptional team-work to judge the moment, provide support to each other and encourage the pupils and students to participate.
13. Planning of lessons is appropriate and efficient. Each teacher plans lessons via charts covering the whole week or module. This is highly effective for lessons where the teacher remains with the same class for most subjects and most pupils and students work within a narrow band of attainment. This system provides an effective continuity, is linked strongly to each pupil's or student's Individual Education Plan targets and ensures a focus on the right individual's needs. The main weakness is in a few whole class lessons, where the lack of detail in planning for individual needs means that, occasionally, the most able pupils or students are not sufficiently challenged and so do not learn as much as they could. Where pupils and students are taught individually in English and mathematics for example, the needs of the most able are met well.
14. In several lessons the resources and approach used treated pupils and students as if they were much younger than they were and did not provide a sufficiently mature environment. The school has thought carefully about this difficulty where the young people do not like change from year to year with favourite books or toys for example. However there are more mature elements to lessons such as the horticulture modules and also in the residential homes for older students. Teachers agree that gradual change towards more age appropriate resources will help them in supporting pupils' and students' social development.
15. Assessment of what is learned is very thorough, with a system that records just how well established each small step in learning is. This information is used very well, so that each pupil and student can build on their previous learning from one lesson to the next and so make very good progress.

### **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good. Accommodation and resources to support the curriculum are good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Imaginative and consistent linking of communication with behaviour management is highly effective.
- Detailed Individual Education Plans guide all activities and help ensure that each pupil's and student's needs are met very well, giving equal access to the curriculum.
- Very good provision for personal and social education permeates all activities and underpins the ability of pupils and students to make progress.
- The 24 hour curriculum and residential care is a core feature in the success of the school.
- Insufficient time is spent teaching some subjects and this restricts pupils' and students' opportunities for learning.
- The 14 – 19 curriculum is very good, carefully preparing pupils and students for the next stage of their lives.

- The extensive accommodation contains several high quality elements, but lack of provision for some subjects occasionally limits achievement.

## Commentary

16. Central to the curriculum at Bradstow is the inextricable linking of communication with the management of behaviour. Pupils and students are enabled to demonstrate their needs, preferences and learning through sophisticated systems of communication adapted to individual learning styles. This lessens their frustration, reduces anxiety and makes contact with peers and adults possible. Parents express pleasure that their child is increasingly able to communicate and is more likely to join in family activities. The expertise of the speech and language therapist, combined with excellent planning with the communication facilitator and behaviour managers, has made this possible. Staff, including care, administrative and catering staff have received very good training to enable them to make use of a range of communication systems. This means that all members of the school community use photographs, symbols or signing to reinforce pupils' and students' speech and facilitate pupils' understanding.
17. Other elements of the complementary curriculum also contribute very positively to meeting the needs of pupils and students as specified on their Individual Educational Plans. For the more able this might mean withdrawal to work on individual targets for numeracy or literacy. Boys and girls are enabled to relax whilst engaging in 'Sherborne' dance movements or making regular use of the sensory room. Communication through music sessions proves invaluable for many pupils and others benefit greatly from gentle massage and the contact it brings.
18. The good curriculum is suitable for pupils and students of all ages and meets statutory requirements. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection where it was unsatisfactory for pupils aged 11 to 16. Planning for what is to be taught throughout the year in each subject, to ensure that there is continuity and progression in learning, is now firmly in place. Whilst the emphasis of the curriculum is rightly focussed on communication, still too little time is allocated to ICT, religious education, art and the resistant materials element of design and technology. This means that pupils' and students' overall achievement is restricted to satisfactory in these areas.
19. The very good personal, social, health, and citizenship education is integral to all school activities as well as being taught as a discrete subject. This programme is linked to effective individual targets for personal development. It encourages pupils and students to calm their behaviour, to respect boundaries or to become increasingly responsible for themselves including their personal hygiene. Sex and relationship education not only forms part of the ASDAN programme but is addressed at a personal level when the time is right.
20. The curriculum for pupils aged 14-19 is very good and is based upon the ASDAN Awards. The nature of the pupils' and students' difficulties means that the school has taken full advantage of the flexibility in the curriculum for this age group. Work from the age of 14 concentrates on helping the young people to relate well to others, look after themselves and become as independent as possible in shopping, cooking and travelling for example. They are helped to undertake useful work preparation such as catering or horticulture and prepare for the next steps that they have to take.
21. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment during the school day and after school. During the day lunch times are given to many different clubs on a casual basis, where pupils and students can choose to relax after lessons, use computers, play outside or make things for example. Good opportunities for enrichment, especially in sport, are delivered mainly through the evening activities in the residences. Opportunities for enrichment through the arts is satisfactory. Taking part in musical events, theatre or art does occur, and there have been visiting artists and musicians.
22. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is very good. Accommodation and resources are good overall. Very good training has ensured that all staff are highly knowledgeable about autism and behaviour management and this has contributed significantly to the consistency of approach that is so effective. Teachers have sufficient

subject knowledge to cover all areas of the curriculum and are ably assisted by highly competent teaching assistants. There are sufficient care and administrative staff to allow for the very efficient running of the school. Resources are plentiful, readily accessible and support the curriculum well but do not always reflect the age of pupils or students sufficiently for them to fully understand their peer group culture. The quality of accommodation is good overall despite a few evident shortcomings. The site is large, extremely attractive and generally well maintained. There is extensive space for outdoor activities. Teaching accommodation has improved significantly with the building of new classrooms and the refurbishment of a teacher resource and training centre. However, there is still insufficient indoor provision for PE, art and some aspects of DT which limits achievement in these subjects.

### **Residential care**

23. The very good residential care element of the curriculum is crucial to helping the young people at Bradstow learn how to manage their own lives as much as possible and live with others more easily. Joint ownership of Individual Education Plans by teaching and care staff and a consistently common approach to communication and behaviour, help to ensure the success of the 24-hour curriculum. Very good liaison between staff ensures that individual targets are addressed and reviewed regularly, including targets on activity and social inclusion plans. Pupils and students have opportunities for choice, for example whether to go bowling or engage in craft activities in the evening. Sporting opportunities contribute positively to the overall PE curriculum. For example, an external sports co-ordinator organises a range of activities on Sunday mornings and pupils go sailing, swimming or play football on the beach. Pupils and students can also relax whilst engaging in typical teenage activities such as watching television, listening to music or enjoying the regular disco which contributes to their ability to socialise more easily. Independence and social inclusion is encouraged and they go out for meals or visit the cinema during regular visits into Broadstairs.
24. Residential accommodation is homely and generally well maintained, bedrooms are personalised and there are sufficient bathrooms. However, it has been recognised universally that hostels are no longer adequate to fully meet the needs of pupils and students and plans are in hand for new provision.

### **Care guidance and support**

The way in which the school cares for all pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good. The quality of support, advice and guidance is very good. There are good arrangements to involve pupils in the life of the school by valuing and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures in the school and residences to make sure pupils and students are safe and healthy are very effective despite the nature of their difficulties.
- Pupils and students have excellent relationships with adults in the school and residences, building up a trust which helps them to learn how to respond more calmly to events.
- There are very good induction arrangements for pupils and students when they join the school so that they settle in quickly.
- There is very good individual support provided for pupils and students to monitor their work and guide their choices.
- Pupils and students make a good contribution to the work of the school but lack the opportunities that a school council would bring.

## **Commentary**

25. Pupils and students are kept very safe despite the fact that they tend to react in unpredictable and sometimes dangerous ways. The school and care staff show a very high awareness of safety issues within school and consistently provide an environment that is safe, supportive and gives the highest regard to pupils' well being. The new school buildings provide very much improved facilities that ensure a clean, safe and healthy environment. Although there is no formal health and safety committee, regular health and safety checks and a building maintenance programme identify and rectify any hazards. There are very good procedures in place for dealing with accidents. The very effective child protection procedures are fully understood by adults in the school. The Commission for Social Care Inspection [CISCI] report in February 2005, stated, "The Head of Care is knowledgeable about many aspects of child protection and there is an ongoing training programme for staff."
26. Relationships are excellent because pupils and students trust the adults around them, who listen to them and encourage each tentative step. This means that they can begin to socialise with others, respond to change more calmly and gradually learn how to learn, often for the first time. Parents say that staff treat their children fairly and encourage them to become mature.
27. The effectiveness of guidance is very good in terms of pupils' and students' personal development and academic progress. The teachers and care staff know the pupils and their families very well and are sensitive to their needs. Very thorough attention is given to analysing the performance and progress of each pupil and student and this information is used to set targets in Individual Education Plans which are shared with staff throughout the school and the residences. Pupils and students are also guided well in knowing which courses and programmes to follow to enable them to achieve their goals. They have access to relevant and very effective support on personal issues. The pupils are highly satisfied with the school and what it provides. There are good links with outside agencies.
28. There are very good arrangements to get to know children before they start at the school and then to help them settle in. Parents agree that the way the school helps them to understand what will happen for both themselves and their child, is a significant and very positive feature of the school.
29. The school actively encourages the pupils' views informally and listens to them regularly. There is, however, no school council to meet regularly to consider matters of school improvement. The school has acknowledged this and the further impact this could have on certain individual pupil's personal development. Each of the elements of care and pupils' and students' welfare have improved well since the last inspection.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership with parents is very good and so too are the links with the community and other schools and colleges. The school provides very good extended services and support programmes to other schools.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good arrangements to keep parents up-to-date about their child's progress and what is going on at school.
- The procedures to deal with parents' concerns are very good.
- Links with other schools and colleges, especially when pupils or students join or leave Bradstow School and with the local community are of a high quality.
- There are very good consultation processes with parents on matters of school improvement.
- There is very good provision of educational support programmes.

## **Commentary**



30. Parents are highly satisfied with what the school does. They say they feel comfortable about approaching the school, that their children are very well taught and that the school is very well led and managed. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Parents are well informed about the school through regular newsletters and telephone calls. Pupils and students or care staff write to parents regularly telling them what they have learned and what has happened. Parents appreciate the opportunities to discuss their child's progress at the formal meeting with teachers. A helpful weekly report, containing progress towards a pupil's individual targets, is sent home. Parents are welcome to visit and stay at any time. The head teacher is always available to deal with any concerns or complaints that parents may have. This ready contact ensures very high levels of parental satisfaction and ensures that any problems are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
31. Parents are consulted about school improvement, through regular written surveys. Their views are collated and the school responds accordingly. For example parents said they would like more help with managing behaviour at home and improving their communication skills with their child. The school now runs workshops to address these issues.
32. Bradstow's partnerships with mainstream and special schools locally, as well as special schools in London and across southern England, are very effective. They include good transfer of test data and pastoral information when pupils and students join the school, to help them settle in quickly. Vocational studies with the local college and very good links with the local business community provide very good educational, social and work experience opportunities. Regular outside visits make a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The school successfully seeks out the skills and resources that are available locally that strengthen governance, decision-making and pupils' learning.
33. There are very good arrangements where Bradstow staff share their unique expertise with other schools and professionals. The school is actively involved in several local initiatives to improve standards. Teachers from mainstream schools are invited to Bradstow for professional development in managing behaviour and to gain a better understanding of autism. Bradstow staff visits other special schools to deliver in-service training for staff teaching pupils with moderate learning difficulties.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is excellent. Day-to-day management of the school is very good. Governance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership by the headteacher is inspirational, resulting in a deeply committed and highly enthusiastic staff.
- Support from key staff is excellent leading to very effective teamwork.
- The school is highly effective in providing for the needs of individuals.
- The head of care provides very good leadership and the residential provision is very well managed.
- The school maintains very good data on the performance of pupils and students but does not analyse it in a way which clearly informs them of pupils' and students' progress in subjects of the curriculum.
- Governors are highly committed and know the school well but are not sufficiently aware of pupils' and students' progress in the subject areas.
- The school's approach to financial management and the principles of best value are very effective.

## Commentary

34. The success of the school is largely the result of the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the excellent support he receives from his deputy, the assistant headteacher and head of care. This excellent leadership has resulted in a high quality staff team which is deeply committed to the pupils' wellbeing. They are confident and very enthusiastic about their work. This is despite the extremely challenging pupil and student behaviour which staff have to work with on a daily basis. Everyone is seeking to provide a high and improving quality of service. Key, senior staff provide role models which encourage effective teaching and strong pastoral support. Subject leadership is much improved and all major subjects are well monitored, led and managed with an enthusiasm for new ideas and approaches to teaching. The quality of the residential provision makes a major contribution to the success of the school. The head of care is a very good manager of the large team of residential staff and she provides very good leadership, which supports and motivates her staff. Parents regard the leadership of the school as a major strength.
35. Governors offer considerable skills, have a good understanding of the school's needs and are prepared to challenge the management team when appropriate. They ensure the school meets all statutory requirements. They regularly visit the school despite the distances involved. However, they do not have the information necessary to make them sufficiently aware of pupils' and students' progress in the subject areas, in order to play a stronger role in school improvement.
36. The day-to-day management of the school is very good. The school is smooth running and has an excellent, positive and business like atmosphere. School self-evaluation and performance management are established and have led to good improvement since the last inspection. The school commissioned its own best value review of provision in 2002, which led to a number of changes and improvements. The school now maintains some very good data on pupil performance, which is greatly improved. Comprehensive and detailed records are collected for all pupils' and learning targets and these are carefully set and closely monitored. This ensures that all pupils are included and have an equal opportunity to make progress in areas most important to them, which is a strength of the school. However, the data collected is not yet analysed and summarised in such a way that it informs parents, staff and governors of how well different groups of pupils and students are doing in subjects of the national curriculum. As pupils and students achieve within a tight band of attainment, staff know their achievements very well and so they do make good progress. However, managers cannot yet use the information to see which subject areas need to be improved most and so drive up standards even further. A major strength of the school is the management of staff. The commitment, retention and development of teachers, teaching assistants and care staff is central to the headteacher's approach. All staff have extensive training opportunities, including the use of an excellent school based professional development centre.

## Financial management

### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,864,191	Balance from previous year	505,395
Total expenditure	4,369,586	Balance carried forward to the next	616,533
Expenditure per pupil	75,061		

37. The school manages its finances very well. The school business manager is a very professional and effective member of the management team. He has introduced a very

rigorous business approach to financial management which is clearly showing results. It provides a very good conduit between day-to-day budget decisions and the school's short and long-term development plans. The links between the governors and the school management team are strong and ensure that all financial decisions are well thought through and transparent. The significant budget surplus is well accounted for and expenditure is carefully considered to ensure best value is obtained.

38. The aids to raising pupils' attainment, upon which the school can build, include the very high quality of leadership and management, and the knowledge, expertise and personal commitment of staff. There are, however, potential barriers to improvement, including the poor quality of some accommodation. The distance of the school from parents, the LEA and most governors also brings problems in achieving ease of communication and support for the school.

## **WORK RELATED LEARNING**

Provision in work related learning is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Work-related learning is very well led.
- Careers education is carefully structured, strongly supported by the local Connexions adviser.
- Very good use is made of facilities on the school site, residential experience and the use of a local college to promote work-related learning.
- There is a shortage of appropriate external placements to meet the needs of students.

### **Commentary**

39. Work-related learning is still developing, with some very good aspects of provision already in place. For example, the 24 hour curriculum is carefully organised to ensure that pupils and students live their lives fully to meet their individual needs and aspirations. The very good communication strategies help pupils and students to make choices. There are rich opportunities on the school site to develop the pupils' and students' ideas such as the successful work in the allotment area with materials and plants. Another example of very good practice is the school's mini-enterprise project involving garden or cooking careers boxes. This enables students to take part in the careers process environment, engaging in role play before moving out to less supportive environments using the skills they have gained. A strong feature is that students gradually need less support and some of the most able are almost independent. The local Connexions adviser undertakes some high quality work to ensure the success and relevance of the next stage of students' education and careers. For example, he makes regular visits to Year 9 for transition reviews, with additional reviews for students in Years 12 and 14. This process ensures that parents, social services and school staff provide very good planning to ensure each student has an appropriate plan for the future. In addition, effective use is made of a local college where students from Years 11 to 14 study art and develop an awareness of craft, pottery, and creativity as well as enriching their communication skills.
40. The overall management of work-related learning is very good and helps to overcome the difficulty where placement in the community or at the local college is not always appropriate right away. In addition, there are not enough vocational courses outside school that are relevant to the abilities and aptitudes of some students. This is why work on the school site is developed. By the time students leave the school they have had an opportunity to complete the ASDAN Workright Award, have been engaged in recycling projects and have had an opportunity to work alongside the school librarian, the caretaker and have assisted with school administration tasks. All these activities make a significant contribution to students' growing understanding of the world of work.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students make excellent progress in their ability to communicate.
- Team working is excellent and is a significant feature of very good teaching and learning.
- Language and literacy are promoted very well throughout the day, contributing positively to very good achievement.
- There are times when resources and activities are not age appropriate.

#### **Commentary**

41. Achievement overall is very good. However, there are variations in achievement between the four elements of English. Communication, which includes speaking and listening, is excellent whilst reading is very good. Achievement in writing is good but pupils and students have too few opportunities to record work.
42. The expertise of staff and joint planning between the English co-ordinator, speech and language therapist and behaviour managers are central to the ever increasing ability pupils and students have to communicate their needs, feelings and knowledge. The decision to use the impressive expertise of the speech and language therapist to train all staff for developing communication, but especially those working in classrooms to use augmentative communication systems capably and consistently has been rewarded. Detailed assessment is made of how individuals communicate and learn best. These might include the use of Makaton signing, photographs, symbols or the use of PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems). These methods are common in many special schools but Bradstow has been highly creative in matching methods and materials to meet individual needs. For example, boys and girls begin to recognise photographs of known people or objects. Others understand that symbols can represent objects or actions. Pupils and students match symbols with words, using increasingly sophisticated resources that reduce in size until ultimately they form mini books that can be clipped to a belt. Colour is also reduced so that finally only black and white is used, to represent 'normal' print. More able pupils and students who do not communicate through speech make requests exchanging symbols, such as asking for a drink or requesting access to the computer. Pupils who become disturbed are encouraged to use PECS to indicate the cause of their distress. Language is then limited to essential words to reduce stimulation and encourage relaxation. Those who can communicate verbally are encouraged to speak in full sentences as far as possible and use accurate vocabulary. Mornings and afternoons begin with a communication session where pupils are prepared for the activities ahead, sequencing their own timetables and greeting all present. Singing is used well during this time to aid communication but songs for older pupils and students do not reflect their age, giving them a social disadvantage.
43. Pupils and students demonstrate a love of books. This is because the sharing of stories is so much fun at Bradstow. More able pupils and students of all ages match text with symbols. They recognise the letters of the alphabet and some individual sounds. A small number of pupils read simple text with support. Library provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection and the librarian has collected together a wide range of stimulating resources. Pupils responded very positively to the use of puppets, music and a water pistol that featured in a very good story telling session. Good use of the interactive whiteboard also engaged pupils' interest as they followed the story of the sad crocodile before relaxing with books of their choice. Many pupils and students have favourite books and the choice is

extensive. However, there is insufficient encouragement towards age appropriate books as they move through the school. The best reading resources the school has are the beautifully produced books of Bradstow pupils and students going about their daily lives.

44. Insufficient use of ICT restricts achievement in writing. A very small number of the most able pupils and students use the computer to record their work. For example, one pupil competently writes letters home using words and symbols, recognising the need for capital letters and full stops. Others select the correct sequence of weekly activities, cutting out sentences and compiling letters to be sent home. All pupils make marks on paper, they tolerate hand over hand 'writing', with some pupils independently tracing over or copying letters or text. Many pupils recognise and write their own name.
45. Teaching and learning are very good overall. All lessons seen were very good or good. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The significant strengths of lessons are:
- Excellent team work that enables staff to take over seamlessly from one another as situations fluctuate;
  - Proficiency in alternative methods of communication systems and their consistent use by all members of staff;
  - Skilled behaviour management and knowledge of individuals that keeps disruption to a minimum and focuses clearly on learning.

Lessons are cheerful and purposeful. Assessment of individuals is accurate and detailed. This means that teaching is directed towards individual targets so that boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities make equally good gains in learning. The most able pupils are regularly withdrawn to work towards their targets but there are a few occasions when work in classrooms is not sufficiently challenging for them. Collaborative working was strong in a very good lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The speech and language therapist worked alongside the class teacher as pupils made use of their individual communication systems. Pupils named the colours they saw through the glasses they put on before sharing the story of 'Anna's Amazing Multi-Coloured Glasses.' Others named objects on cards they selected whilst others needed patient help as they matched objects with the correct room. One pupil used the touch screen competently to turn the pages of a book as it was read but the pictures were of much younger children.

46. Subject leadership is very good and management is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and leads by example. Her positive and enthusiastic approach is mirrored by the speech and language therapist, with whom she works in close harmony. Together they strive to innovate and fine tune current practices especially to improve further, already excellent communication systems. The co-ordinator is rightly looking at new resources for reading and improving provision for ICT within English. Monitoring of teachers' planning takes place regularly but there has been no recent monitoring of lessons. Systems to quickly access and analyse very good individual assessment are not yet in place. Overall improvement in English is good.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

47. The contribution made to language and literacy through many aspects of the curriculum, including the 24-hour curriculum, is very good. This is a key factor in the success of the school. The social use of language is put into practice as pupils use local leisure facilities, visiting shops, restaurants and places of interest or paying for tickets on local transport. Mime, dance, drama and music are all used sensitively as means to enhance and complement other forms of communication. The expectancy that everyone who works in the school will use symbols and signs, helps minimise pupils' frustration and encourages very good relationships. Pupils and students communicate their choice of food to kitchen staff, they tell care workers what leisure activities they want to attend and speak to parents by telephone. The skills of literacy are enhanced in many subjects. For instance, pupils in Years 7 to 9 looked at books about transport before visiting the railway museum and made books

about the Easter story during RE. Post 16 students recognise signs in public places and select appropriate clothing for the season or occasion after leafing through magazines.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in mathematics is good and often very good and so pupils achieve well.
- The subject is well led and includes externally accredited courses for older pupils.
- Time spent teaching mathematics is sometimes too limited.
- Pupils' and students' learning in mathematics is not supported well in other subjects, or through the use of ICT.

### **Commentary**

48. There has been good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection particularly in teaching and in pupils' and students' achievement.
49. Pupils and students achieve well in mathematics and numeracy as a result of good teaching. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils and students with the most complex difficulties still achieve well in the development of basic number and shape. All pupils and students have an opportunity to develop an understanding of how mathematics is useful in life; teachers' planning and lessons concentrate on counting, measuring, recognition of shapes and understanding and using money. The higher achieving pupils and students count to numbers over 100, can do simple addition and know how many coins make 50 pence. Most pupils and students can recognise or name a square, triangle and circle and put them into the right groups. Those with more severe learning difficulties can indicate shape, using symbols and have some understanding of number lines. Older pupils and students use mathematics in practical settings. When shopping for ingredients for lunch for example some understand the values of coins, they also measure temperature, length and time.
50. Because of the good and supportive teaching, pupils and students have the confidence to solve number problems willingly and with enthusiasm. Where planning is very good, objectives are appropriate and teaching strategies included so that pupils and students learn in a way which suits them best. There is a clear emphasis in all lessons on the targets in the pupils' Individual Education Plan so that each one continues to make progress in key areas. The very good use of resources makes lessons lively and meaningful. In one Year 8 class, for example, puppets were used to introduce concepts of big and small and pupils had a lot of fun making the puppets work and comparing their sizes. Teaching assistants are very skilled in keeping pupils and students on task and helping them understand basic concepts, for example, how their fingers can help them count. Very good lesson organisation with one group of sixth formers meant that they could list, by naming or signing, things they wished to buy, and work out how much they would cost. This practical 'life skills' approach to mathematics is very effective although, in some lessons, the actual mathematics content is very thin and opportunities are missed for pupils and students to reinforce their understanding of number. For example in one sixth form lesson on the allotment, students planted seedlings and the teacher helped them to measure the distance between each plant, but this only took two minutes and opportunities to build on this learning were missed. This results in good rather than very good progress overall.
51. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of how the subject is taught in the school, including the need to increase the time spent on the mathematical content of lessons. Good accreditation is available to older pupils in the form of ASDAN awards and pupils' portfolios are of good quality. Documentation to ensure well-

organised management of the subject by the co-ordinator is of very high quality. There is however little evidence of ICT being used to help pupils learn mathematics in any subject.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is generally good. There are good examples of mathematics being used in other subjects. In art, knowledge of shape is reinforced and in science and food technology pupils learn to measure and compare size, for example. However, some opportunities to build on number, spatial awareness and data-handling in other subjects are not always realised.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils and students understand science well because it is presented in a practical way and the resources are good.
- The assessment of achievement and progress is refined to meet the needs of individual students and pupils successfully.
- The quality of the teaching is always good or very good so that pupils and students learn well.
- The role of the co-ordinator is at an early stage of development.

### **Commentary**

53. Pupils' and students' achievement in science is good throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. By the age of eleven years pupils are developing their investigative habits. They are finding out about plants and animals and the various types of forces and the way materials change. These skills are built upon and developed in the secondary classes and the sixth form. At this stage, extensive use is made of the school allotment and farm areas. In this way the students gain an understanding of the life cycle of plants and the conditions of growth. They also extend their knowledge of materials. In one lesson Year 10 pupils were learning about body parts and personal hygiene with particular reference to teeth. By the end of the lesson they had developed their knowledge of teeth and the need to care for them. Sixth form students successfully complete the science related elements of the ASDAN Award modules.
54. Teaching is always good and sometimes very good. It is strongly practical so students can understand more easily. For example, students in Year 9 were studying the importance of healthy eating and were learning about the different types of food, in particular, proteins and fats. An essential element of the lesson was the opportunity to look at and taste some different examples of fats and proteins. Of particular merit in lessons is the very effective use of communication aids and symbols, which enable all students to access the ideas and concepts of the lessons. Another strong feature of science lessons is the very good quality of support provided by teaching support staff and the overall quality of teamwork. This feature ensures that behaviour management in classes is very good and this has a positive impact on the overall quality of learning. There is evidence that in some lessons the more able students are not always fully challenged and given differentiated tasks.
55. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. There are very good and detailed assessment procedures allowing learning to be built from lesson to lesson on an individual needs basis. For pupils and students aged 14 to 19 ASDAN modules are successfully completed. Good use is made of ICT with the Writing Symbols Program to help students to follow their own learning. Overall, the resources for science are good but there is some difficulty in finding appropriate resources to meet the specific needs of some pupils and students. The co-ordinator has a clear intention to develop

her own knowledge of the subject in the school and sees the importance of monitoring the teaching and learning across the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been good improvement in ICT which is now used across the school.
- The subject is well led and managed leading to improved achievement.
- Resources are good.
- Insufficient time is allocated to ICT and opportunities to use it in all subjects are too limited.

### **Commentary**

56. Pupils' achievement in ICT and the quality of teaching in the subject are satisfactory and this represents good improvement since the last inspection when both were unsatisfactory. Because of sound teaching, pupils have reasonably good skills when using the keyboard and touch screens. Some parents are pleased because their children can now use a computer competently at home, which surprises them. Because of pupils' complex needs and challenging behaviour, the use of computers presents teachers with a considerable difficulty. Few pupils are able to work unaided or for any amount of time and teachers work hard to overcome this. Where teaching was seen it was of good quality. For example some good work was achieved in a Year 9 class when pupils used newly introduced software to produce picture songs, in a food technology lesson pupils used graphics to produce symbols and draft a letter home describing what they had been doing at school. Some pupils are able to access the Internet and others take digital photographs of their work.
57. The joint co-ordinators for the subject are very enthusiastic and knowledgeable and do have some understanding that ICT is underused. As a result of introducing new software, equipment, staff training and renewed emphasis on the subject, they are optimistic that improvement will be on-going and show good capacity to improve. The newly introduced interactive white boards are being used well by some teachers and resources generally are good. Subject documentation is of very high quality.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

58. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning across all areas of the curriculum. Very few meaningful examples of its use were observed during the course of the inspection and this is a weakness which senior staff and the subject co-ordinators plan to improve further.

## **HUMANITIES**

59. **Geography** was a sampled subject. Only one lesson was observed. The little available evidence was scrutinised and the subject co-ordinator interviewed. In the lower school geography is taught in the autumn and summer terms and a geography/history week was due to take place after the inspection. Geography in the upper school is a part of the ASDAN modular course. From documentation scrutinised, including the scheme of work and pupils' Annual Review reports, the provision for geography is satisfactory. In a good lesson with the youngest pupils about weather signs and symbols, pupils recognised relevant pictures and PECS symbols and, with support, played 'weather bingo'. The lesson combined the teaching and learning of good communication skills with extending pupils' geographical understanding. Much emphasis is laid on learning 'practical' geography to enable pupils and students to move around the school with confidence and discover the local environment as well as, for example, looking at and experiencing different forms of transport. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to providing staff with useful resources, including an ideas box



which gives ideas for lessons, trips and virtual visits to improve the provision of geography across the school. There has been a satisfactory improvement in geography since the last inspection.

60. **History** was a sampled subject. It was not possible to see any history lessons as it is not taught during the summer term. Very little evidence of work was available for scrutiny and as the school's history/geography week was not scheduled to take place until after the inspection it is not possible to make judgements about standards, achievement and teaching. Pupils at Bradstow have difficulty with concepts such as "today" and "yesterday" so history links very closely with personal, social and health education and geography. It concentrates on topics such as "Me as I am now", compared with photographs of pupils when they were younger. Although appropriate to the majority, this approach does not always challenge the more able pupils and students sufficiently. Visits off site are used well to supplement the history curriculum, for example, visiting the local church to look at the historical nature of the building. Artefacts are widely used but the quantity of history resources is unsatisfactory.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is relevant to pupils' and students' needs.
- Pupils and students are made aware of a range of different faiths and festivals.
- Not enough time is spent teaching religious education for achievement to be good.

### Commentary

61. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils and students learn about other people's beliefs and traditions. This remains the same as the last inspection. The younger pupils learn about themselves, what makes them feel peaceful and how to live with other people. Older pupils and students enacted the Easter story and know that Jesus died on the cross. Throughout the school they learn about events in the bible, and about the major religions, Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.
62. Teaching is satisfactory. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection and in each case what was taught was good, but the time spent teaching the religious education element of the lesson was far too short and so teaching was satisfactory overall. In these lessons there is not enough detail about what each pupil or student is expected to learn. Some lessons appear to be of high quality, for example one lesson taught, but not seen, during the inspection and where the planning was scrutinized and discussed with the teacher, showed how puppets were used very imaginatively to tell the story of Noah's Ark. In one visit to a local church the teacher showed good subject knowledge, pupils recognised religious symbols and one student took photographs of different parts of the church. The main strength in teaching is the very practical nature of how pupils and students learn, such as making cakes for Divali and making curry for lunch when learning about Rama and Sita
63. Subject management is satisfactory. The subject is well planned and annual reviews are good in terms of reporting what pupils and students can do. The school also has festival days, which contribute very well to religious education, such as a nativity day and celebration of Palm Sunday. There is a lack of monitoring of how well religious education is taught however, and so the co-ordinator cannot decide where improvements are needed. Improvement is therefore limited. The curriculum, because of lack of time remains limited and is just satisfactory.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. Only two lessons were observed in **art and design**, one involving the youngest pupils and the other those of secondary age. Pupils' and students' work and teachers' planning were scrutinised and a discussion was arranged with the subject co-ordinator but, because of the limited number of lessons observed, no judgement was made. Pupils and students are gaining appropriate experiences using a range of materials and a variety of techniques. For example, during the inspection the youngest pupils were creating a card picture of a garden using natural materials. The quality of teaching was very good and because of the skilled support provided by teaching assistants and the use of symbols and signing, the pupils successfully positioned and stuck items, such as grass, flower petals and twigs to produce a picture that they were pleased with. Pupils of secondary age worked with different media to create models involving decoration and sewing. In the lesson observed, the students were helped to complete good models of birds. One sixth form student was keen to see his pottery mug after it had been hardened.
65. The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped and there has been no monitoring of lessons to judge quality. Resources for learning in art are satisfactory but there are few opportunities in art and design to challenge and stretch the more able pupils. Some use is made of ICT, for example the 'Paint Program' but there is little evidence of regular use. Not enough time is spent teaching art to help pupils and students gain the most from the subject. The lack of an art room and suitable storage limit the quality of experiences available to pupils and students. The school is aware of this and is building an art room which will be finished shortly. Good use is made of a local college to provide sixth form students with enriching experiences in the subject. There have been some improvements since the last inspection particularly in the quality of teaching in Years 5/6 and the management of communication and behaviour in the lessons observed.
66. **Design and technology** were sampled and so there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision, achievement or teaching and learning. Two lessons of food technology were seen. Teaching and learning were very good in one lesson and good in the second lesson. Older students displayed independence as they prepared their own lunch, making choices of toppings for their toast, cutting up ingredients and grating cheese. Communication and numeracy skills were enhanced as younger pupils chose fillings for their sandwiches, using signs and symbols and indicating which sandwiches were 'longer' or 'shorter.' Health and safety were ensured by the excellent teamwork of staff and their skilled behavioural management. Good accommodation for food technology contributes to good learning.
67. Design and technology have improved since the previous inspection. A small number of students have opportunities to use resistant materials when making planters for sale at the summer fair. Pupils use a range of materials to make attractive displays of collage. However, the lack of accommodation for work with resistant materials and the resulting narrow curriculum, restricts pupils' achievement. The newly appointed co-ordinator has realistic plans for further improvement including the purchase of resources such as construction kits and tools.

### Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and pupils' development in music is very good.
- Music successfully contributes to the good progress pupils and students make in every area.
- Music enables pupils and students to relate well to others and to begin to communicate.

## **Commentary**

68. Overall achievement in music is very good. By the time they leave school, many pupils and students have learned to recognise familiar songs, keep a rhythm and play simple percussion instruments. Pupils and students will listen quietly to music and enjoyed a drumming workshop.
69. Teaching is highly skilled and meets the needs of the pupils and students very well. The specialist music teacher uses music to help pupils communicate with him and to control their behaviour and guide them. In one lively session one pupil was able to beat out a 1,2,3 rhythm for the first time while another accompanied a whole tune on a drum. Teaching assistants contribute substantially to the progress pupils and students make by helping them with their tasks and keeping them calm. It is very encouraging to watch pupils realise just how to play a xylophone for example.
70. Leadership of music is very good. The co-ordinator and none of the staff are music specialists. However, music is planned as a whole school and a specialist is employed to work with each class for one half hour per week. Resources are still being built up and are currently satisfactory. The school holds drumming workshops which are highly successful in engaging pupils and students, but there are no visiting performers or visits to concerts.
71. Music is also used as a complementary therapy to help develop communication in pupils who have emerging language. It helps them to talk more in their other subjects. Music has improved well since the last inspection.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' and students' enjoyment and participation in swimming are very good.
- The overall physical education enrichment programme for pupils and students is very good.
- The school hall is small and there are limitations to the use of large equipment.
- Pupils and students have nowhere to change and so do gymnastics in their ordinary clothes.
- The range of resources for small group and individual activities is insufficient to reflect the wide age and ability range within the school.

## **Commentary**

72. Pupils achieve well in physical education including gymnastics and very well in swimming. Every class has a timetabled swimming lesson weekly. In addition, pupils and students are taken swimming during the evenings and weekends by care staff. Specific targets for swimming are set for pupils and students. A small number of students can swim 25 metres unaided and another group can swim short distances up to 25 metres. The majority of pupils and students are well supported by staff to use floats and other swimming aids to develop their confidence in the water and practise their skills. For almost all pupils and students swimming is an enjoyable activity. In gymnastics pupils and students make some remarkable gains in physical confidence, overcoming their natural reticence to transfer from one place to another, climbing in and out of the wall bars and performing somersaults with ease.
73. In addition to very good opportunities for physical development on the school site, the programme includes experience of sailing, cycling, an activity holiday and a range of activity during lunchtime. There is an extensive playground equipment area where pupils and students can climb, run, jump and practise balance and other skills. This is well used during

lunchtimes. 'Sherborne' movement sessions are also well developed. Pupils and students co-operate fully and work hard on their tasks and through this are provided with good opportunities for social as well as physical development.

74. The quality of teaching in all elements of physical education is very good. In gymnastics, for example, pupils are provided with very good support to walk along a beam and a bench and climb up a ladder. Some pupils were coached successfully to turn round on the equipment. Throughout the lesson there was evidence of very good progress as a result of the encouragement and skill of the class teacher and support staff. Good use was made of the existing equipment and space in spite of its limitations.
75. Leadership and management of physical education are very good. The subject is well and creatively organised to maximise opportunities for pupils and students to develop physical skills, despite a reluctance to try new things and make the transition from one place to another. The school hall is unsuitable for older pupils and students and has limited space. In addition the lack of changing facilities makes it difficult for pupils to change for gymnastics or dress appropriately for more creative work. There are insufficient class based resources to reflect the wide age range and abilities of the pupils and students to broaden their overall skills in school. There have been good improvements since the time of the last inspection. Of particular note is the extensive use of outdoor activities and the improvements made in the quality of the teaching.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal, social, health and citizenship education, alongside developing communication, is the bedrock of the 24 hour curriculum leading to increased independence for pupils and students.
- The leadership and management of the subject co-ordinator are excellent.
- The subject provides a very strong tool in enabling pupils to manage their behaviour.
- All members of the school staff contribute very well to the promotion of pupils' personal and social development.
- Parents are very pleased with their children's progress in personal and social education.

### **Commentary**

76. Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good throughout the school. Pupils and students gradually gain in confidence and independence and learn how to keep healthy through eating the right food, taking exercise and keeping clean and safe. Parents are particularly pleased with their children's gains in social skills as this enables events such as holidays and leisure activities like playing ball on the beach to be enjoyed by the whole family. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils and students learn to play their part in the community and as citizens, through visits and by taking on responsibilities.
77. The teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good, within lessons and in the 24 hour curriculum. Everyone involved with pupils and students, whatever their job description, teaches personal, social, health and citizenship education constantly. It is very successfully embedded into the whole life of Bradstow school. All pupils and students have a personal and social target, agreed by both education and care staff. These are reviewed at least termly and very often more frequently. They are eminently sensible and down to earth targets, which help pupils and students in their everyday life, for example, "To use a spoon rather than pick food up with the fingers". These targets also help pupils and students learn to manage their behaviour to the best of their ability. Pupils' and students' targets are reproduced in whatever format is most useful for them, for example, words, pictures and

symbols are printed out in an attractive way which will help the pupil or student to recognise what his/her target is. The way progress is assessed is rigorous and used very well to help pupils and students to move forward.

78. The co-ordinator knows her subject and the different needs of individual pupils and students very well. The scheme of work is very clear and very wide ranging. It is age and needs appropriate and includes a variety of approaches to ensure maximum impact. The co-ordinator was instrumental in the school being granted full accreditation for their Unified Guidance systems in 2003. This recognised the early start the school makes in recording achievement and the high quality of the target setting and action planning and procedures. All this has had a profound effect on the success of the subject across the whole school. Staff development is very good. Resources for staff, pupils and students are very good, they are wide ranging, informative and obviously used well. A particularly valuable human resource is the complementary therapists who provide a wide range of alternative opportunities for personal and social development through movement, music, story telling and sensory experiences.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	1
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	2

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

poor (6); very poor (7).

*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*