

INSPECTION REPORT

CAVENDISH SCHOOL

Runcorn, Cheshire

LEA area: Halton

Unique reference number: 111497

Headteacher: Celia Dickinson

Lead inspector: Michael McDowell
Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th January 2005

Inspection number: 268546
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	78
School address:	Lincoln Close Runcorn Cheshire
Postcode:	WA7 4YX
Telephone number:	01928 561706
Fax number:	01928 566088
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Chisholm
Date of previous inspection:	19th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cavendish is a special school in Runcorn that provides up to 81 places for boys and girls aged between 2 and 19 who have severe learning difficulties. There are 35 girls and 43 boys on roll. All have statements of special educational needs and their attainment on entry is very much below the average for their age. Twenty three pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Recently pupils who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, in addition to their learning difficulties have been placed at the school. All the pupils are British and almost all are white. In most cases, the language spoken at home is English. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. More than a third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and most are drawn from areas of the borough that are economically disadvantaged. The local education authority plans to change the designation of the school in 2006 so that it will be for pupils aged 11 to 19. There has consequently been a reduction in admissions of very young children and there are presently only a small number in the Foundation Stage and in Years 2 to 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, geography, history, music, religious education, special educational needs
32692	Nick Mayfield	Lay inspector	
30559	Jenny Taylor	Team inspector	English, design and technology, French, physical education, English as an additional language
16930	Jeff Plumb	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, citizenship, personal, social and health education, Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum meets the needs of all children, pupils, and students very well, whatever their capability or ethnic group. They receive excellent guidance and support and their achievement is very good. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is very good.
- Attitudes, behaviour, values and other personal qualities are excellent and therefore the ethos of the school is outstanding
- Teaching and learning are very good and learners of all capabilities are given excellent support and guidance.
- The curriculum is innovative and very well suited to the needs of learners of all ages. There is outstanding commitment to fully including all learners in all activities.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent and the school is led, managed and governed very well.
- Accommodation and resources are satisfactory and continue to be improved. However, while good use is made of facilities elsewhere, the school lacks the space to provide its own specialist rooms to fully support the teaching of design and technology, science, and physical education, to secondary age pupils. Outdoor play facilities for the Foundation Stage children are also too limited. These elements of accommodation are unsatisfactory.

There has been very good improvement in the effectiveness of the school since the last inspection. All issues have been successfully addressed. The weaknesses in the use made of assessment, in the provision for science and information and communication technology, (ICT), and in the safety of pupils' arrival and departure arrangements, to which the report drew attention, have all been eliminated. Assessment and its use are now excellent. Additionally, there have been significant improvements in the achievement of pupils, especially in ICT and science, in the development of their personal qualities, in the quality of the curriculum, in the governance, leadership and management of the school, in the support and guidance given and in the provision for students in Years 12 to 14.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement, overall, is very good. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and achieve well in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils of whatever level of capability or ethnic group, achieve very well by the end of Year 2, Year 6, Year 9 and Year 11. Students in Years 12 to 14 continue to acquire new skills and competencies and increase their knowledge. Their achievement is also very good. Across the age range, achievement in English and in the development of communication skills is very good. Achievement

is also very good in mathematics and, despite the lack of specialist facilities, in science. By Year 6 achievement in ICT is very good and it continues to be so by Years 9, 11 and 14. There is very good achievement across the age range in physical education in which good use is made of community resources. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve well in art and design. In geography, achievement is good by Year 2 and Year 6 and very good by Year 9 and Year 11 and by students in the Post-16 classes. Pupils achieve very well in French by both Year 9 and Year 11. Achievement in personal, social and health education is very good across the age range. The achievement of those pupils and students in Years 7 to 14 who study citizenship is very good. Achievement across the age range is good in religious education. There was too little evidence to judge achievement in history, music, and design and technology. Learners of all capabilities, across the age range, achieve the targets in their individual plans very well.

The personal qualities of pupils and students, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Attendance is good and the school takes effective measures to promote it.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and a significant number of lessons is excellent. Assessment is excellent, and, because of this, teachers have very good knowledge of the learning needs and capabilities of those they teach. Their encouragement and engagement of learners is excellent and helps them to become interested in what they are asked to do, sustain their efforts, and to enjoy learning. Teachers make the greatest efforts to ensure that all are fully included in lessons. The curriculum is very good. It continues to be developed; it is innovative and imaginative and it meets the needs of all learners very well. Teachers effectively make up for the lack of specialist accommodation in some subjects. Arrangements for the care and protection of children, pupils, and students are very good, and the guidance and support they are given are excellent.

The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents and ensures that they are fully informed about the achievements of their children. It has very good relationships with other schools and colleges that benefit the learning opportunities of pupils and students. It works well with its community and has good links with local businesses and organisations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management, overall, are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. She has worked tirelessly to develop provision and her work is well known and respected beyond the school. Others in leadership roles carry these out very effectively and the school is managed very well. Governance is very good and statutory requirements are fully complied with.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and believe it to be very good. Children, pupils and students attending the school like it very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide specialist accommodation and resources to support the teaching of design and technology, science and physical education to secondary age pupils.
- Improve the limited outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good**. In relation to the learning goals that children in the Foundation Stage should attain by the end of the Reception Year achievement is **good**. Pupils, whatever their capability, achieve **very well** by the end of Year 2, Year 6, Year 9 and Year 11. The achievement of students in Years 12 to 14 is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage respond to very good teaching and achieve well.
- The school meets the challenging targets that it sets in relation to pupils' achievement very well.
- The performance of pupils of all capabilities is better than, or significantly better than, that of comparable pupils in similar schools.
- Achievement in English, especially in the development of communication skills, in mathematics and science is very good, as is, by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and Post-16, achievement in ICT.
- There is very good achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education and students in Post-16 classes do very well in their work-related learning and in developing their community awareness and understanding of the world.

Commentary

1. In the areas of learning in which it was possible to make a judgement, children's achievement is good overall. It is very good in personal, social, and emotional development. That children get off to such a good start is due to the thoroughly planned, very good teaching that they receive. However, for most, especially those with the most complex and profound difficulties, learning to learn is a slow process. Children's personal, social and emotional learning is an area, however, where the very good provision made is matched by very high levels of achievement. Children have come to listen and respond very well to what they are told, to work and play happily with others and to concentrate on their tasks. They are aware of the needs and requirements of others.
2. The school sets targets for pupils' performance at the end of Year 6, Year 9, and Year 11. While, because of their special educational needs, pupils do not attain grades in relation to National Curriculum levels or in GCSE examinations, they achieve very well in the challenging supplementary targets set by the school. These are expressed as gains to be made in relation to a suitable scale for measuring small increments in knowledge, skill and understanding known as "the P- Scales".
3. A very thorough assessment is made of what each pupil knows, understands, and can do and this is recorded against both the P-scales and other similar measures that are even more sensitive and which register the smallest gains. Under a nation-wide scheme, data derived from the P-scales for each cohort of pupils, as defined by their age and capabilities, is submitted to a data collection centre every year. At this centre, the achievements of each cohort of pupils, in each strand of the National Curriculum, in English, mathematics and science, and in relation to personal and social development, are compared to those of all others of similar age and capability for whom data is held. In 2004, these comparisons showed that the pupils of Cavendish, whatever their age group or capability, performed better, or significantly better, than pupils elsewhere who have similar special educational needs. Those pupils with the most profound and complex difficulties did very well in number and in developing pre-reading skills and at least as well as others with similar levels of learning difficulty, in science. Pupils at the end of Year 2, were found to have outperformed two thirds

of their contemporaries in most aspects of science and in mathematics, while their performance in English and in the development of communication skills was better than most. Personal and social development was found to be good. By the end of Year 6, the achievement of pupils in English and science was higher than that of three quarters of other similar pupils of the same age and in mathematics and personal and social development it was above average. The achievement of pupils at the end of Year 9 was outstanding in science and well above average in English and mathematics. Achievement in personal and social development had risen to a level beyond the capacity of the scale to measure. By the end of Year 11 achievement in English, mathematics, and science was very high in comparison to others elsewhere. A particular strength was pupils' achievement in speaking and listening, which was outstanding. Personal and social development was, again, at a level beyond the capacity of the scale to measure. Assessments made in 2003 showed that pupils' performance was of a similar high standard and current assessments suggest that that the high standards previously achieved are being maintained. Overall, achievement is significantly higher than at the last inspection.

4. For pupils of all levels of capability, achievement in English and in communication skills is very good. Well chosen strategies including the use of electronic devices and Picture Exchange Communication Systems enable pupils with particular difficulties to realise their potential as communicators. Pupils develop a love of story and a strong interest in improving their own reading skills. By the end of Year 9 they recognise characteristics of the work of contemporary poets. Older pupils and students in the Post-16 classes showed exceptional achievement in drama when they successfully presented a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" to the public at a local theatre. Throughout the age range pupils' achievement in mathematics is better than average. Standards are particularly good in the secondary classes where achievement in number and in using and applying mathematics is higher than that of three quarters of pupils of the same age who have similar capabilities. Assessment data also shows that achievement is, comparatively, very good, in science with particular strengths in scientific enquiry. The school measures the achievement of pupils in information and communication technology using a suitable, fine grained, scale. Records show and observations during the inspection confirmed that by the end of Year 9 pupils are very confident users of computers and other elements of ICT including digital cameras and switch operated communication systems. Their achievement is very good.
5. From an early stage pupils develop personal skills that help them to be effective learners. They give attention to others who speak to them and they listen well to questions and instructions. They understand that they must take their turn and they respect the work and views of others. As they grow more confident with age, they are ready to try new things, to organise aspects of their own learning and to take on appropriate responsibilities. They express their voice through the school council and council members act on behalf of others. Students in the Post-16 classes explore aspects of local democracy and world citizenship. They co-operate with others in a successful business enterprise and develop the range of skills that they will need in life after school. Their personal and social development is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The personal qualities of pupils and students, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **excellent**. Their attitudes and behaviour are also **excellent**. Attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through a consistent approach, the school is very successful in helping its children, pupils and students to have outstanding attitudes and behave as well as they can.
- Children and young people throughout the school help and support one another very well.
- The school provides many opportunities for children, pupils and students to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.
- There is high respect for the feelings and beliefs of others and there is no evidence of racism, harassment or oppressive language and behaviour.
- Children in the Foundation Stage do very well in moving towards their goals in personal and social development.

Commentary

6. Although a significant number of pupils are, because of their emotional, behavioural, and social difficulties, potentially, difficult to manage, the school is highly successful in enabling all of them to master any difficult or challenging behaviour and develop beneficial relationships and positive attitudes to learning. There is a detailed policy, to which all staff subscribe, for relating to pupils and responding to inappropriate behaviour. The staff set out to know each pupil very well and a detailed analysis is made of the characteristics of each individual. This knowledge is used to predict and avoid occasions on which difficult behaviour might emerge. As a result of this excellent management of behaviour, good-natured and highly supportive relationships are developed between the pupils and those who teach them. Dialogue between adults and pupils in the classrooms, and throughout the school day, is, overwhelmingly, positive. There are many informal and formal rewards to encourage pupils to be as good as they can and try their best. Overall, there is an excellent climate for learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when these aspects were very good.
7. Children and young people in the school support one another as much as they can. They do this within formal arrangements as when older pupils act as “buddies” for younger children, representing their interests in the school council. Less formally pupils and students show pleasure at the success of their classmates and encourage them with praise. Thoughtful, positive interventions on behalf of others are to be seen in classes. For example, in a lesson in which pupils in Years 10 and 11 formed groups to carry out an experiment, one pupil showed a high degree of social awareness and a strong sense of responsibility when he gently prevented a less socially aware pupil from absent-mindedly scrunching up the record of the group’s results. He helped him to settle down once more to the task he was supposed to be completing. On a broader scale, pupils and students have a keen awareness that others may be, materially, less fortunate than they are themselves. They have given thought to this as is evidenced by the world map that they have produced to illustrate these ideas.
8. The school provides very many opportunities through which children, pupils and students develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result their personal development is excellent. Through its work in many curriculum areas self knowledge is promoted. At the higher end of the age range students who are considering their life after school show remarkable qualities of introspection as they analyse their own characteristics, while much younger pupils, in Years 1 and 2 make careful choices about what they like when they choose favourite characters from a story. The school in itself, particularly in the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils, provides a perfect model for the development of social skills. Pupils have developed very strong views on fairness and on what is right and what is wrong. They are given excellent opportunities to articulate these, for example, in assembly when they have written and acted out “morality plays” based on well known plots such as the “Three Little Pigs” or the “Troll and Billy Goat Gruff”. Many aspects of the curriculum give pupils and students opportunities to develop independent living skills. There is very good and, on occasion, excellent, direct teaching about the cultures of others. From time to time the whole school focuses on the culture, customs and way of life of people elsewhere, as it did, for example in the recent Caribbean week. Events such as this make learning about other people fun. This is also true of the very good work on other cultures being done by Post-16 students. Girls who were taking part in learning about the culture of India in citizenship and

religious education sessions were thrilled to show the bindi marks they had been given on their foreheads. A great deal of work is done to promote awareness of western culture. Visits to galleries, theatres concert halls and pop gigs take place frequently. Greatly to their credit, students and pupils recently performed their production of William Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” at a local festival. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have all improved significantly since the last inspection.

9. Those pupils who made their views known to inspectors including the members of the school council said that they liked school very much and that they felt safe. They could recall no personal experience of bullying and the school records show that there has been no complaint of this nature for almost three years. Parents were also clear that bullying or harassment was not a current concern. There have been no recorded incidents of a racist nature. During play and lunch times pupils integrate freely, make use of both indoor and outdoor facilities and behave in an excellent manner making these occasions very pleasurable breaks in the school day. In their schoolwork, especially in those lessons that develop awareness of the beliefs, customs and practices of others, pupils and students learn with open- minded curiosity. When for example, students who are looking at aspects of life in India, view video that shows the homes and amenities of typical village dwellers in India to be far different from those that they are used to, they respond with empathy rather than with superiority.
10. Children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress towards their early learning goals in personal and social education, as they did at the last inspection. Even when excited, for example by a visit to the hydrotherapy pool, they behave well. When taking part with older children in registration sessions they find their own named chairs and join in the greeting song very well. They show unexpected maturity in their calm and happy demeanour. Records show that children who have had particular difficulties in forming relationships and playing with others are now doing this very well.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	10.69	School data :	0.98
National data:	N/A	National data:	N/A

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

11. Attendance is good. At the last inspection it was satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is very low and pupils and students are keen to come to school. The major reasons for absence are illness or the need for hospital treatment. The school encourages attendance with rewards and follows up unexplained absence rigorously. In the latest reporting year, the irregular attendance of two pupils has had a significant distorting effect. Most pupils have attendance rates of well over 90 percent.
12. The school does not exclude its pupils. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum is very well suited to the needs of the learners.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. Assessment is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through excellent assessment teachers know the capabilities and preferred learning styles of each child, pupil, and student. This ensures that lessons are excellently matched to the needs of individuals.
- Excellent management and encouragement of children, pupils and students leads to them striving to do their best, working very well with one another and doing things for themselves.
- Every effort is made to ensure that all children, pupils and students are fully included in all activities.

Commentary

13. The school has developed excellent, very thorough, assessment processes. Through observation and testing, the attainments and learning characteristics of each child, pupil, or student, are discovered. When planning their lessons, teachers make use of this information to set, in each subject or area of learning, general and individual learning targets, or objectives. Pupils and students are aware of their own targets and their teachers keep them closely informed about what they must do to reach these. The careful recording of levels of attainments over time using the P-Scales or a similar measure yields data that the school analyses to discover relative weaknesses in areas of learning so that these might be addressed. This is of great help in improving the effectiveness of teaching. Teachers have an excellent appreciation of the importance of knowing the dominant and preferred learning styles of pupils and students. Staff have worked very effectively to adapt the test normally used to discover these styles to the needs of their pupils and students. Knowing which of their pupils and students learn best by doing, by seeing or by listening enables teachers to increase the learning impact of lessons. There has been a very significant extension and improvement in assessment and its use since the last inspection.
14. The school gives the highest priority to getting to know every child as well as it can. The personality and individual characteristics of each pupil are carefully observed so that the right strategies to encourage positive behaviour and build up self-confidence may be chosen. This thorough understanding of what the children are like is at the heart of the school's very clear policy for their management. All teachers are conscientious and consistent in keeping to this policy, and, consequently their management of pupils is excellent. They have very high expectations that their pupils will try their best, be helpful to others and succeed in achieving their learning targets. Overwhelmingly, these very high expectations are justified and children fully commit themselves to learning. Because disruption to learning is an infrequent occurrence and because pupils concentrate so well, lessons are often fun. They provide time for cheerful exchanges in which pupils support one another happily praising each other's successes. They become confident learners with the higher attainers taking personal responsibility for their own tasks. Their confidence is especially noticeable in the easy familiarity in which they make use of information and communication technology such as the interactive whiteboard to share their ideas with others or to respond to questions.
15. Within most teaching groups there are children whose learning difficulties are significantly greater than those of their classmates. The teachers and classroom assistants prepare to meet the special needs of these pupils and students very thoroughly. They are given very good personal care and their comfort is assured. Every effort is made to communicate with them by the most effective means so that their needs and responses never go unacknowledged. When tasks are set, great care is taken to ensure that, for these pupils and students, the tasks are comprehensible and suitable to their capabilities. A good example of this was seen in a Year 11 class studying the rain forest, in which those with the greatest

learning difficulties were given the task of planting their own mini rain forest, while, at the same time, the higher attainers worked on food chains. When pupils reported back to the class on what they had learned, equal emphasis was given to each of these learning opportunities as well as equal appreciation. This signifies the strong commitment of teachers to include each individual pupil to the greatest possible extent. This is a notable and excellent strength of teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (10%)	18 (44%)	19 (46%)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **excellent**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent and continued development ensure that the curriculum meets individual needs very well, complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum, and gives all pupils the chance to be included.
- There is an excellent range of activities, which enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- Staffing and resources are good overall, but accommodation is limited and there is a lack of specialist facilities to support practical subjects and outdoor play in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

16. The curriculum has improved very well since the last inspection. Schemes of work are now in place and a very good range of learning activities is provided for all pupils. Subject advisers work hard to develop their specialist areas and the senior management team liaise with them to closely monitor and check how well planning for lessons works in practice. Meticulous assessment processes that are closely linked to target setting for individual pupils in all subjects, result in very high quality planning. Provision for information and communication technology, (ICT), has improved considerably and it is now taught very effectively through all subjects. The use of ICT is particularly well planned for and used by all pupils including those with more complex needs. The increasing use of electronic communication devices has resulted in those pupils with severe communication problems being able to make their needs and responses heard. The use made of interactive white boards is particularly effective in Years 7 to 11. Pupils confidently use these to carry out tasks as diverse as composing music or making a chart to show by symbols their own individual characteristics. The school does more to ensure that all pupils can take part in lessons. When required, signing and symbols are use and also the Picture Exchange Communication System. Great care is taken to match the activities in lessons to the capabilities of individual pupils. Commitment to inclusion is excellent. In order to ensure that what is taught is fully accessible to all pupils and students, the school has worked hard to increase its understanding of how children learn and, as a result of training, presents its work to greatest effect. All teachers are now aware of the importance of working out which method of learning each learner prefers. They now develop their suites of lessons with this in mind. Because of this, particularly in the work done with Post-16 classes, students are more comfortable with the learning tasks that they are given, know more about their own strengths and weaknesses as learners, and are more strongly motivates to succeed. The curriculum covers the required subjects of the National Curriculum at a level suited to pupils' capabilities. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught through themes that link learning in each

subject so as to make it more meaningful to the pupils. In Years 7 to 11, the pupils follow a structure broadly similar to that of the secondary phase. Art and design are taught in alternate terms which has limited the level of pupils' achievement in design technology. French is currently taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of ASDAN and work related studies. Pupils study units in health, social and cultural education, performing arts and the services.

17. The importance of personal, social, and health education is stressed throughout the school. 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 included in the programme. Additional activities outside lessons are many and varied. There are very good opportunities for outdoor education which include canoeing, orienteering and each week a group of pupils have horse riding lessons with the Riding for the Disabled Association. Pupils join with other schools to perform plays in the local arts centre, for example they are justifiably proud of their recent presentation of a "Midsummer Night's Dream". There are also residential visits to the riding stables and pupils are able to take a more active role in the care and management of horses. There are also visits to the Lake District and to Paris. Pupils and students work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and there is a flourishing Young Enterprise project. There are very close links with the community and pupils sing to a group of local senior citizens at Christmas. These very close and valuable links encourage pupils to become more confident and raise their self-esteem.
18. Staffing is very good with sufficient well-qualified, experienced, dedicated teachers and classroom assistants. Together they provide very high quality education and support for all pupils. There is a visiting team of medical professionals including a nurse, physiotherapists and occupational therapists together with two speech and language therapists who provide treatment through advice and guidance. Resources are generally good. The range of ICT and electronic communication equipment has been extended and through a variety of teaching strategies they have been used to help pupils who have more complex needs. This has enhanced the curriculum and made many features more accessible. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. However, the hall is too small for all the school to meet together and its size limits the range of physical activities which can take place. Similarly, the grass area outside cannot be used for sports because it slopes. Children in the Foundation Stage have limited facilities for outdoor play. Older students benefit from using the adjacent bungalow as a base for their studies. There are no specialist practical areas for science, and design and technology and this limits the curriculum that can be offered within the school. However the school makes every effort to ensure pupils are able to enjoy a rich and structured curriculum by using the facilities of the community and other partner schools and colleges.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported **very well**. Monitoring of achievements and personal development is **outstanding** and leads to pupils and students receiving **excellent** guidance. The involvement of students in the work and development of the school, taking account of their views, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The trusting relationship between staff and pupils is excellent. Children are enthusiastic and eager when they come to school and are very happy in their work.
- The procedures for assessing risk, protecting children, controlling medicines and ensuring the overall welfare of pupils are very good, and outstanding monitoring of achievement leads to excellent support and guidance being given.

- The school works very closely with each child to ensure their individual needs are met. Their views are acted upon wherever possible.

Commentary

19. Children are evidently happy and eager when then they arrive at school. Arrangements for their safe transportation have improved since the last report and the procedure for arrivals runs smoothly, each child receiving an individual greeting from staff. Care is taken over the registration procedure and the daily circumstances of each child, whether present or not, are discussed. Any queries are followed up promptly. Children feel comfortable in the presence of staff who are skilled at making them settled and ready for the day's work. All parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their child liked school, and the overwhelming majority agreed that their child was treated fairly. This view was confirmed by talking to pupils who said that the best thing about their school was their relationship with staff, and further confirmed by discussing with parents. There is a school nurse present for much of the school day and the medical needs of each child are well understood and catered for. The head acts as special needs co-ordinator. One staff member is trained as child protection officer and two teachers have special responsibility for safety. The staff are well trained to administer medication and recognise any symptoms that might give cause for concern. There are excellent procedures for the induction of new pupils and for ensuring that their individual needs are fully known.
20. The school undertakes a wide variety of external visits including Duke of Edinburgh Award outings and Riding for the Disabled. The risk assessments for these activities are well documented and well executed. School staff volunteer their time to ensure that the necessary high staff/student ratios on such trips are met. There are relatively few accidents at school and when accidents do occur, these are well documented and actions taken to prevent recurrence. The school records behavioural and other incidents in a similar way and the system was seen to be working well. There are excellent procedures for monitoring the achievements of pupils and recording these. The school has a thorough and accurate understanding of what each of its pupils knows, understands and can do. It sets targets for all its children based on these excellent assessments and uses these to help individuals know what they must do to improve. Procedures for the control of medicines are very good, and these procedures extend to external visits. There is a hydrotherapy pool on the premises and great care is taken to ensure that all the necessary physical and chemical controls are in place. The board of governors have a health and safety sub-committee, which takes a detailed interest in all the practices involved and the overall care of pupils. The arrangements to ensure pupils' safety are markedly improved since the last inspection.
21. There is a School Council to help ensure that pupils' views are taken into consideration as much as possible. It is not always possible for each class and age group to be systematically represented, and a buddy system is used to ensure that younger or less able pupils are represented. The council members said that they took these responsibilities very seriously and went out of their way to help the less able. There was much evidence of this ethos in class. The school council members were able to describe the changes that they had influenced and other pupils also confirmed the positive way in which the school staff responded to their ideas and requests.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with its parents and local schools and **good** links with the wider community.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel very welcome at school and say that the staff are all extremely approachable. There is a very high degree of parental satisfaction with the school.
- The school has very good links with other local schools and other special schools in the area. There are extensive joint programmes with other schools.
- Links with the wider community are good and the school receives considerable help from its immediate neighbours.

Commentary

22. The school has made a number of improvements in recent times to help parents feel more welcome. For example, some parents in the past, had found the school's security measures to control access, inhibiting. Very few parents are able to collect their children directly from school and so daily informal contact is not easy. The school has responded to this with a drop-in surgery every Friday, when parents can meet the head without an appointment. The 'Friends of Cavendish' group has been re-instated and there are a wide number of social activities such as coffee mornings and bingo when parents can attend and informally check on their child's progress. The head publishes a newsletter twice per term and parents also receive a magazine, written by the pupils, which deals less formally with their interests and activities. The school prospectus is clear and parents receive progress reports annually. There is good attendance at parents' evenings and although the attendance at the pre-inspection meeting was low, parents responding to the questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that they felt comfortable about approaching the school and that the school took their views into account.
23. The school has very good links with other schools in the district and particularly with the special needs school community. Nearly 40 percent of all pupils have some contact with mainstream schooling and there are a wide variety of extra-curricular links with local primary, comprehensive schools and colleges. Typical of these links are a local Runcorn playgroup for nursery children and a flexible learning pre-entry course in hairdressing for Post-16 students. The school has special sporting links with another local special school and the arrangements for pupils who transfer into further education are excellent. It prepares them thoroughly for this step, ensuring that the courses that they follow are appropriate and also by keeping in contact with them.
24. Relationships with the wider community are good. There have been incidences of vandalism in the past, and restrictions have been placed on the use of the playing-field area by outsiders. At the same time, the school has taken great care to explain to local youths why vandalism is so detrimental and to educate them about the special needs of the pupils. The immediate neighbourhood helps the school with a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme, which is highly effective. The school is part of a consortium of providers, including Early Years Partnership, Sure Start, and Halton Social Services, who sub-contract the running of after-school clubs to Scope. Providers pool their resources to enable the parents and carers of pupils from Cavendish and those of other disabled youngsters, to have "respite", particularly through the Saturday Drop-off Club. These arrangements have promoted inter-agency collaboration very effectively. Many pupils are working toward Duke of Edinburgh Award qualifications, and several are members of the Scouts and the Boys Brigade. There are a wide range of community links including disabled riding, theatre, and work related experiences; for example with the new Mersey crossing project.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **excellent** and **very good** support is given by others who are in leadership roles. Management is **very effective**. Governance is **very good**. The facilities and accommodation have been improved but in areas such as science, design and technology, and physical education, they prevent even higher achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior management team enable all staff to contribute as well as they can to the school's success.
- Pupils with very complex and challenging behaviour are exceptionally well managed.
- Management is very good and management of assessment and inclusion is excellent and this extends the learning opportunities of all pupils.
- Financial planning is very good and closely linked to the priorities on the school development plan.
- The school is overseen and supported by its governors very well.
- The school reviews its performance very well.

Commentary

25. The headteacher provides an excellent sense of direction for the school. Her vision, focused on the highest achievement and maximum independence for every pupil, is shared by all staff. In partnership with the deputy and assistant headteacher she has created a climate that empowers and inspires all staff to be innovative. Leadership is of a higher quality than at the last inspection.
26. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are exceptionally well included in all school activities with their peers and all pupils are developed to '*stand on their own two feet*'. The school has made inclusion a reality for its pupils: their appearance and social skills enables them to blend in with their peers in social contexts outside school. Because of the headteacher's interpersonal skills the morale of all staff is very good: no mean achievement within the context of the uncertainty caused by the local education authority's review of SEN provision within the borough.
27. The very good management systems reported on at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. There has been a very significant improvement in the management of assessment which has contributed to raising achievement. The management of challenging behaviour is innovative and results in pupils with very complex behavioural difficulties remaining focused and achieving well. Additional complex needs are very well managed. A creative approach and effective partnership between teachers and therapists enables the medical and educational needs of pupils to be met in school. The Foundation Stage is very well managed. Imaginative management of post-16 students means that they have the opportunity to reach their aspirations based on a very flexible and tailor-made curriculum that includes attendance on college courses. The model whereby the deputy is responsible for monitoring teaching and learning in the upper school and the assistant headteacher has the same role in the lower school works very effectively and ensures that very good practice is shared across the school. Subject advisers act effectively in an advisory role to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
28. The school development plan is a very effective tool in managing change and facilitating improvement. All priorities focus on raising achievement and all staff and governors are involved in shaping these priorities. Financial management is very good. Very good use is made of grant allocations to benefit the quality of provision for the pupils. Spending is very carefully monitored by the very effective bursar.
29. Governance is very good and has improved since the last inspection. The governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of the school. They support and challenge the headteacher very effectively. They are involved in strategic planning and setting the budget but have confidence in the headteacher to manage the school at an operational level. Their knowledge and understanding of special educational needs is very good and they have a plan to support the headteacher during the forthcoming period of change as the school becomes a secondary phase school linked to the SEN review within the borough. They understand the headteacher's vision for a new build to meet the demands of the future within the context of an exciting and innovative 14 to 19 vocational curriculum. In the interim, they are aware that for

practical subjects in the secondary phase facilities are very limited and that they pose a barrier to learning.

30. Performance management is very good and is effectively linked to the professional development of all staff. Induction procedures for new staff are very good. Recent developments have embraced the future as staff have been trained and equipped to manage more challenging behaviours within the context of receiving an increased number of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. In addition there has been very considerable development of staff to equip them for a vocational approach to the 14 to 19 curriculum. The main barrier to achievement relates to the accommodation because of the lack of a large outdoor play area for Foundation Stage and the lack of specialist teaching rooms for Secondary aged pupils. However, staff work exceptionally hard to overcome these difficulties and there are realistic plans to address the deficiencies.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	936,376	Balance from previous year	31,220
Total expenditure	920,712	Balance carried forward to the next	46,884
Expenditure per pupil	11,957		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Sessions were not seen in the following areas of learning: creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's records and their work were analysed and discussions with key staff took place. On the basis of the evidence children achieve well in these areas of learning.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** in the areas of learning seen. There are five children taught in a mixed age class with Key Stage 1 pupils. Meticulous planning ensures that they experience all of the areas of learning to which they are entitled at a level suitable to their needs. Four are full-time and one with profound and multiple learning difficulties attends on a sessional basis because she is recovering from recent major surgery. The evidence gathered shows that they achieve well because of the individualised nature of the high quality support they receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching tailor made to their individual needs.
- Teaching and learning are very good and the learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the children's good achievement.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The outdoor play equipment is unsatisfactory.
- Home-school links are very effective.

Commentary

31. Children's achievements are good in the areas of learning seen because the quality of teaching is very good. The difference between the teaching and achievement reflects the severity of needs these children have. Despite very good teaching the achievements take place in small steps but are always celebrated. In aspects of personal, social and emotional development achievement is very good.
32. Quite appropriately the school places a high priority on developing children's **communication, language and literacy skills**. Teachers encourage children to communicate at every opportunity available, using objects as prompts, signs, symbols, and speech, as appropriate. Children's responses to questions and the calling of their name are valued and some gorgeous smiles and independent bangs on a switch have been snapped using a digital camera. There is some evidence of the child with profound and multiple learning difficulties eye pointing, but although the teaching assistants work very hard to stimulate the child there is little evidence of anticipation type responses. Teaching in short bursts, broken up with fun activities, such as blowing kisses, promotes good achievement in communicating in a range of imaginative ways. The highest attainers are using recognisable speech to say: "Hello everybody!". Effective use is made of Picture Exchange Communication Scheme, (PECS), to support one child who is at a very early stage of communication. All experience mark making in the sand and because of skilful teaching that encourages independence the highest attainers are beginning to draw a straight line and this represents very good achievement in writing for them. Achievements are in line with the standards reported in the last inspection.
33. **Mathematical development** is very well supported through games and singing number rhymes. Children enjoyed throwing frogs into an imaginary pond in a controlled way and all four present during this activity managed to raise one finger. Most could raise three fingers as part of a counting game. The highest attainer can place shapes in the correct holes in a tub and two other children are beginning to develop this mathematical skill. Inclusion is excellent, for example all children, including those with the most profound needs, take part in structured

play activities. They show great merriment as they travel on an imaginary bus to the shop to buy a bun using a large pretend penny. Achievement is better than at the last inspection.

34. Thoughtful and well considered planning ensures that children's achievement in their **personal, social and emotional development** is very good, as it was at the last inspection. Children with very challenging behaviour have been taught strategies to cope with their impulses. One child, for example, who is very reluctant to share the toy she is playing with has been taught to offer her classmate something else instead. Because of the climate created and the high expectations, most of these children sit down for dinner without any fuss, and with the minimum of support they eat their food using a plate and metal knife and fork. They are beginning to express preferences by pointing and using language. Their turn-taking skills and co-operation with other adults are now often very good.
35. Although children's **physical development** is developed well because the teaching assistants use the limited space in the classroom to set up safe equipment for them to crawl through overall their learning and achievement is limited because of the lack of large outdoor play equipment such as swings and a safe climbing frame. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection.
36. Very good planning between the teacher and health professionals ensures that speech and physiotherapy are integral to the children's learning experiences and not seen a bolt on. Links with parents to support their children's learning are very good. Parents are seen frequently and they receive a weekly newsletter giving details of what their children have been doing during the week. Leadership and management are very good but the Foundation Stage teacher has to work extremely hard to cope in a small space. A particular frustration is that she cannot set the room up as she would like: it is impossible to have six separate and distinct areas fitted out with resources corresponding to the six areas of learning. She overcomes this difficulty by placing a nature table out to evoke awe and wonder and encourage curiosity through a sensory approach when she focuses on knowledge and understanding of the world and then puts it away and puts out equipment to develop creative skills. This is not an efficient use of her time but does ensure that over time every child experiences each area of learning.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils across the age range achieve very well and they develop their speaking, listening and literacy skills very well as a result of very good teaching.
- All pupils are included in the English curriculum
- Drama is well promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils' skills in literacy are promoted very well during lessons in other subjects.

Commentary

37. Pupils of all levels of capability, including those with more complex needs, achieve very well. This is chiefly because teaching and learning are very good. Staff have all been trained to structure lessons to follow the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy and this has improved the consistency of teaching. Since the last inspection, both pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning have improved significantly. Assessment of pupils'

capabilities and progress is excellent. Teachers use measures that are sufficiently sensitive to reveal the smallest gains, and by very good observation of each pupil they come to know where their strengths and weaknesses lie. They use this information to match their lessons to the needs of individuals so that they can succeed in tasks and make as much progress as possible.

38. The subject adviser has ensured that all teachers focus on developing pupils' communication skills with considerable success. Very good subject leadership and management have ensured that an emphasis is placed on the acquisition of speaking, listening and communication skills throughout the school. As a result, pupils are confident and eager to engage visitors in conversation. Pupils listen attentively to staff and become increasingly able to express their views as they progress through school. This was evident during a lesson when pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5, discussed the story of the Enormous Turnip and were able to re-tell parts of the story, fully understanding its sequence and characters. Pupils in years 7, 8, and 9, were confident as they discussed the work of the contemporary poet, Benjamin Zephaniah and they knew things about the poet, including the facts that he wore dreadlocks and was interested in cars. The importance of studying poetry and literature as a means of promoting understanding of other cultures is well understood by teachers. Pupils are helped very effectively with their reading and writing by tasks adapted to match their abilities and by the carefully focussed support by teachers and teaching assistants. Many pupils within the school find learning to write difficult but teachers and support staff are skilled at helping them record using other methods. For example, by cutting and pasting symbols to make sentences. By the end of Year 6, pupils have learned how to write their name, address and postcode, and by Year 11 this has been developed so that pupils can, for example, complete simple forms. Individual reading record books which act as a link between home and school are used by older pupils. These help to ensure that their learning is supported outside of the classroom. All pupils are taught to read using a range of structured reading programmes. The small library area situated adjacent to the teaching area for younger pupils has a small supply of good quality books more suitable for this age range. Older and more independent learners do not have access to a library, and resources to meet their learning needs are kept in their classrooms.
39. The teaching of different communication strategies for individual pupils to use is a strong feature throughout the school. It reflects the excellent commitment to inclusion. Those pupils who require additional support to enable them to communicate more freely are taught using specialist strategies or equipment including systems such as PECS, and Big Mack switches. Signing using the Makaton system is used effectively by some staff and pupils. In addition speech and language therapists who work closely with staff on a regular basis provide specialist programmes for pupils with communication difficulties. The developing capacity of students in Post-16 classes to communicate effectively is a clear indication of the success of teaching over time. The dialogue in Post-16 classes is very good. Students are sufficiently confident to explain what they are doing to a third party, evaluate their own work and that of others, and to engage in cheerful, humorous exchanges with the whole class. In personal, social and health education classes, students show a very good grasp of comparative and evaluative language that supports their learning about customs and cultures, and enables them to express opinions. A high point for students in the Post-16 classes comes in relation to their work for the school's Youth Enterprise Scheme. They are sufficiently confident to present their work to others outside the school. One student showed such improvement that she won the Halton Young Achiever of the Year Award.
40. Drama plays a large part within literacy. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence to communicate through participating in plays and performances. From the youngest age pupils understand the importance of taking turns and listening to others which contributes well to their personal and social development. Students in the Post-16 classes were delighted to show a video of their performance at the Brindley Hall of "Midsummer Night's Dream". Many had substantial parts of the script to remember and thoroughly enjoyed dressing up to portray their characters. This successful performance has done wonders for the confidence of older learners. Pupils with more complex difficulties have

their understanding and participation in drama and other literature greatly enhanced by a visiting, specialist drama group who promote learning through the senses.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Provision to develop pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum is very good. Speaking and listening skills are linked to drama, for example, when the pupils adopt the roles of parents, godparents and vicar to enact a christening ceremony in religious education. In physical education for younger pupils their movements were linked to the movements described in the story of the Lion Hunt and in science pupils' vocabulary was extended to include words such as "scrunch" to describe the noise of gravel in a lesson about sound.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

Provision for French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively and very effective teaching ensures that pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- Very good achievement is evident in pupils' increasing vocabulary and understanding of spoken French.
- Learning French helps pupils' personal development.

Commentary

42. The very good quality of teaching and learning is founded on excellent assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and on detailed planning. All pupils are encouraged to participate and each pupil has an individual target. Management of pupils and the pace of lessons are very good. All pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well. Praise and encouragement are used well and lessons are lively and humorous. This is appreciated by pupils and reinforces the excellent relationships between pupils and those who teach and support them. As a result, pupils learn very well over time. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' communication skills, their cultural development and their self-esteem. Standards in French have been maintained since the last inspection,
43. Pupils start to learn French at Year 7 and they enthusiastically greet each other and visitors in French. They enhance their number skills by counting in French. They consolidate and build on their range of vocabulary and respond accurately to simple instructions and commands. They repeat words and phrases, which improves their accent and pronunciation as well as building their vocabulary. By Year 9 they can name a selection of soft drinks, fruit and items for a snack. Their achievement is very good.
44. Learning resources are satisfactory and adapted to meet the needs and aptitudes of the pupils. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. They gain in confidence and are proud of their new skill. Each year pupils visit a specialist language college, which has the facilities to replicate a French street. Students have the opportunity to visit France. The subject makes a very good contribution to the personal and social development of all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good throughout the school because of the challenging teaching based on very high expectations that every pupil will succeed.
- Assessment is excellent and is the secret of the very good gains pupils make in their learning.
- Pupils and students, whatever their capability, make rapid gains in confidence because their learning is fun and the activities they experience are interesting.
- Leadership is excellent and management is very good.

Commentary

45. Pupils across the age range do considerably better than in similar schools and achieve very well. This is a very significant improvement on the findings at the last inspection. A major factor in bringing about pupils' very good achievement is the positive approach of the teachers. They expect that pupils will succeed because they know each learner's capabilities so well. Lessons are built on challenging but achievable learning goals.
46. Sharp assessment results in every pupil having specific targets. Teachers skilfully use these targets to plan flexibly to meet the needs of each pupil and this is the secret of the very good achievement so evident in this school. By Year 2, the highest attainers recognise numbers 1 to 30, can match numbers up to 20, albeit making a few errors, and recognise 1p and 2p coins. Their learning is always relevant and related to life skills, as they begin to understand that money is used to purchase items from a shop. Lower attainers recognise numbers in the range 1 to 5 and can recognise the difference between a very big bear and a smaller bear. Those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are well included and are given opportunities to respond to large numbers using the sense of touch and are encouraged to communicate by eye pointing during mathematical activities. Achievement continues to be very good throughout Years 3 to 6. All pupils by Year 6 make rapid gains in sequencing important events in a day at a level appropriate to their capability and the highest attainers begin to learn to tell the time. By Year 9 the highest attainers can confidently add and subtract tens and units without a number line and can weigh the ingredients used to make a cake independently. With very effective support from learning support assistants and using plastic models of little people, the lowest attainers make very good progress in counting to 4. Rapid gains are made by Year 11 because of the very good teaching in Years 10 and 11. By Year 11 the highest attainers can manage money quite well, use the decimal point with a degree of accuracy and have the strategies to solve problems at a level appropriate to their capability. Because they have grasped fractions they can purchase a quarter or half a kilo of a product in a grocery shop. Lower attaining pupils recognise money and experience using money to purchase a drink in a café.
47. Because learning is made to be fun and interesting pupils make rapid gains in confidence and so achieve very well. In a very well planned lesson for pupils in Years 10 and 11 the pupils enjoyed a team game which involved throwing a bean bag at a number on a large number line mat. Challenge, high expectations, very effective use of questions and the excellent relationship between the teacher and the pupils resulted in the lowest attainers making very good gains in matching numbers and the highest attainers gaining confidence in mental calculations and the accurate use of mathematical vocabulary. This activity also improved their eye to hand co-ordination. For students in the Post-16 classes, learning in mathematics is firmly related to real life activities. Lower attainers weigh and measure ingredients in cookery and reinforce their recognition of shapes. They operate a production line for a Young Enterprise project in which they investigate the "nets" that they will make up into paper boxes and containers. Higher attainers calculate production cost and profit and loss for this enterprise. Mathematical development is strongly supported in other activities, for example, the work being done to investigate the feasibility of a new Mersey crossing. The real life dimension in all these examples leads to students being very committed to learning.
48. Throughout the school, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are stimulated and given the opportunity to respond with their senses to well designed mathematical

activities. They have access to switches to respond, are encouraged to point with their eyes and are included in all activities such as number rhymes and songs and going to the shop on an imaginary bus to buy some cakes. They all have a very good mathematical experience. None were seen to be tactile defensive and on occasions gorgeous smiles were seen in response to direct intervention from learning support assistants during lessons. Teaching and learning are very good. All staff have embraced the spirit *'every child matters'* and the focused and personalised approach to learning based on a secure knowledge of the needs of every individual contributes to their very good achievement. Excellent use is made of interactive whiteboards to engage the pupils and motivate their learning. Teaching and learning moves along at a cracking pace and the expectation that each pupil will succeed at the task set is very high. Challenge and praise go hand in hand and the very smallest steps of progress are celebrated. The effective partnership between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations and because relationships are excellent they are often prepared to take risks and surprise themselves by what they succeed in doing. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson when a pupil made a breakthrough with his understanding of addition and subtraction.

49. Leadership is excellent. The subject adviser inspires the team of teachers and her energy, enthusiasm and commitment to the highest achievement for every pupil is infectious. Consequently all teachers work very hard to ensure the best possible provision for all pupils. Management is very good. Teaching and learning are monitored and very good practice is shared to bring about improvement. Assessment data is analysed carefully and used very well to inform planning to raise achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Mathematics across the curriculum is very good. The mathematical opportunities in all subjects are taken very well. For example, higher attainers weigh ingredients in food technology and use the correct terminology to describe their weight. They develop their measuring skills in science and record numerical data accurately. Every opportunity is taken to encourage lower attainers to recognise numbers and to develop their counting skills. Younger pupils experience number rhymes. Problem solving and sequencing activities are planned for across the curriculum in a systematic manner.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good, across the age range, for pupils of all levels of capability.
- Imaginative teaching of very good quality adds excitement to learning and helps to overcome the limitations imposed by lack of specialist resources and accommodation.
- Every opportunity is taken in science lessons to extend the communication skills of pupils.

Commentary

51. At the last inspection achievement in science was satisfactory. Since then there has been significant improvement. By making use of a suitable assessment system, the "P-Scales", the school is able to track with some precision the gains made by all pupils in each strand of the science National Curriculum programme of study. Through a nationwide monitoring scheme, these achievements are compared with those of other children, of like capability, in similar schools. This comparison shows that, in 2004, pupils at all levels outperformed their peers elsewhere. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties made gains in line with the

average in “Life Processes” and “Materials and their properties” but achieved more highly than most others in “Scientific enquiry” and “Physical processes”. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6, pupils were also found to have achieved much more than their contemporaries elsewhere. In particular, their achievement in “Scientific enquiry” and “Life Processes” was higher than that of three quarters of their peers. The achievement of pupils by the end of Year 9 was even higher than this with particular improvement in work on “Materials and their properties”. Achievement by the end of year 11 was also found to be, comparatively, very high.

52. The school lacks any specialist facilities for science. There is no properly equipped room or bay in which the full range of secondary science can be taught in a fully resourced, safe, manner. However, teachers have worked hard and effectively to overcome these limitations. In the special development unit, for example, in which those pupils from across the age range, who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, are taught, learning about the body is made fun. Pupils look at, hold, and move the joints of a life sized plastic skeleton while the teacher and the classroom assistants cheerfully sing to them. They are helped to make their own skeleton pictures by sticking dry pasta to paper. From the attention that they give to their tasks and their contented expressions it is clear that the pupils enjoy this activity. For pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 science lessons have a more formal tone. Scientific enquiry is fostered by carefully structured investigations that can safely be carried out in the classroom. For example, pupils in one observed lesson, learned very well that they must use all their senses to report fully and accurately the changes that occur when water is added to a range of superficially similar white powders. Pupils are very keen participants. They report their observations happily and very directly using comparisons that are meaningful to them. One pupil, for example, on carefully sniffing a mixture, declared with some certainty, that it “smelled of mice!” Simple domestic containers were used instead of laboratory glassware but, in this case, these facilities were adequate. Again, in another good example of teachers making the best of what is available, pupils in Years 10 and 11 were observed carrying out an experiment on displacement. In this lesson, effective use was made of cans of produce and washing- up bowls. Pupils eagerly made predictions and carried out a fair test to verify these. They were observant careful and very pleased with what they had accomplished. Once more valuable scientific enquiry was carried out without recourse to the usual range of apparatus that supports the teaching of science.
53. During science lessons teachers make very good use of the opportunities each lesson provides to extend the communication skills of their pupils. For those with the greatest degree of learning difficulty this involves providing experiences that capture attention and provoke a positive reaction that is apparent in body movement or facial expression or in some cases vocalisation. Older pupils talk about what they do. They are encouraged to say what they see, feel, smell and hear, to predict outcomes, to use the language of estimation and to understand concepts such as fairness in testing. They learn to recognise and write technical words that are important in the context of their science work. For example “dissolve”, “solution” and “displacement”.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good across the school because of more confident teaching.
- The multi-media presentations produced by pupils in Years 7 to 11, with the support of the Key Stage 3 ICT consultant, are stunningly good.

- Very good teaching makes effective use of interactive whiteboards and a whole host of switches are used well to support pupils with complex communication needs to make independent choices.
- ICT is used very well to support all subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

54. Provision in ICT and achievement across the age range are very significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is very good across the school and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have access to a wider range of switches than was the case at the time of the last inspection. These enable them to communicate their independent choices. Teachers have confidence in using interactive whiteboards and excellent use has been made of the Key Stage 3 ICT consultant from the local education authority to model very good practice and build up teachers' confidence to use ICT effectively in their teaching.
55. Too little evidence could be gathered to make a secure judgement about achievement by Year 2. Scrutiny of planning confirms that pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive a very good curriculum and those with severe communication difficulties can respond to their name being called during registration by pressing a big switch. Achievement by Year 6 is very good. Pupils successfully make simple music compositions using the interactive whiteboard to drag symbols, let go and press the play button. This makes a very valuable contribution to their eye to hand co-ordination and those who have difficulty in dragging a large symbol because of poor hand control are fully included as the teacher places her hand over the top of the pupil's hand to enable the pupil to experience the dragging sensation. Scrutiny of files stored shows that by Year 9 pupils have been involved in producing a PowerPoint presentation as part of a silting project in geography. The highest attainers successfully and independently used digital cameras and were involved in recording rap tunes and independently put the sound on the multi-media presentation. Lower attainers were included in this project and were part of the experience. Excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11 ensures that the pupils in these years enjoy very considerable success in a range of ICT skills. In a lesson which moved along at a cracking pace all students achieved very well. The highest attainers accessed the Internet independently and downloaded information about sound, middle attainers developed their keyboard skills and used the back space bar to self-correct the spelling of their name, whilst the lowest attainers used a suitable piece of equipment to identify and use the correct mathematical sign to complete a sum. With the support of the Key Stage 3 ICT consultant pupils in this age range produced a powerful multi-media presentation that focused on the exciting range of extra-curricular activities available in the school. This project has developed a wide range of ICT skills.
56. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching ranges from good to excellent. Because of highly effective assessment and thorough analysis of individuals' strengths and weaknesses, teachers know pupils very well. They set individual targets and use them to raise pupils' achievement. Excellent teaching is characterised by fascinating sensory starters which immediately grasp pupils interest, proceeds at a very brisk pace and plans suitable activities matched to the needs of every pupil. In these lessons the productivity in learning is amazing and pupils make rapid gains in confidence in using computers and in learning from each other. In Years 10 and 11 the eyes of the pupils sparkled with the joy and excitement of finding new information about sound from the Internet and in spelling their names correctly using a word processing program.
57. Leadership and management are very good. Very effective monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that the best practice is shared. The Key Stage 3 consultant has been effectively deployed to develop teachers' skills and confidence, and the excellent assessment procedures that have been developed have arisen from this help. These make a very valuable contribution to raising achievement because teachers use individual pupil targets to inform

their teaching and to monitor pupils' small stepped gains. The development plan recognises the importance of developing the ICT skills of the learning support assistants.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. ICT is very effectively used across the curriculum. It is used to support the teaching in art and design, music, science, geography and as a communication aid for all pupils. The Pop Video made by sixth form students is outstandingly good as is the PowerPoint Presentation of the Big Book Project made by pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers are very confident in the use of interactive whiteboards and communication aids when they are required, and this makes a valuable contribution to the very good provision.

HUMANITIES

History

59. There was insufficient direct evidence of teaching and learning to make a judgement about the quality of provision for history. No lessons were observed. History is taught as part of humanities to pupils in the special development unit and in classes for pupils from Year 1 to Year 11. For those in Years 1 to 6, work in history is related to termly topics or themes as well as to the National Curriculum programmes of study. For example, pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have recently been looking at the lives of Victorian children. They have learned that toys were few and often "home-made". Their work has been given increased impact by being linked to lessons in art and design in which the pupils have worked hard to make simple dolls from wooden spoons. The work of older pupils is not related to a theme. Recently, they have made visits to sites of historic interest. For example, they have visited Chester in support of their work on the Tudor period. Arrangements to lead and co-ordinate history have recently changed but a teacher who is knowledgeable about the subject advises colleagues on curriculum and planning and also looks after resources. These are good.

Geography

Provision for geography is **good** for pupils in Years 1 to 6 and **very good** for those in Years 7 to 11 and for students in the Post-16 classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils by Year 11 and students in the Post-16 classes achieve very well because of very good teaching and learning.
- Work in Post-16 classes, that links geography, citizenship, and cultural awareness is of high quality.
- By Year 7, pupils have experience of their immediate environment and understand that there are places in the world that are quite different.

Commentary

60. There are very high expectations of what pupils in the secondary phase should achieve. Teachers prepare lessons that are challenging and, because of excellent assessment, they are well suited to the individual capabilities of their pupils. By Year 11 achievement is very good and pupils have developed a wide vocabulary of geographic terms and are eager to learn more. They have very good awareness of the relative position and size of countries and regions of the world. They identify the British Isles and the Amazon basin on a globe and know that Britain is tiny in comparison to Brazil. As well as being thoroughly prepared lessons are delivered energetically and informed by a clear understanding that learning is promoted by

the pupils having plenty to do. For example, in a very good lesson on eco -systems for pupils in Years 10 and 11, pupils worked initially as a class group to recall their previous learning, then made use of globes to identify the locations of the places they were studying. They followed this with group work on “food chains”. Work in geography in this instance is strongly linked to work in science. Pupils with the most severe learning difficulties within the class are very fully included and are given tasks very well matched to their capabilities, as well as sufficient support to complete these. Achievement, overall, is much better than at the last inspection when it was satisfactory.

61. Post -16 classes continue to develop their geographical knowledge and skills through very well designed units of study that bring together elements of geography, citizenship and cultural awareness. The teaching of these units is very good and occasionally excellent. Presently, students are studying India. They are looking at religion, economic activity, home life and the physical environment in the sub-continent. Teaching is thoroughly planned to take account of the learning styles and individual needs of the pupils. In a very good observed lesson the use of video was very effective. Pupils’ answers to questions confirmed that they had learned their previous lessons very well. Higher attaining students made use of maps and globes very confidently. A minority produced labelled sketch maps of India showing main cities, rivers and mountains. In work linked to citizenship, especially the understanding of local democracy, higher attaining Post-16 students are looking at all aspects of the development of a second Mersey crossing. The third in a series of lessons on this topic was observed. Teaching learning and achievement were all excellent.
62. Pupils in the infant and junior classes develop their knowledge and understanding of their immediate environment well. They make a good start on learning to respond to, and in some case in using language about direction. Visits within the local area, or for special purposes, such as trips to the centre for Riding for the Disabled, reinforce awareness of the world beyond school and home very well. From time to time, as part of a programme of themes and topics, the younger children get to know about other places. In Caribbean week, for example, the culture and music of the West Indies was brought to life by visiting performers and pupils learned, according to their capability, about the climate, the vegetation and the every day life of the people of a faraway land. There is an adviser(co-ordinator) for humanities who supports teachers with their planning in geography well and ensures that resources for learning are available. Presently these are of good quality.

Example of outstanding practice

Students in a Post-16 class respond to the outstanding ethos and very challenging subject matter in an excellent citizenship/geography lesson.

There is laughter as the students watch their teacher take up, once again, her life-time struggle to draw a convincing motor car on the whiteboard. “I know you can all do better than this”, she says, knowing that this will egg her students on to do their best. It is a lesson in local democracy. Students, including one with profound and multiple learning difficulties, are investigating the need for a new Mersey crossing and the feasibility of the site proposed for it. They have rehearsed the issues of traffic congestion, and weighed the social and economic importance of this against the social disruption and displacement of home-owners that

building a new bridge will cause. All of the students are confident learners and all are willing to have a go at indicating the location of the river and the present bridge by drawing on the interactive whiteboard. They praise and collaborate with one another and show great competence as they use the computer to print off their own work. Their answers to questions show excellent retention of previous learning and a lovely feeling for language. "What does the present bridge look like?" asks their teacher. "Like a rainbow", comes the reply.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with the most complex and profound learning difficulties are taught effectively in a manner that meets their needs.
- The curriculum fully reflects the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.
- Pupils and students across the age range are given interesting and exciting things to do and this leads to active, lively, learning and good achievement.

Commentary

63. In the class for those pupils with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties religious education takes place in a quiet, meditative setting that is carefully prepared and maintained. Use is made of simple but very effective techniques such as reducing the light to that provided by a few candles, perfuming the room with incense, and the playing, very softly, of sacred music. Pupils are placed in their most comfortable positions. All of this signals to them that they should be calm and listen quietly to the stories from World religions, including Christianity that are then told to them. The stories themselves are made more meaningful by this careful planning and preparation that links learning about religion to positive sensory experiences. Pupils respond well. The teacher involves each child in turn in the tale as it is told. With good support from the classroom assistants the pupils are attentive and those who are able to, follow the teacher with their eyes.
64. The local agreed syllabus for religious education is at the heart of the activities and lessons that are planned for pupils and students across the age range. In order to make aspects of learning about and learning from religion more accessible to pupils a strong emphasis is placed on learning by direct experience. Pupils visit places of worship and the school is visited by Christian ministers of religion and leaders from other World faiths. In lessons, enactments, have a firm place. Pupils and students learn about many customs and ceremonies through role play.
65. In their study of World faiths pupils in the senior classes look at rites of passage. They learn about naming ceremonies and reinforce this by acting these out. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 come to know that babies are officially named when their birth is registered, but that a baby might involve a faith based ceremony if that is what parents choose. They further developed their awareness of this when they prepared a baptism ceremony and played the roles of parents, God-parents and minister. This enjoyable lesson enabled them to come to a good understanding that the significance of baptism is that it welcomes the new baby into the faith community of Christianity. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn about marriage as a significant life event that most religions solemnise with ceremonies. In a very lively role-play a marriage took place before an enthusiastic congregation in the school hall. Parts were played very well with particularly clear reading of the vows by the minister manqué. As a result of such good teaching, that enlivens lessons with opportunities to learn by doing, the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding effectively and achieve well. Teachers are helped in their preparation by the adviser (co-ordinator) for religious education who has very good experience

of teaching the subject and who ensures that the school's good range of artefacts and resources for learning are readily available. Both provision and achievement for all groups of pupils have improved well since the last inspection.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

66. No lessons were seen during the course of the inspection because during this term Art and Design are taught. Insufficient examples of work were seen to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning and provision overall.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and respond enthusiastically to effective and well-planned teaching.
- Pupils learn to critically evaluate their own work and that of others.
- Very good use is made of information and communication technology to extend learning about art.
- Art and design and design and technology have been integrated to take proper account of the needs of pupils and the limitations in accommodation.

Commentary

67. At the last inspection teaching, learning and pupils' achievement were good and this high standard has been maintained. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and through effective assessment they know their pupils well. They make use of resources effectively to give their pupils interesting things to do. Those with the most profound learning difficulties who are in the special development unit clearly enjoyed making bead necklaces as part of their work on an "Africa" theme. They strove their hardest to select and hold beads and to thread them on string whilst clearly enjoying the African music being played and the African designs being displayed around their workplace. The work of the classroom assistants supporting this activity was sensitive, cheerful and of high quality. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed similar enjoyment as they worked very hard to enhance with coloured papers, drawings of the characters of the story of the "gingerbread man" that is the current focus of their English work. Their achievement was very good. They chose and matched colours with confidence and fully enjoyed tearing, scrunching and sticking. Those in years 3 to 6 showed that making skills develop well over time. All were able to draw a recognisable face on the spoon dolls that they were making and many showed confident choice making as they selected the fabrics and materials for their doll's hair, limbs and clothes. There is a high level of sophistication in the work of pupils in Years 7 to 9. They have researched the work of Mondrian and understood that over time his work became less figurative and his colour choice more vibrant. With confidence borne of good teaching and appropriate adult help, pupils are in the process of making pastiches of Mondrian's designs using a collage technique. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are working at landscape drawing and painting. The careful planning for this unit of work calls for use of digital photography and of images drawn from the Internet to provide exemplars. The laws of perspective are being thoroughly taught. Higher attaining pupils show in the drawings that they produce that they understand that the size of objects appears to diminish as the distance from the viewer increases.

68. In lessons for pupils across the age range teachers are particularly careful to use dialogue to get pupils to look carefully at their work, to see what is good and what might be further improved. When pupils are working together on similar projects, teachers draw the attention of all to good things in the work of individual pupils so that they may learn by these means to evaluate the quality of their own work and that of others. This process also applies when the work of well known artists is being looked at. By Year 11 pupils confidently offer opinions about which aspects of the work they like best and the higher attainers give their reasons.
69. The very good resources for information and communication technology are used to support art very well. Especially good use is made of the Internet to explore and research topics. The work on Mondrian taking place in Years 7 to 9 has been well facilitated by Internet access to key images as well as by use of the interactive whiteboard to illustrate elements of design. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make use of computers to select and modify images, for example of landscapes, when they are exploring colour values.
70. Because there are too few facilities to support the teaching of all aspects of design and technology, and because, in addition the special educational needs of the pupils make it difficult to fully do justice to the design elements in the programme of study. the school, with support and advice from the local education authority has combined design and technology with art and design so as to retain all the accessible and beneficial elements of both subjects. This arrangement makes good sense in the present situation but it can only be an interim measure as pupils of secondary age need the opportunity to develop their making skills in a properly resourced environment.

Music

71. There is insufficient direct evidence of teaching and learning to make a judgement on the quality of provision for music. Only one full lesson was observed. This was a very good lesson given by a visiting teacher for all children who are in the Foundation Stage and the primary classes. The children were used to the teacher who has worked with them since the start of the school year. They eagerly anticipated the songs and games and thoroughly enjoyed the session. The helpful presence throughout the lesson of the children's own teachers and classroom assistants meant that all who needed special support were given it. There was lots of enthusiasm for the repertoire of action songs that the teacher provided and a great deal of vigour went into the playing, as an ensemble, of percussion instruments. The pupils have learned well. They look at the conductor and almost all obey the instruction to stop playing when this is given. Higher attaining pupils have committed tunes to memory. They show this when they succeed in identifying familiar songs from just one or two notes.
72. Older pupils learn about musical styles; in Years 7 to 9, in sessions of musical appreciation they listen to recorded music and come to understand that music is used to convey mood. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy accompanying recorded music with percussion and they make very good use of a computer program and an interactive whiteboard to compose their own music. In sessions where this is done very good use is made of information and communication technology especially the interactive whiteboard.
73. Specific responsibility for the development of music is not presently assigned to a teacher on the staff. The contribution of the visiting teacher to the provision of music in the infant and junior classes is considerable but if music is to develop further, a subject adviser (co-ordinator) on the permanent staff is needed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching by all staff enables pupils to achieve very well.
- All pupils are encouraged and enabled to take part in as many activities as they can.
- Limited accommodation and resources restricts the range of activities which can be offered in school.
- The enthusiasm and leadership of the subject adviser encourages all pupils to take part.

Commentary

74. Teaching and learning are very good with some outstanding features. Assessment is particularly strong. All pupils are successfully encouraged to participate in the planned activities and work well with obvious enjoyment. Younger pupils are eager to share their achievements with others in their class and are encouraged by the positive response of their friends and teachers. They enjoy their lessons because of this and also because they have the chance to try new activities. Teachers understand their pupils very well and set challenges which they can achieve. Classroom assistants work very well with teachers and pupils to provide additional high quality support. Consistent and good teaching ensures that achievement is higher than at the last inspection. There has been a good improvement.
75. A significant number of boys and girls benefit from taking part in sporting events both locally and regionally. They have achieved well in the Cheshire County Cricket Tournament and Tag Rugby competitions. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to ride with the Riding for the Disabled riding school in Clwyd. This experience does wonders for their confidence and self-esteem. There is a residential visit arranged for older pupils to spend additional time riding and learning horse management.
76. The physical education programme and the extended extra curricular activities make a strong contribution to the learning and achievements of all pupils at the school but particularly older students. However, the small size of the hall and sloping grassed outside areas severely limits activities available within school. To overcome this, arrangements are made so that pupils and students can use community facilities to develop skills in cricket, rugby, football, and gymnastics. Opportunities are also provided for participation in table tennis, canoeing and orienteering. There is a small shallow hydrotherapy pool within the school but swimming tuition takes place at the local leisure centre. Some pupils have been awarded the Royal Life Saving Bronze certificate. Most pupils swim very well and can swim between 25 and 400 metres. Some older pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards and as a consequence they take part in simple fell walks and some enjoy overnight expeditions. Pupils achieve very well across the age ranges.
77. The subject adviser is very enthusiastic and is a good role model for pupils. He has developed very good links with local providers so that the curriculum can be extended beyond the range of activities that can be expected in similar situations. There are teams in several sports that help to build personal and team skills. The subject makes a very good contribution to the personal and social development of all pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school gives all its pupils and students a curriculum that is very well matched to their needs.
- Across the age range, pupils and students improve their personal qualities and achieve very well.
- High quality teaching is based on thorough knowledge of each pupil and student.
- Leadership and management are very effective.

Commentary

78. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, the PSHE programme focuses on developing pupils' independence skills and is integral to the whole curriculum. For those in years 7 to 11, there is a discrete PSHE programme and a planned citizenship programme. A very good sex education programme is tailor made to pupils needs with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills to learn what sorts of behaviour are acceptable and what sorts of behaviour are unacceptable, thus reducing their vulnerability. It also makes a valuable contribution towards enabling girls to take responsibility for their 'feminine hygiene', thus improving their dignity and independence. The programme for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties focuses on self-awareness, feelings and body part recognition. In Years 10 and 11 pupils' are made aware of the harmful effects of the misuse of glue, alcohol abuse and smoking. This is delivered very sensitively and carefully so that vulnerable students are not at risk of trying to experiment with sniffing or smoking harmful substances themselves. The citizenship curriculum is very good. There are whole school projects which enable all pupils to participate as active citizens, for example in the plan to improve the school's playgrounds. The taught programme for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is outstandingly good.
79. Achievement in PSHE and citizenship is very good. By Year 2, pupils are becoming increasingly confident and their social skills are improving. They are, mostly, able to sit down to lunch and use plates, knives and forks without any fuss. Those with very challenging behaviour are developing strategies to work collaboratively with others, to take turns, and to share without having a tantrum. Achievement continues to be very good throughout Years 3 to 11, so that by Year 11 most students have developed important skills to enable them to function independently at home. They have a good sense about their appearance, are able to shop sensibly for clothes, and can plan, prepare and cook a simple meal. Through a structured citizenship programme they make rapid gains in their understanding of the importance of trust in working and playing with others and at a level appropriate to their capability have a very good understanding of complex issues surrounding animal welfare and local democracy. Most importantly of all they are prepared to stand on their own two feet and refuse to wear a 'disability label'. By the age of 16 they can go clubbing, dance as well as anybody else and by the age of 18 can go to the bar independently and order a drink. Through hard work the school has worked with parents of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties to encourage them to support their children in making sensible and independent choices about what they wear. Parents say: *'this strategy has resulted in improved behaviour at home'*. Many older pupils have opportunities to develop as good citizens through the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme.
80. Teaching and learning are consistently of high quality. Two excellent lessons were seen. All taught programmes are tailor made for the individual pupil to develop the greatest level of independence possible. Because of excellent relationships, a superb knowledge of each individual student, high expectations and commitment to developing the maximum independence for every pupil all reach their full potential as responsible and independent citizens within the context of what are realistic expectations for them.
81. Leadership and management of PSHE and citizenship are very good. Responsibilities are shared amongst a team of colleagues who pool ideas and resources very effectively and share a common vision: *'that all students, as far as possible, will experience the dignity that comes with being independent,'* and who work to ensure that for all for whom it possible that vision becomes a reality. Monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that very good practice is shared and a very effective assessment procedure ensures that even the smallest steps of progress are celebrated.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	1
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	1
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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