

INSPECTION REPORT

DORIN PARK SCHOOL

Upton, Chester

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 111511

Headteacher: Mr P H Kidman

Lead inspector: Adrian Simm

Dates of inspection: 16th – 18th May 2005

Inspection number: 268558

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	72
School address:	Wealstone Lane Upton Chester Cheshire
Postcode:	CH2 1HD
Telephone number:	01244 381951
Fax number:	01244 390422
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Capstick
Date of previous inspection:	24 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dorin Park School educates 31 boys and 41 girls aged 3 to 19 years who have physical difficulties, and severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. Numbers of pupils have fallen slightly in recent years. Pupils have a broad range of attainment on entry but, overall, it is very low in comparison to their chronological age for those starting in the reception class. Ninety-seven per cent of pupils are of white British background and those who are not, are supported in developing fluency in English. Nearly all pupils from the Reception class to Year 13 have statements of special educational needs (SEN). A very small number of pupils are placed at the school for assessment. Pupils come from a wide area including North Wales. A very high number of pupils travel by local authority transport. Forty-nine per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is high. The school has achieved a number of awards including Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools, Investors in People and the Inclusion Quality Mark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21138	Adrian Simm	Lead inspector	Science French Religious education Work related learning English as an additional language
13450	Jenny Madden	Lay inspector	
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	English History Music Physical education
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship Geography Special educational needs
7994	Pam Weston	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Dorin Park School is **outstanding** because so many areas of school life are either very good or excellent. Pupils achieve very well upon an exciting curriculum that is full of fun. As a result, pupils enjoy school to the full. This happens because of the high quality of teaching and excellent relationships between pupils and all staff. There is an outstanding ethos for learning in the school. Excellent leadership and very good management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and all staff with responsibilities have ensured very good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Given that the school's funding is reasonable, the exceptional results achieved mean that the school offers excellent value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Highly reflective leadership and management have improved the school very well since the last inspection. The governors' role in this is effective.
- Very good teaching and learning ensure that pupils' achieve very well.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Teaching and welfare assistants make a highly effective contribution to this.
- Outstanding links with the community and other schools and colleges have a significant impact on provision. This is particularly obvious in supporting excellence in the performing arts and in the very good provision for work related learning and science.
- Part of the school's exceptional ethos is the very strong systems of support and advice for pupils. The very broad range of therapists and medical support staff based at the school, and the Connexions adviser, contribute significantly to pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

The school's progress in improving pupils' achievement has been highly effective since the last inspection. This is most obvious in the Foundation Stage, science and mathematics. Part of the reason for the improvements is because staff are now much clearer about what pupils find easy and difficult in their work. Pupils are challenged therefore, far more effectively in their work. Most areas of school life have either been improved significantly or maintained at a high level.

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.

Pupils' achievement is **very good** in the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), work related learning and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Achievement is excellent in the 'performing arts' and in personal and social development, which pervades all parts of school life. The achievement of the Artsmark Gold Award, Healthy School Award and Inclusion Quality Mark were clearly merited. Achievement in religious education is good but not stronger because of the relatively low amount of time it is taught in comparison with other subjects. Boys and girls, pupils whose first language is not English and those with differing special educational needs achieve equally highly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **excellent**. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are outstanding. Pupils' attendance is generally very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching is **very good** throughout the school. Outstanding examples of teaching were seen in the Foundation Stage, sensory-literacy and movement therapy, science, ICT, French and the 'performing arts'. This results in pupils learning very well. Teachers and support staff work so closely together that, frequently, their roles inter-link. They know exactly how pupils will react to different situations. This results in excellent relationships, which in turn leads to pupils who grow in confidence, want to learn and thoroughly enjoy their education. Staff frequently check on what pupils know, do and understand by careful and very effective question-and-answer sessions throughout lessons. All pupils regularly work with pupils from mainstream schools. This is so popular that during the week of the inspection, several pupils from a partner high school gave up their study leave to join in a combined science lesson.

The curriculum offers outstanding opportunities for enriching pupils' learning. Provision for personal and social development is excellent. Pupils take part in a very good range of educational visits off site in which they learn practically and from residential experiences. Links with other schools and colleges are excellent and ensure that pupils' learning opportunities are much broader than would otherwise be the case. An example of this is the way in which the school overcomes the drawbacks of its own accommodation for science. Staff work extremely hard to ensure very high quality provision that involves speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nursing support and excellent individual advice and support for pupils and their families from the Connexions adviser. Pupils benefit very well from voluntary support from local community members.

Pupils in Years 10 and 11, and students in Years 12 and 13 build their learning in many areas of work in school and in their links with the community. This results in their learning being accredited very well in a range of courses accredited nationally.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff are **very good**. The school's commitment to all groups of pupils, and to giving each individual pupil a programme of learning tailored to their needs, is outstanding. All other staff in leadership positions make a very good contribution to developing provision. The school is very effective in tying together such areas as self-evaluation, staff's personal targets for improvement, whole-school targets for improvement and continuing professional development for all staff. The ultimate focus on raising pupils' standards and improving their personal development is exceptional. The school is very clear about what it does well and what else needs to be done to move on even more. Governors are highly committed to the school and provide active support. The Chair of Governors is a regular visitor to the school, is very supportive of all staff and challenges the school to improve. The governors make good use of the expertise of different governors. The school is very committed to maintaining a safe environment for the pupils although both the headteacher and governors had overlooked recording two important risk assessments until the week of the inspection. This is why the judgement on management of the school and governance is not stronger. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very highly satisfied with all areas of school life. Pupils really enjoy what the school provides for them. They are extremely satisfied.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant issues for improvement stemming from the inspection.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Boys and girls, regardless of their differing special educational needs achieve **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well throughout the school: boys and girls; pupils with differing special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language.
- Pupils in the Reception class make a very good start to their school life in working towards the goals set for them. This is far more effective than it was at the last inspection.
- Overall, pupils' achievement shows an improving trend that is very good since the last inspection. This is most obvious in mathematics and science.
- Pupils make very good progress against the targets set for them.
- Excellent links with other schools and the community are an integral part of pupils' outstanding achievement in the 'performing arts' and pupils' personal development.

Commentary

1. When they join the school, pupils' attainment is often very low. Because teaching and learning are very good throughout the school, pupils are settled in immediately and make very effective progress. They achieve very well throughout the school from the Foundation Stage to the Post 16 department. Pupils with English as an additional language are in the early stages of language acquisition. They benefit, as do all pupils, from the very well thought out teaching methods to improve pupils' standards in communication, including speaking and listening. Staff are very effective at planning lessons that are exciting for all pupils and to vary, as necessary, the teaching and learning approaches they employ. As a result, the special educational needs of different types of learners are met very well. All parents who responded to the questionnaire for the inspection consider that their children like school and are making good progress.
2. In the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve very well overall. Their achievement in communication, language and literacy, and in personal social and emotional development, is outstanding. This is because staff are excellent at building these strands of learning into most lessons. Throughout the rest of school, achievement is very good in speaking and listening, reading, writing, alternative communication strategies for those pupils who cannot make their needs known verbally, mathematics, science, ICT, PSHCE and work related learning in Years 10 to 13. Achievement is good in religious education.
3. This very high level of achievement throughout the school shows a marked improvement in standards since the last inspection in all subjects of the curriculum, but particularly in mathematics and science. English and ICT have improved well and remain strengths of the school. All pupils' personal and social development is outstanding. This is because pupils constantly experience excellent relationships with staff. Accreditation in courses recognised nationally is much further on. For example, in Post 16, higher attaining pupils leave school with awards in Entry Level Certificates of Achievement, whilst others achieve success through gaining units of accreditation of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). There is an improving trend in pupils' success in accredited courses demonstrated by more pupils having gained bronze and silver awards in ASDAN in 2004 than in 2003.
4. The school has put much effort into setting realistic but challenging statutory targets for pupils. The low numbers of pupils in year groups means that the measurement of trends in progress cannot be compared year-on-year. The school rightly uses the targets for tracking individual pupils' progress. The school is changing its systems from using a measure known as 'P' scales to another approach called PIVATs. Both systems are agreed steps leading to national

curriculum levels for those pupils for whom this is appropriate, but the changeover needs time to embed before it can be fully exploited. National curriculum levels are used as targets for higher attaining pupils. Regardless of their levels, many pupils achieve very well and exceed their targets. Where this type of data shows progress to be limited, the alternative system of targets set in pupils' individual education plans, which are focused on the pupils' exact levels, pick up the smaller steps that have been made.

5. The school's approach to inclusive education is excellent. Part of this is linked to provision for pupils in the 'performing arts' where their achievement is outstanding. There is a long history in the school of theatrical performance that provides pupils with the opportunity to build their self-esteem and confidence. The subject is outstandingly effective, partly because of lessons that combine elements of art and design, drama, music and dance but also because pupils from mainstream join in activities each week. This is part of the school's approach to ensure that all pupils, in a variety of ways, blossom in their learning through links with pupils in primary and secondary schools. It is also clear from school records that year-on-year, a small but significant number of pupils are supported in returning to mainstream schools for their full time education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **excellent**. Attendance is **very good** whilst punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their life at the school. They want to work and enjoy doing so through the supportive and secure environment provided for each pupil.
- The personal development of pupils is a major strength in the school with pupils growing in understanding and awareness as they move through the school.
- Behaviour is excellent at all times because pupils know the standards expected of them and are constantly stimulated by the experiences provided during the school day.
- Despite medical absence, which is unavoidable for many pupils, attendance is very good and very well promoted by the school.

Commentary

6. This area of school life has improved from very good to outstanding since the last inspection. Pupils arrive at the school smiling and happy to be there. Some have long journeys, but in conversation they made it clear that they felt this well worth while in order to attend a school which they love. In lessons pupils are consistently challenged and supported by the very good teaching and care for practical considerations, so that pupils concentrate hard and exhibit a very high level of interest in the work. The atmosphere is relaxed and all pupils join in even when they are unsure of themselves, knowing that they will never be criticised. Pupils are very supportive of each other; for example, some pupils take 'wheel-chair' driving tests so that they can push others in their chairs safely around the school and playground.
7. From an early age, the majority of pupils in the school build a very good understanding of their strengths and weakness, and as they get older, they become sensitive to matters, which can cause difficulties or distress to others. Pupils become socially aware and adapt easily to a range of social contexts through the experiences provided by the school. For example, residential visits at home and abroad, joint lessons with mainstream schools, visits from musicians, theatre groups and dancers are all entered into with great enthusiasm. The school rewards pupils who display determination and achievement as well as, for example, those who take up swimming and horse riding. More senior pupils clearly care about the environment and were discussing a range of issues concerning recycling in the school at the school council meeting during the inspection.

8. A range of strategies designed by staff to meet the needs of individual pupils is improving the behaviour of some pupils who can be very challenging. The results are outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is very good or excellent in most lessons, around the school, playground and on visits out of school. However the strongest reinforcement of good behaviour is the fact that pupils want to please staff with whom they have very close and caring relationships. Staff make very clear what are the expectations for behaviour in the school. The number of exclusions from school for poor behaviour would normally be shown in the table below, but there have not been any.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	68
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1
Any other ethnic group	1

9. Pupils are keen to attend the school. Although the major reasons for absence are caused by medical conditions, on rare occasions, a very small number of pupils are kept at home for family reasons when they could benefit from attending school. Some pupils who start with poor attendance, improve as they benefit from the very supportive and understanding environment. Attendance so far in 2004/2005 is on track to exceed the target set of 92 per cent. This is good improvement on the previous full year's data shown below.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003/2004

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	9.9	School data :	0.5
National data:	8.8	National data:	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning, curricular opportunities, links with parents and how well the school listens to and acts upon pupils' views are **very good**. The standard of care is **good**. The support and guidance, which pupils receive and the impact of links with the community and other schools are **outstanding**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outstanding quality of relationships between staff and pupils enhances pupils' learning significantly. Many pupils say they enjoy school immensely.
- Staff are very clear about what else pupils need to know in their work so that they can plan to improve their achievement.
- Pupils are encouraged to work very hard in lessons.
- Pupils are known and valued as individuals. Teaching assistants, therapists, nursing staff and the Connexions adviser contribute significantly to this.
- Rare instances of challenging behaviour are effectively managed.

Commentary

10. Relationships with pupils are of exceptional quality. This results in pupils working very hard and learning very effectively. There is a welcoming atmosphere in the school as soon as pupils arrive through the front doors. Pupils in Years 7 to 13 mostly know their timetables for the day, and after registration and tutor groups, make their way to lessons. Should they forget, timetables are posted on the corridor wall and referred to for help. This is a very effective approach and supports pupils' personal development very well. Staff always inform pupils what they are about to do in lessons. The important objectives for the lessons are frequently written down and discussed clearly with pupils before they start. There are very good levels of support in lessons and staff are deployed very well to ensure that each pupil gains the maximum benefit from the teaching. Teaching assistants challenge and question pupils and help them to succeed. Staff manage challenging behaviour calmly and effectively by consistently using agreed strategies. Staff are very clear what pupils know in their work and therefore, what else needs to be taught. They plan very well for improving pupils' achievement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8(21%)	17(45%)	11(29%)	2(5%)			

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

11. Sixty-six per cent of lessons seen during the inspection were very good or excellent as shown in the table above. These lessons spanned nearly all subjects inspected and were evident throughout the school from the Foundation Stage to Post 16. A good number were linked intrinsically to aspects of the performing arts via dance, drama, role-play or singing, such as an outstanding lesson in French. In the most exceptional lessons, staffing levels or adult support were generally very high and allowed pupils to be supported either individually or in pairs. This was evident in several science lessons across the age range. Investigative work was at the heart of the learning, for example, with Years 3 to 6 studying rock layers based on a visit to the Dee Cliffs, whilst in Years 8 to 11, laboratory assistants and pupils from a local high school joined in knowledgeably and enthusiastically with a lesson held at their school. Lessons were exciting, which encouraged pupils to concentrate and work very hard. Speech and language therapists provide invaluable signing and symbol support, for example, to cover technical scientific language where necessary, whilst physiotherapists and occupational therapists become directly involved in lessons such as those to do with 'forces' and 'pushing and pulling'. Teachers have command of their subjects, great enthusiasm for the job and together with teaching assistants, and other professionals, such as the Connexions personal advisor, provide lessons and other learning experiences that are second to none.

12. Whether in the classroom or on the playground, staff manage the rare instances of challenging behaviour calmly and effectively by consistently using agreed strategies. Teachers and teaching assistants understand the needs of the pupils they are supporting. They provide the expert help and challenge required to enable pupils, including those with additional learning needs, to become more independent in their learning. Teachers, teaching assistants and therapists all contribute to the targets set in care plans, which is a very good way of working. This is just one example of the way in which staff set out to improve their expertise relevant to pupils' more specific special educational needs.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good** and meets the needs of all pupils. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **excellent**. Participation in the arts and other activities is **excellent**. The accommodation is **very good**, and is much better than at the time of the last inspection. The match of the school's support staff to the curriculum is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very effective in providing for the very broad range of special educational needs of its pupils.
- The curriculum is a rich and varied one, including that for the performing arts.
- There are excellent links with several local schools.
- There is an appropriate range of courses leading to external accreditation.
- The accommodation is very good and is very suitable for purpose.
- The support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements.

Commentary

13. The school provides a very good range of curriculum opportunities. All pupils have equal access to a very effective curriculum because it is adapted very well to meet their individual needs. Every pupil benefits regularly from experiences involving pupils from primary or high schools and also one residential experience every year. This contributes to their very good achievement overall, including outstanding progress in their personal and social development. Pupils who need therapies are supported very well and this is enhanced by very good liaison between therapists and teachers.
14. All pupils enjoy a rich 'performing arts' curriculum, which, because of its broad multicultural content adds significantly to their personal development. They work alongside children from other schools on a weekly basis in producing a 'performing arts' based production. The theme of these activities change termly and is usually based on original materials written by the staff from school. Many opportunities are also provided for pupils to both visit and to receive visiting artists and performers. The extensive arts curriculum is a strength of the school through which pupils develop their self esteem, confidence and their understanding. At the same time their language and general communication skills are significantly enhanced. Pupils of all abilities learn skills that help them to work together in groups, and learn how to share, co-operate, negotiate and compromise. This helps pupils prepare very well for life after school.
15. Very effective links with local schools are carefully cultivated and managed, and their impact well judged. The school rightly considers it has a significant partnership with the local 'Connexions' Service. This enables pupils to benefit from provision in business enterprise, which helps to prepare them for later life. Higher attaining pupils achieve success in a range of accredited courses by Year 11. These cover the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT but also business studies. Older pupils benefit from relevant, and very well assessed, courses that are run in key skills including communication, number skills, ICT, and personal skills.
16. The accommodation is very good and enables all pupils full access to their learning. It has been improved since the previous inspection. For example, there are new library areas, safer playground surfaces, improved car park facilities, a new pool plant system, an improved computer network, improved privacy in the use of the toilets and more attractive school grounds which are full of interesting things for the pupils to experience. Teaching assistants and other adults support teachers exceptionally well. This includes the health and medical professionals located within the school. Teaching assistants play a key role in class during the many activities that involve speaking and listening. They also help to prepare resources and are very involved in the ongoing assessment of pupils' progress. The teaching assistants also lead sessions where appropriate, clearly enjoying their work as much as the pupils.
17. The school has charted how much time pupils spend on the different subjects. As a result the curriculum is now more balanced than it had been previously. The range of accredited courses has increased. Specialist accommodation for learning in science is provided for the older pupils through very effective links with a local high school. Toilet facilities are no longer unsatisfactory. Overall, good improvement to the curriculum has been made since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

There is **excellent** provision for the support, advice and guidance given to pupils. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides excellent support and guidance for pupils as a result of teachers' extensive knowledge of every pupil in the school. Staff apply this knowledge to ensure they work in the very best interests of all pupils to promote their development and personal and educational wellbeing.
- Relationships in the school are excellent. The rapport created between staff and pupils supports pupils in all that they do in the classroom, on visits and in their personal care.
- The school does all that is practicable to seek pupils' views and takes seriously their thoughts and ideas.
- Pupils are educated and cared for in a safe and secure environment that is well maintained and welcoming.

Commentary

18. All pupils in the school benefit from individual care programmes and individual education plans designed to meet their particular needs. These are put together by an inter-disciplinary team of staff. As well as teachers, classroom and welfare assistants, these procedures include physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and the school nurse who is responsible for the health needs of pupils. As pupils get older and move from class to class, they are very well prepared for getting to know their new teachers, new classmates and familiarising themselves with the new classrooms. From Year 9, pupils have advice from their Connexions personal advisor who plays a full part in reviewing their needs. Pupils of Post 16 age, generally take part in link courses designed to meet their needs at colleges or day centres. They build a very useful 'progress file' to present their skills accurately to future colleges or employers. These pupils are prepared exceptionally well for leaving school.
19. The excellent relationships in the school mean that pupils can rely on staff to help them in every part of their life in a happy and comfortable way. Pupils feel that the staff are friends who will spend time with them sorting out problems and who are always there when they need them. Pupils are encouraged to take as much responsibility as they feel able to for their own learning and development. The school does all it practicably can to gain their views. The school council meeting attended during the inspection showed clearly that pupils value being consulted. They take responsibility for liaison with the headteacher.
20. Staff are extremely vigilant in the care and supervision of pupils. This is monitored closely by the headteacher. The playground and outside areas have recently been refurbished to reduce the risk of accidents and provide facilities for the extension of play skills. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils dietary needs are very well known by staff and lunchtime feeding arrangements are meticulously observed. Child protection procedures are in place and known by staff who have recently been trained by the local education authority. The named person responsible for the effectiveness of the school's procedures is due to receive high level training in the very near future.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with other schools, colleges and the community are **excellent** whilst partnerships with parents are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding links with the community have contributed to sustained support in school for pupils, who are provided with a wide and exciting range of experiences inside and outside school.
- Excellent partnerships with other schools, both special and mainstream, significantly expand the curriculum and give pupils close contact with their peers in other schools.
- The school works very effectively with parents. Parents are confident of the provision made for their children to support their progress and happiness.

Commentary

21. Pupils benefit from an outstanding range of contacts with the community that has been maintained since the last inspection. Funding for the school is considerably enhanced by generous donations from individuals and the business world, that enable the school to provide enhanced facilities for pupils, such as in ICT. In addition, company representatives help in the school and serve on the governing body. Adults from the community help with parents in providing such activities as scuba diving, Japanese calligraphy and visits to sites owned by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust. The link with the Connexions Service is very highly valued by the school and through it pupils are able to take part in work placements which provide a realistic view of the world of work. Pupils in all age ranges have the experience of exciting and stimulating visits and visitors into the school as well as community projects such as tree dressing and a local history project. The school is used extensively by the local community for swimming and adult education. The physiotherapists based in the school serve the broader community.
22. Links with other schools and colleges help pupils to benefit significantly both educationally and socially from sustained contact with mainstream pupils. There is a very close relationship with pupils from a neighbouring school, who join in with weekly sessions in the performing arts. The school has gained the Arts Mark Gold Award. There is a very strong history of pupils performing for others. They are about to perform 'The Tempest' at a local theatre along with other pupils from high schools. The science curriculum is enhanced for senior pupils through regular work in the science laboratories of a local high school. This is very good practice and helps staff overcome the lack of specialist science facilities in their own building. The school takes an active and leading role in joint partnerships for inclusion.
23. The partnership with parents has improved well since the last inspection and is now very good. There is good attendance at the two parents meetings in the year and very good attendance at the annual meeting that reviews pupils' statement of special educational needs. The headteacher is clear that the more elusive parents are all seen within a two-year period. A number of parents work in the school and others volunteer to assist in activities such as horse riding and swimming. The school regularly consults parents and responds to their requests, such as the request for individual education plans to be sent home.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **very good**. Leadership by the headteacher is **outstanding**. Governance is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **very good**. There are no significant barriers that adversely affect achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's vision for developing the school is highly influential and has resulted in a school with outstanding features. He has created very effective leadership teams.
- The good knowledge governors have of the work of the school and the good support they provide to the headteacher and staff.

- Day-to-day finances and administration are very good.
- The number and quality of teaching and support staff impacts very positively on pupils' achievement.

Commentary

24. The headteacher is committed to fully meeting the needs of pupils by ensuring provision of very high quality. He leads a strong team of senior staff. The deputy headteacher provides support that complements the strengths of the headteacher very well. The curriculum leaders are very effective. Collectively they set very high standards, inspire and motivate staff and pupils so that everyone regularly achieves their best. The headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and pupils alike. Because of this there is an excellent ethos for learning and extremely high morale permeates the school. One aspect of management that detracts from the otherwise excellent picture, is that, despite local education authority advice, two risk assessments that had been overlooked previously, were only brought up to date during the inspection. This was an area of school management that was not as effective as it should have been. Since the last inspection the school has continued to work for and achieved five national awards. All awards reflect the highest possible standards of education and provision for pupils.
25. Staff have been helped by the considerable commitment of the headteacher to increasing their effectiveness through performance management procedures. The deputy headteacher is also involved in carrying out monitoring and evaluation and, through detailed discussions with subject leaders, helps to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and identify trends. As a result, subject co-ordination is very good. Subject leaders are very effective in promoting better learning and higher standards in their subjects through formal and informal meetings, increasingly through scrutinising teachers' planning and pupils' progress. The introduction of PIVATS to monitor and evaluate achievement is working well. This has a positive effect of the achievement of pupils across the school. Through earlier performance targets it has been possible to ensure that every child in the school has an inclusive mainstream experience each year.
26. The governing body takes its responsibilities very seriously. Governors offer a wide range of experience and wisdom to the school. They are led well by an experienced chairperson, who has provided much valuable personal and professional support to fellow governors and to the headteacher. Governors gain good knowledge of the quality of the provision from visiting the school on a regular basis and through listening to formal presentations by the headteacher, senior staff and others. They fully embrace their role as 'critical friend' to the school. The headteacher and governing body give appropriate and careful consideration to the outcome of their spending decisions; they use the principles of 'best value' effectively. Through their reflective discussions about all aspects of the school's work they provide a very good balance of challenge and support. A good example of such critical challenge was when governors asked the headteacher to revisit the way in which statutory targets were first set and described for pupils. The governors thought that they could be expressed in a much more understandable way. This was achieved and is a model of good practice.
27. School administrative staff keep all accounts very efficiently and provide high quality support and information for the headteacher, governing body and staff. The latest auditors' report confirms the high quality practice and made only minor recommendations for improvement which have been fully implemented. There is a generous number of teaching and support staff of the highest quality. Teachers enhance their teaching and learning through their competence and confidence with new technologies, such as the use of interactive whiteboards across the school.
28. Leadership and management of the school have made very good improvements since the previous inspection. The shared commitment of all staff ensures that all pupils' needs are met. High morale and an excellent ethos in school have been key factors in this improvement and in the raising of pupils' achievements. Taking into account the very high levels of achievement and the outstanding provision for personal development, the school gives excellent value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004 (* based on funding for 85 pupils)

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,141,286*
Total expenditure	1,169,114
Expenditure per pupil	13,754

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51,405
Balance carried forward to the next	23,577

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

Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects that reflect the standards achieved by pupils.

Five lessons were seen involving Foundation Stage children. A variety of other activities was also observed and contributed to the judgements made.

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are secure and constantly supported by staff who plan very well to meet children's individual needs.
- There are very good behaviour strategies, which enable children to begin to understand the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Very good support staff anticipate a need rather than waiting to be directed.
- The school has excellent links with health agencies.

Commentary

29. There are too few pupils in the Foundation Stage and insufficient evidence to make a separate judgement in each area of learning. As a 'package', provision is very effective.
- At the start of each day in **personal, social and emotional development** the children take part in a short 'welcoming' period. They wait patiently while each child is welcomed in turn. There is very good use of signing and music, which the children are familiar with. They respond very happily to the familiar routines of the class knowing for instance to take their apron off when they finish in the sandpit. Children co-operate very well with staff. For example, at snack time they are polite, wait their turn and develop the confidence to make choices such as whether to have a piece of apple or orange or to eat both. Achievement is excellent because activities permeate the whole of the school day.
 - In **communication, language and literacy**, children share stories and rhymes outstandingly well with the staff. Very good resources, that are imaginatively used, make the stories and rhymes come alive. The children begin to recognise the characters involved. They try hard to identify and name the characters and when asked, to make choices, as they did when taking part in the story of Little Miss Muffet. There is very good use of switches to make sounds, and of symbols and signs to aid language development.
 - Examples of **mathematical development** abound. Children are introduced very well to number through rhymes, singing and very good use of ICT programs. Because staff persevere and encourage the children to take part in the activities, they are beginning to take turns very well. With assistance, for example, pupils use the interactive whiteboard and switches.
 - In **creative development**, with adult support, children make, for example, spiders with pom-poms and pipe cleaners. They are encouraged to experience and tolerate the tactile materials. Later they make silver cobwebs by using black paper, glitter and glue. As they join in singing 'Incy Wincy Spider', they try very hard to complete the actions. In a music lesson, when they use the parachute game to try to make wind to enable their toy boat to sail gently, their faces show sheer delight when they are successful. As in all lessons observed, children are supported very well by very good experienced support assistants who understand the children's needs and constantly seek to support and challenge them at the correct level.

- In **knowledge and understanding** teachers plan exciting and imaginative activities such as going on a spider hunt. Children are armed with magnifying glasses and bug viewing boxes to aid their hunt. There are very well planned activities to reinforce the outdoor learning.
 - In **physical development** children achieve very well through daily outdoor and indoor activities. They are encouraged to handle tools and equipment whenever possible. They enjoy swimming, which is led by a physiotherapist. There are lots of singing and physiotherapy-guided activities, which are pertinent to individual children's needs.
30. Teaching and learning is very good overall with examples of excellent teaching taking place. As a result the children make excellent progress in communication language and literacy and social and personal development. The organisation and management of the Foundation Class is very good. Since the last inspection, when provision was judged to be satisfactory, there has been very good improvement. Provision is now very good. Procedures for assessment are very good. Children's files build up very good evidence of how they are doing from when they started. This forms the basis for recording children's achievement as they move through the school. Observational diaries are kept. Expectations for attaining are very high. Individual targets are effective in challenging children to achieve and in assessing progress. There are very close links with various health agencies such as speech and language staff and physiotherapists. Staff from these agencies often work alongside school staff very successfully and greatly enhance the teaching and learning for the children. There are excellent links with children of the local primary school. This is an excellent aid in developing the children's social and personal development. The recent joint art project, 'The Owl and the Pussycat' is an excellent example of the success of these links.

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

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

31. A separate judgement was not made on provision in French because it was not part of the main focus of the inspection and insufficient evidence was available. However, the one lesson seen was excellent. Pupils practised simple greetings through song, replying to the teacher and other staff or by showing cards on which greetings were written for those whom could not reply verbally. The lesson was full of fun and packed with sensory activities for those best able to learn that way. It was clear that every child mattered to all staff in the lesson.

English

Seven lessons were observed covering all year groups.

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of teaching approaches used to suit all pupils ensures that they make very good progress.
- Very good support from teaching assistants contributes to the very effective quality of teaching and learning.
- The procedures for assessing the progress pupils make are very good, and give teachers an accurate knowledge of pupils' capabilities in English.
- The very good leadership and management ensure very well organised provision.

Commentary

32. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Higher attaining pupils leave school with an award in English, including the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement. Others achieve success through gaining ASDAN units of accreditation. At the previous inspection, provision was good. The school has built on this well.
33. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are planned carefully, and incorporate very well the recommendations of the National Strategy for Literacy. Pupils enjoy lessons. The very good teamwork between teachers and their assistants is a characteristic of lessons, as is the good selection of different strategies for teaching. Teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to practise their communication skills. This routinely involves speaking and listening, but for an increasing number of pupils it includes using augmentative strategies such as signing and the use of pictures and symbols. Very effective use is made of the group reading sessions. Careful attention by teachers and support assistants with the very good support of the speech therapists, results in pupils gaining confidence in expressing their ideas. By the time they leave school, pupils speak appropriately in a number of different situations, and they listen intently. Reading, writing and spelling develop well because the attention to detail in the teaching is supported by the very effective use of resources, such as computers. Pupils' skills in English are sufficiently developed to provide very good support for their learning on the courses they enrol on in college.
34. Information from very good assessment procedures and sharp targets for literacy in pupils' individual education plans are used very well to make lessons relevant to each pupil, whatever their ability. The progress of pupils over their years at school is very well tracked. The method known as 'PIVATs' is now contributing very effectively to this. Clear profiles show the gains pupils make over their time at school. This information is used very well in lesson planning, in writing targets for learning and in arranging pupils into classes according to their individual learning needs. Marking is of very good quality and is helpful to learning. Teachers are

becoming increasingly experienced at judging the capability of their pupils against the PIVATs levels.

35. The very well organised provision is the result of very good leadership and management of the subject. The joint co-ordinators, one for primary aged pupils and one for secondary aged pupils, have worked diligently to produce a suitably demanding curriculum. For example, the older pupils use William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' as a framework for learning spelling, discussion, grammar, comprehension and poetry. Typically they read aloud from a simplified text, talking about themes and characters in the text, and use the library and the Internet for research. The challenging content of the curriculum inspires pupils and engages their interest.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

36. Language and literacy are promoted very well in the other subjects through many incidental and planned opportunities. All classes provide very good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, and staff ensure that pupils have suitable opportunities to read and write in subjects other than English. They are aware of the very good effect this has on progress. As a result, staff have developed a good range of reading books and resources, which focus on relevant topics that can be used in, for example, geography, history and science.

MATHEMATICS

Seven lessons were observed covering all year groups.

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are very well planned to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- Learning assistants make a very good contribution to the teaching team.
- Resources and teaching methods are used imaginatively to interest and challenge the pupils particularly those with more complex difficulties.
- Information technology is used very well to reinforce learning.

Commentary

37. Teaching and learning are very good and as a result pupils achieve very well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good in shape, space and measurement but less so in number. The curriculum is now very well established across all areas of learning. The checking of pupils' work enables lessons to be planned to meet the specific needs of all pupils. Targets are clear and measurable. The two co-ordinators lead the subject very well. They work closely together and have a very clear picture of how the subject is improving across the school. The subject has improved very well since the last inspection.
38. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of the numbers to 10 when for instance, paying for toys in the toyshop. With adult help they count and recognise the coins that they are counting. Other pupils respond positively and show awareness of lower numbers in, for example, simple number rhymes. By Year 6, higher attainers independently count to 10 correctly and recognise the number shapes. They place the numbers in the correct order using an interactive whiteboard. At all times there is a very happy atmosphere and pupils participate well. They have the confidence to 'have a go' when challenged in their work. These are examples of very good progress and of the very good relationships built up by staff with the pupils. Teachers and support staff are skilled at knowing how best to match the work to the pupils' individual and differing needs. Planning for learning takes account very well of what the pupils know and understand, and what is the achievable target to set. Pupils' individual education plans work very well in tying this all together.

39. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils successfully count and understand numbers to 20 whilst lower attainers successfully join in with the group counting aloud to 10. Pupils enjoy lessons because they are fun. They know they are succeeding because staff tell them so. When using the interactive whiteboard, pupils gain in confidence so that they learn how to gently 'drag' items across the board to place them in a chosen position. By the end of Year 11 all pupils have progressed very well. Lessons are very well planned and resources are matched to each pupil's learning needs. Pupils concentrate on their work and because tasks set are clearly explained, most higher attaining pupils work independently or with little support. When solving problems, they can explain how they calculate the answer. Opportunities for accreditation in the senior school enhance the curriculum and pupils' self-esteem. Post 16 pupils' lessons are well planned to meet their individual needs. They work at their own level to complete the tasks set in their accredited courses. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour, and consequently pupils work hard and behave very well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

40. Mathematics is used very well in other subjects. It is often linked to music, for example when pupils try to keep the beats in a rhythm. In design and technology, following a visit to a local suspension bridge, pupils planned and measured well before designing and making their own model bridge. In an ICT lesson, pupils measured the 'degrees of turn' of the image of a dragonfly on the computer. This is very strong provision because teachers use every available opportunity to draw pupils' attention to the purpose and function of mathematics in a wide range of situations.

SCIENCE

Six lessons were observed covering all year groups.

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy science and are very interested because lessons are exciting.
- Pupils cover all aspects of science comprehensively.
- Achievement is very good because staff are very clear about what pupils know and what else they need to learn.
- The school overcomes the drawbacks in specialist accommodation by visiting a nearby high school for regular lessons.

Commentary

41. Teaching and learning across the school are very good. During the inspection, one lesson with Years 3 to 6 and a lesson in Years 8 to 11, held at a mainstream high school, were excellent. As a result, pupils achieve very well in all aspects of science. Practical investigations are the foundation of pupils' learning. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives. Planning, support and resources take account of the diverse needs of pupils so that every pupil is fully involved, including those for whom English is not their first language.
42. Through effective questioning, teachers and support staff successfully encourage pupils to recollect previous learning to show how much they know. Higher attaining pupils in Years 8 to 11 work out their own risk assessments for lessons, which is excellent health and safety practice. Teachers and support staff always have the highest of expectations of the pupils. Consequently, pupils rise to the occasion and increase their achievements. Literacy, communication and numeracy skills are regularly reinforced in science lessons. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are very interested because lessons are exciting. An added bonus is that all pupils achieve external accreditation for their work, which is a very good way of recognising the

achievement of all pupils. Current higher attaining pupils in Years 10 to 13 have already completed and been tested on between four and seven units of work leading to an entry level qualification. Pupils appreciate this and work hard to complete their tasks.

43. Two science co-ordinators lead and manage the subject very well. This arrangement produces a team-approach, which has resulted in science being a strength of the school. The weakness noted at the last inspection of the lack of specialist facilities has been overcome by very good links with a nearby high school. This is a very positive feature of inclusive education. It is so popular that, during the week of the inspection, several pupils from the partner high school came into their school from study leave to join in with the science lesson.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Three lessons were seen and inspectors noted where ICT was used in other subjects.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information and communication technology provides very good opportunities for learning in all subjects because of the high quality of equipment and because each pupil is able to work at their own pace.
- Staff have very good ways of recognising the progress pupils are making.
- Information and communication technology is very well led by two co-ordinators and overseen by the deputy headteacher.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to ICT, and as a result, their behaviour and achievement is very good.

Commentary

44. Since the last inspection ICT has become well established across the school. Pupils are taught by experienced staff. There is very good provision for teaching and learning with high quality computer and other equipment, including Internet access, interactive whiteboards and switches. Learning in lessons is supported very well by the use of computers in other subjects across the curriculum. Staff have built very well on the good provision at the last inspection.
45. The quality of teaching is consistently very good, and occasionally excellent. Teachers have considerable ICT knowledge and benefit from support from very competent teaching assistants. Collectively they inspire pupils to the very high standards they routinely achieve in their learning. Pupils are excited in their learning and are keen to participate in all ICT activities, trying their best at all times. The expectations of staff of pupils' behaviour and work are very high. As a result, pupils respond positively, behave very well, and concentrate and work for long periods of time.
46. The subject is very well led collaboratively by the deputy headteacher, primary and secondary co-ordinators. This provides very good support to staff in using computers to support learning in other subjects. All teachers have completed the national training programme, which increases their own specialist knowledge and confidence, and in turn enhances the progress pupils make. By the time pupils leave school they have all had opportunities to gain external accreditation in ICT, such as certificates of achievement or National Skills Profile modules. By July 2004 pupils collectively gained 21 certificates of achievement between Grades 1 and 3, and 51 Grades in National Skills Profile. This is much improved from the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

47. The use of computers and other equipment to support teaching and learning across subjects is very good. Teachers and higher attaining pupils are confident at using a wide range of programs to draw, paint, write words and sentences, and match pictures. Lower attaining pupils use programs linked to switches and speech synthesisers to produce words, sentences and speech. For example, Year 5 pupils use programs to write sentences and one pupil now has access to a Big Mack to greet his friends by using a 'head switch'. In Year 6, they use computer mathematics games to reinforce counting, matched to action songs. Senior pupils, including Post-16 students, accessed a PowerPoint presentation during a lesson in religious education to compare similarities and differences of people in Africa with their own area. Teachers and support staff make very good use of the 'snoezelen room' (sensory room) and its wide range of ICT switches to enhance pupils' ability to make choices and recognise the effects of their actions.

HUMANITIES

No judgements were made in geography and history because they were not part of the focus of the inspection and insufficient lessons could be observed. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Two lessons were observed, which included pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, together with scrutiny of a range of pupils' work throughout the school.

Provision in Religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn effectively about a very broad range of issues appropriate to their own lives and that of others. This aspect is much stronger than at the last inspection.
- Teachers make lessons relevant to all pupils regardless of their different special educational needs.
- Taught time is low in comparison with many other subjects.

Commentary

48. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. All pupils follow a planned programme of religious education that takes into account a broad range of different faiths and cultures. The enrichment of the curriculum is outstanding. This is because it includes, for example, visits to local churches for Christian festivals, the celebration of festivals of other faiths such as Diwali, visitors to lessons, religious artefacts for pupils to hold and study and very strong links with the school's performing arts and PSHCE programmes. This helps pupils significantly in not only learning about religion but also in learning through religion.
49. Teaching and learning are good. Typically, in a lesson with pupils in Years 9 to 13, pupils gained an awareness of the importance of foods special to a range of different cultures and faiths. Pupils were very keen to taste and smell the different foods. They were encouraged to express preferences, which strengthened their personal development well. Because of the teacher's good planning, preparation, and the strategies employed, all pupils were involved regardless of their different learning needs.
50. The subject is well led and managed by two co-ordinators. Together they monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work and provide advice and encouragement to colleagues on subject knowledge, teaching styles and resources. The curriculum promotes well pupils' understanding of aspects of citizenship. Pupils in Years 10 to 13 are provided with good opportunities to reflect on a range of issues such as morality, human rights and personal relationships. Their work is accredited in religious education through the ASDAN awards in, for example, beliefs and values.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school, although this is restricted to some extent by the relatively low amount of time the subject is taught in comparison with other subjects in the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

51. There was insufficient evidence of teaching and learning to make overall judgements separately about the quality of provision in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Examples of pupils' work in art and design and design technology point to curriculum provision that is fully in place. In the two lessons seen in design and technology the overall teaching and learning was good. However, a judgement on the combined contribution of music, dance and physical education to provision in the performing arts could be made. Four relevant lessons were observed.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Provision in the 'performing arts' is **outstanding**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject enriches pupils' learning tremendously well.
- Pupils join in with those from mainstream schools and thoroughly enjoy their time together.
- The subjects of art and design, drama, music and dance are taught outstandingly well in a fully integrated way.

Commentary

52. In a school that is very effective in most subjects, 'performing arts' is the highlight. Pupils' achievement is excellent because teachers' enthusiasm and skills in pushing individual performances to the limit are outstanding. Because of the school's commitment to it, as exemplified by the co-ordinators and staff, all pupils enjoy a rich 'performing arts' curriculum. Pupils enjoy one full afternoon session each week which is dedicated to the performing arts when they work alongside children from other schools, culminating in plays and performances. These are of a very high standard. Additionally, the older pupils benefit from excellent music lessons.
53. The 'performing arts' develops pupils' understanding of narrative, an appreciation of group work, and an improvement of their performance skills. It also enhances subjects throughout the curriculum. Evidence shows that in religious education pupils use dance and fabrics to help their understanding of the movement of the sea in the storm on Galilee. In science they use musical instruments to enhance their understanding of the water cycle. In literacy they use art and design to create three-dimensional representations of some of the story references and go on to use these in character role plays. Self-confidence and self-esteem flourishes within a very broad programme of cultural and multi-cultural learning opportunities. Pupils develop their awareness of culture through making a graphic score of Smetana's 'Vltava'. Pupils create an African dance, play with a steel band, and use computer software to generate portraits in the style of Modigliani. Emphasis on working together can be seen through involvement in making a patchwork quilt, participation in a circle dance and the performance of a Victorian melodrama. The 'performing arts' curriculum incorporates the use of ICT through visits to an art gallery, where pupils use a digital camera to record exhibits, and recording the sounds of animals to incorporate in a piece of music.
54. The school places collaboration and inclusion at the heart of its work in the 'performing arts'. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent because both co-ordinators are subject 'experts' and, with their teaching assistants and other adult helpers, bring great enthusiasm and innovation to their work. The high standards of the last inspection have been pushed even further. Links with other schools have been extended.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Six lessons involving PSHCE were seen covering all key stages. A variety of other activities were also observed and contributed to the judgements made.

Provision in PSHCE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for personal and social development permeates all the work of the school and is supported very well by excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- Very good team work, including exceptional involvement of the multi-disciplinary team, enhances pupils' learning.
- The planned programme is broad, and is supported very well by initiatives such as the school council, work related learning and work experience placements.
- The progress pupils make is recorded accurately, and the information is used effectively to plan lessons and deal with issues which concern individual pupils.

Commentary

55. Pupils' achievement in PSHCE is very good. The gains pupils make in lessons in PSHE and citizenship are supported very well throughout the school day. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils make a powerful base from which advice, guidance and encouragement are offered. The multi-disciplinary team, comprising a range of therapists and other medical staff, has a very positive effect on the achievement of pupils. All staff are very aware of the importance of promoting pupils' personal development and they work together to bring this about. Because staff understand pupils' needs so well, they are very good at doing this, in lessons and in all subjects across the curriculum and in other activities.
56. The school uses breaks and lunch times very effectively as learning opportunities for pupils. Pupils have targets set and staff carefully monitor what is happening to ensure that pupils are making progress, particularly in their social and moral development. At lunchtime, pupils eat together in an orderly manner, take turns and wait patiently if necessary. Lunchtime assistants know their pupils well and the feeding programmes for which they are responsible.
57. The subject was not reported in the previous inspection, although social development was deemed to be good. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is now very good. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are taught through topics in a cross-curricular way, and this works very well. From Year 7, pupils have specific lessons. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. As a result pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in understanding issues to do with society, health and safety. The school council provides a small number of pupils with opportunities to be involved in debate and discussion leading to decision making. This provides very good opportunities for them to gain socially by working together, and to understand issues of citizenship. Personal and social development is further enhanced by a positive programme of integration through dance, drama, residential experiences at home and abroad and Youth Award Scheme activities, which all build on pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development. This is very good practice.
58. The very good assessment procedures provide information to judge the progress individual pupils make against the targets set in their IEPs. The school uses a 'finely-tuned' evaluation scale known as PIVATs, to track pupils' achievement. This allows the co-ordinators to analyse strengths and weaknesses across the school and subsequently to improve provision. Leadership and management are very good. The resources to support teaching and learning are very good. There is a wide range of CDs, videos and ICT activities and opportunities of a high quality, which are used very well and increase pupils' achievement.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teamwork between school staff and the Connexions adviser is outstanding. Other support services play their full part.
- Work related learning enhances pupils' personal development and learning in key skills very well.
- The contribution of work related visits, visitors to school and work experience are all pulled together very effectively.

Commentary

59. Work related learning was not evaluated at the last inspection. However, in comparison with judgements made at the time on work experience and links with local colleges, provision has moved on very well. Pupils confirm that they value very highly the opportunities they have in developing their vocational and key skills. Because of very good teaching and learning, pupils achieve very well in the key skills of communication, number handling, problem solving, working with others and improving their own performance. A major part of this is because of the outstandingly strong links between staff and the pupils' personal adviser from Connexions. Pupils take part in planning their own preferred programmes, whilst reviews of progress are attended by a broad range of adults including parents, staff, the personal adviser and, where necessary, medical staff and social workers. This is very good practice.

60. By Years 10 and 11, where appropriate, pupils have their work accredited in a course on business studies. However, very good leadership and management of work related learning ensures that this is just part of a wider set of experiences that knit together very well for all pupils. For example, ex-pupils return to talk about their experiences of the world outside school, and pupils take part in supported work experiences both in and out of school. Mini-business enterprises extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Initiatives such as the 'World of Work' week and 'Tomorrow's Managers Today' encourage pupils to work with mainstream pupils in a very positive way. Statutory requirements are met.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
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	1

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	1
Attendance	2
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
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 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).