

INSPECTION REPORT

FOUNTAINDALE SCHOOL

Mansfield

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122947

Headteacher: Mr Mark Dengel

Lead inspector: Charles Hackett

Dates of inspection: 31st January to 3rd February 2005

Inspection number: 268564

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:	3-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	65
School address:	Nottingham Road Mansfield Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG18 5BA
Telephone number:	01623 792671
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carol Knowles
Date of previous inspection:	1 st Feb 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fountaindale is a day school for boys and girls aged from three to 19 years. Currently, though, there is only one pupil of pre-school age (Foundation Stage). Although all pupils have statements of special education need in relation to physical disabilities, many have other difficulties. These include severe medical conditions, speech and language problems, moderate, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and sensory impairments. All pupils are of a white ethnic background and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils are from a range of different home backgrounds, the majority coming from the towns and villages near to the school. A few pupils have long distances to travel to school.

The school has joint responsibility with the local education authority for an outreach service that supports the education of pupils with physical difficulties in mainstream schools. The full-time equivalent of almost two teachers spends time each week supporting mainstream schools. In addition the school has a small residential facility that provides support for pupils for one or two evenings each week. Pupils have the opportunity to experience time in the residential unit at the discretion of the local education authority.

The school achieved 'Investors in People' status for a second time recently.

As the deputy headteacher has been absent through ill health for over a year, his post is currently being covered by a senior teacher taking on the role of acting deputy headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21081	Charles Hackett	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, physical education and modern foreign language.
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector	
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science, personal, social, health and citizenship education
33710	Denise Fox	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education, history and geography
32971	Jennifer Martin	Team inspector	English, art and design, music and design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Fountaindale is a **good** school with very good and excellent features. The overall quality of teaching is good and because of this pupils make good progress overall. Leadership and management are effective and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school very successfully encourages pupils to be as independent as possible.
- Opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream education are excellent and arrangements to support them when leaving school are very good.
- Pupils display excellent behaviour and attitudes to work, which are fostered by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils.
- Considerable importance is given to the arts and physical education and as a result pupils achieve very well in these subjects.
- Procedures to record pupils' progress are very detailed, but are not being used consistently and effectively by all staff to help plan their lessons.
- High quality care, and for those pupils who access it, very good residential provision, contribute significantly to pupils' very good personal development.
- Although the curriculum is good, the planning for the teaching and development of each subject and the quality of their management varies from being very good to unsatisfactory.
- Although pupils make very good use of technology to help them communicate, the teaching of information communication technology (ICT) and pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall.
- The outreach service provides very good support to mainstream schools.

Overall the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The school has recognised that its role is changing and that its population is becoming more complex and it has responded very positively to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. The quality of teaching, pupils' achievements, leadership and management have improved and mainstream inclusion opportunities have been increased. However, not all of the main issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. For example, ICT is currently unsatisfactory, there is insufficient evidence to show design and technology has been improved and there are still inconsistencies in the leadership and management of a few subjects.

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	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good
Year 13	Very good	Very good

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

Overall pupils' achievements are **good**. The progress of pupils in the class for the youngest pupils and students in the Post-16 unit is very good overall. Progress for all pupils in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), music, art, religious education and physical education is very good. Progress in English, mathematics and science is good. However, although many pupils make good progress in using technology to assist them communicate, the progress of pupils in information and communication technology (using computers) is unsatisfactory. Overall pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, is **very good**. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and display excellent standards of behaviour. Pupils' attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. The emphasis placed on encouraging pupils to be as independent as possible is highly effective in ensuring that pupils are active learners and striving to achieve as much as they can for themselves. The excellent teamwork of staff supports them well. The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall and there are many areas of the school where teaching and learning are very good. This is particularly so in the class for the youngest pupils, which includes pre-school children (Foundation Stage), and in the Post-16 unit. Teaching is also very good for all pupils in PSHCE, music, art, religious education and physical education. Strengths in teaching in these subjects include the very detailed planning undertaken by staff to meet pupils' different special needs. Staff make very good adaptations to equipment and resources, and whenever possible use a multi-sensory approach to ensure that the different learning styles of pupils are supported. Staff have developed a system to track how well pupils are doing but this is not used consistently and as a result assessment procedures although satisfactory are not as effective as they could be. The use of augmentative communication aids (switches and talkers) gives pupils very good opportunities to access the curriculum. The curriculum is good, as are the additional activities provided. Care, welfare, health and safety are very good throughout the school, as is the way pupils' views are taken into account. Support, advice and guidance are good. There are very good links with medical staff, physiotherapists and occupational therapists and a technical support assistant who supports pupils with speech and language problems. The school accommodation is good, although the play area for the youngest pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils have excellent opportunities to spend time in mainstream schools and the work of the school staff as part of the outreach service is very much appreciated by mainstream colleagues. Links with parents are very good because of the great efforts that the school makes to ensure that parents are aware of and involved in their children's learning. Links with the community are also very good and have proved very helpful in providing additional resources for the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The headteacher carries out his work effectively and together with the governors has a very clear commitment to developing the role of the school to meet the needs of all pupils with physical difficulties within the local education authority. The management of the school's finances is very good and the headteacher very effectively ensures that all staff have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the school's provision. However, there are weaknesses in monitoring the curriculum, the use of assessment and the effectiveness of the leadership and management of subject leaders varies in quality. For example, the management of the Foundation Stage and Post-16 unit are very good but the leadership and management of ICT is unsatisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and have good committee systems in place to monitor its performance and ensure that all statutory requirements are being met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents are very positive about the way the school has helped their children. All praise the very high quality of care and feel that the school does everything possible to enable their children to succeed. Pupils themselves express how happy they are with the school. Those who are able to communicate verbally express their pleasure at being in school while the reactions and smiles of non-verbal pupils show how comfortable and happy they are with the support that they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- For ICT, improve the planning of what will be taught, the quality of teaching and the assessment of pupils' progress.
- Establish better systems to monitor the curriculum and ensure that there is greater consistency in how each subject is led and managed.
- Ensure that staff use assessment systems more effectively and consistently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' achievements and progress are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, irrespective of the severity and diversity of their special needs, achieve equally well.
- Pupils make good progress in achieving the targets within their individual education plans.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their communication skills, PSHCE, art, music, physical and religious education.
- The progress of pupils in the class for the youngest pupils and that of students of the Post-16 department is very good.
- Pupils achieve well in part-time placements in mainstream schools.
- Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory overall.

Commentary

1. Pupils with severe physical disabilities and pupils with learning difficulties, such as profound and multiple learning difficulties all achieve as well as each other. This is as a result of the attention to detail given by staff to planning to meet the different needs of pupils. The school carefully records the achievements of pupils. These records show that pupils have made gains in their learning over the past year. For many pupils these are recorded as small steps in the development of their skills (known as P levels). For other pupils of a higher ability level records show that these pupils have increased their attainment levels significantly. For example, two pupils in Year 10 have reached nationally recognised levels of attainment in many subject areas.
2. Whole school targets for pupils' achievements have been set and analysed but the information gained from this is of limited use because of the small numbers in each age group and the wide range of special needs they have. Pupils all have individual targets for improvement and the school has undertaken a detailed analysis of these. In English and mathematics, pupils have achieved about 70 per cent of their targets. In other subjects records indicate that over 90 per cent of targets have been achieved. However, in analysing these results the school has recognised that improvements are needed in the moderation of the assessments undertaken by staff and quality of the targets. Examination successes have been good. Although last year there were no pupils who passed GCSE, a number of pupils have in recent years passed Entry Level certificates. These have been recorded in art, mathematics, physical education, science and English.
3. Pupils make their best progress in PSHCE, art, music, physical education and religious education because of the very high quality of teaching in these subjects throughout the school. Progress in PSHCE is very well supported by the very high quality of care in the school. In art, pupils use a wide range of media, including computers to produce their designs, many linked to the work of famous artists. In music, the excellent teaching skills of the specialist teacher, ensures that all pupils are able to take full and active parts in each lesson. For example, pupils in a Year 8 and 9 class were all able to make a musical contribution to composing their own musical jingles. The enthusiasm of the physical education specialist means that pupils thoroughly enjoy and work very hard in physical education lessons. Because of the adaptations to equipment pupils achieve very well. For example, in table cricket, pupils have reached the national finals at Lords. In religious education pupils gain a clear understanding of spirituality because of the approaches taken by the subject co-ordinator to the structure of religious education lessons.
4. Pupils make good and very good progress in communicating their needs to staff. They use augmentative aids to support this progress. However, because of weaknesses in the teaching

and planning of information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall in ICT. There is insufficient information collected on pupils' achievements in ICT and teaching is not planned sufficiently well to increase pupils' rate of progress.

5. Pupils' progress is good in English, mathematics and science. The opportunities for pupils to attend mainstream have been increased recently. Currently there are 14 pupils who are dual registered. These pupils are making very good progress in their mainstream placements. For example, in an Early Years nursery, pupils from Fountaindale participated fully in all the activities alongside the mainstream children.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are **excellent**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **good**. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' excellent behaviour ensures that they make the most of the learning opportunities available to them.
- Pupils' attitudes to school life are very positive and they show genuine enjoyment in their learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent and staff know the pupils very well.
- A wealth of opportunities is provided to foster pupils' personal development.

Commentary

6. In all lessons and around the school pupils behave in a very polite, courteous and considerate manner. They work well together and collaborate in lessons, regularly sharing ideas and evaluating each other's work. They are instantly willingly help each other out, for example, one pupil shared flour with another who did not have enough in a cookery activity and another opened a packet of crisps for a pupil who was unable to do so at lunchtime. Pupils concentrate hard on their learning and as a result, make good progress. On the very rare occasion that a pupil behaves inappropriately, staff do not make excuses for this and issues are dealt with swiftly and appropriately without interrupting the learning of others. There have been no exclusions from school.
7. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and their learning. They are happy, proud of their achievements and make comments such as 'My school makes you feel all warm inside as soon as you walk through the door.' During a music lesson for the older pupils, the smiles on the pupils' faces showed how excited they were by the work. Pupils also articulate their enjoyment of lessons at school. For example, one pupil stated 'I enjoy cooking'. This enjoyment of lessons clearly contributes to pupils' progress academically and in their personal development as they are motivated and very actively involved in their learning.
8. Staff use humour and praise regularly and this often encourages pupils to persevere with tasks and make progress. For example, in a science lesson for primary pupils it is a source of great pleasure for all the staff when a pupil manages to push an object independently. Teachers also recognise when pupils are struggling to meet the physical demands of the day and respond immediately and unobtrusively to provide appropriate support. For example, when an older pupil with a degenerative condition began to tire during a lesson the teacher quickly intervened by supporting him to reach the work more easily allowing him to continue to join his peers in the lesson.
9. Staff strive at all times to provide opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development, especially in relation to extending their independence. They insist that pupils do things for

themselves as much as possible. For example, pupils are expected to take the register to the office despite their mobility difficulties. When an older pupil in a mathematics lesson described an angle as 'obtuse' the teacher made him repeat it as she knew he could articulate better than he had. This means that no opportunity is lost to provide a learning experience for the pupils and this contributes greatly to their progress.

10. The insistence on the development of independence means that pupils have a strong sense of self-belief. Self-esteem is promoted through public praise such as the 'golden book' where pupils who have worked well are mentioned in a weekly achievement assembly. In religious education lessons and assemblies and collective acts of worship candles are lit and soft music and incense sticks create a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Pupils are given many opportunities to socialise at lunchtimes and break times. Work on, for example, African music and religious education work on Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism caters well for pupils' cultural development. During the inspection primary pupils did work in music and art, which related well to the forthcoming Chinese New Year festival.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003/4

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.4%	School data	1.8%
National data	10.5%	National data	0.4%

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

11. Attendance overall is in line with similar schools and the use of the correct codes to identify reasons for absence has enabled the school to reduce its level of unauthorised absences recently. Most of the remaining unauthorised absences relate to only one pupil, which means that attendance for all other pupils is good. The school takes a strong stance on holidays, continually reminding parents of the disruptive effects these can have on education. Punctuality is satisfactory at the start of the day, with the school managing well the staggered arrival of county council funded specialist transport.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. The inclusion of all pupils irrespective of their particular special needs in the activities of the school is **excellent**. Teaching overall is **good** but assessment is only **satisfactory**. There is a **good** curriculum and **good** range of activities and visits that extend and enrich the school based curriculum. The quality of care is **very high** and pupils are well supported and given **good** guidance with regard to their progress. Links with parents and the local community are **very good**. The opportunities for pupils to experience time in other schools are **excellent**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment and its use is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers challenge pupils to be as independent as possible in the work they are asked to complete.
- Teachers seek to make lessons interesting by providing a wide range of activities that match the preferred learning styles of pupils.
- Support staff provide very good assistance in enabling all pupils to access the curriculum.
- Although overall teaching is good less effective teaching occurs in ICT and at times in secondary mathematics and science.

- Inconsistencies in the use of assessment systems in a few subjects mean that it not always clear what progress pupils are making.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons (3 lessons were taken by teachers outside of the school, therefore the quality of teaching in these lessons was not graded.)

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4(11%)	11 (29%)	14(37%)	9(23%)	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.

- Teachers work very hard to ensure that teaching strategies used are able to meet the wide range of special educational needs of pupils. This means, for example, that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties can successfully work alongside higher ability pupils. Tasks set are matched well to pupils' different needs and often resources are very effectively adapted or created to ensure that all pupils are involved. A clear emphasis is placed on pupils being able to complete tasks as independently as possible. For example, in an excellent music lesson less physically able pupils made contributions to a group jingle with rattle type instruments whilst more physically able pupils used keyboards for their contributions. Support staff play a very important part in assisting pupils to achieve a task for themselves.
- Teachers are very good at planning lessons and activities that they know pupils will enjoy. This was the case for the youngest pupils in the school when staff planned an excellent lesson where pupils and staff imagined they had travelled to Skegness for the day. A corner of the classroom was transformed into a beach and resources carefully prepared for a whole range of activities. Working alongside occupational therapists, staff involved pupils in language and number work, as well as tasks that were matched to their physical needs and their therapy programmes.
- Teachers are good at recognising that pupils have a range of different learning styles. As a result often in lessons pupils are learning through a multi-sensory approach that includes visual and auditory input as well as opportunities to touch and feel objects. This is the case where support staff work with children with visual impairments. In a French lesson for pupils in Years 8 and 9, when the teacher was showing pictures of different objects to pupils, the teaching assistant gave a pupil with visual impairment the opportunity to touch and feel examples of the objects. This ensured that the pupil was fully involved in the lesson. Very good use is made of communication aids for those pupils unable to give verbal responses themselves. Teachers and support staff will encourage pupils to show a response to a question and then record on a range of communication aids their responses. Very good use is also often made of signing, which again ensures that communication is effective.
- The quality of work from support staff is very high. They are particularly effective in the primary department where the care team and teaching assistants work well together as teams of staff. Equally very good support is provided in the secondary department, however, there are more interruptions to pupils' learning here because the staff teams are not integrated in the same way as those for the primary classes. In classrooms a very good learning environment is created. Pupils enjoy being with staff and are keen to do well. Staff in turn are enthusiastic about enabling pupils to achieve and often both staff and pupils spontaneously applaud when a pupil or a group of pupils have successfully demonstrated an activity. Therapists work very well with teachers, often linking their work with topics being covered. For example, in a science lesson for Year 4 pupils, pupils integrate movement exercises with scientific ideas. Physiotherapists helped pupils experience push and pull motions in their study of forces.
- Teaching in English, maths and science is good overall. In English a very good emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to communicate, whether verbally or through the use of a

communication aid. Less emphasis though, is placed on giving pupils the opportunity to write. Although there are examples of effective teaching of ICT, particularly in the Post-16 unit, overall the quality of teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. There is an insufficient link between what pupils can do, how it is recorded and what is planned for them in lessons. In addition in secondary lessons for mathematics and science, as well as ICT, activities in lessons are not changed sufficiently to maintain and develop pupils' interest.

17. Teachers and support staff know the abilities of pupils very well but this is not always evident in the records that are kept. In all subjects, and throughout the school, the achievements of pupils are assessed and recorded in the recently developed small steps tracking documents based on P scales (a national attainment scale designed for slower learning pupils) and National Curriculum statements of attainment. These are inconsistently maintained and do not always reflect the progress pupils make in the subjects they are taught. Teachers have received some training in the use of P scales but they are not yet making judgements to a similar standard. Although they provide a means of tracking pupils' progress they are less useful in helping teachers to plan their lessons. In the Post-16 department assessment is good. Students prepare and review their own learning targets and effective progress files and tracking documents are in place.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good** overall and **very good** for the youngest pupils and Post-16 students. Activities to enrich the curriculum are **very good**. The quality of resources and the accommodation is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education, religious education, art and music are planned very well; but the curriculum for information and communication technology and design and technology is unsatisfactory.
- Work to enhance pupils' independence and social skills and for their sensory development is very good.
- Teaching staff, assistants and therapists work together very well to create programmes, methods and resources that develop pupils' fine and gross motor skills during subject teaching.
- A new 14 to 19 curriculum provides a good range of academic and vocational options and accreditation and prepares students very well for leaving school.
- Learning is greatly enhanced through excellent opportunities for pupils to work and play with pupils in mainstream schools, a good range of visitors into school, and activities at lunchtime, after-school clubs and the residence.
- The quality of the school and residential accommodation is good overall, but outdoor playing surfaces for the youngest pupils are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

18. All subjects of the National Curriculum are offered and all pupils whatever their special needs have equality of access to them. Access to the programmes for physical education, music and religious education is very well planned. As a result pupils across the full range of learning needs make very good progress in these subjects. In the Post-16 department, students make good use of computers in the Independent Living course and the Team Enterprise programme. Planning for the rest of the pupils to learn computer skills, and use these skills to support learning across the curriculum, though, is unsatisfactory. The quality of planning for design and technology for secondary pupils was reported as unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and remains unsatisfactory.
19. The quality of planning for sensory learning is such that it effectively meets the needs of pupils who have the most complex learning needs, communication and physical difficulties or specific medical conditions. A garden and room support pupils' sensory development; and building work on an ambitious new sensory room begins next term. Throughout the curriculum there is a very

relevant and effective focus on developing pupils' independence skills. Residential opportunities at school, holidays in England and Holland and after-school clubs all enhance pupils' independence and social skills further. Good curriculum planning for lessons in personal and social education and citizenship make a good contribution to pupils' overall personal and social development.

20. The teaching of the subjects of the curriculum is combined very successfully with work undertaken for the development of pupils' fine and gross motor skills. Teachers, assistants, parents and therapists adopt a multi-disciplinary approach in working together. As a result of this pupils do not lose lengthy periods of teaching time for therapy sessions. Individual programmes are very effective in promoting good posture, walking, sitting, standing and independence in the dining room, for example, by using well designed resources to help pupils to pour drinks independently and use cutlery.
21. A recently developed 'Pathways 2000+' 14 to 19 curriculum has been designed by staff to be very flexible and ensures that the Post-16 students are prepared very well for leaving school. The school offers the small number of pupils in Years 10 to 14 a good range of options and accredited courses, just as in mainstream schools. Work related learning is an integral part of the programme and has been planned well. Further developments are scheduled for introduction later this term, which will extend the opportunities for pupils to learn through work experience. Planning for careers education is very good overall, although the programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8 is at an early stage of development.
22. Pupils' learning is much enhanced through a wide range of enrichment activities. For example, there are visits from theatre groups, artists, musicians, and business people. Older pupils become more independent when on residential visits in England and Holland. The opportunities for pupils to spend time in mainstream schools develop pupils' self-esteem by giving them a chance to learn alongside their friends in the locality. Both pupils' learning and the development of their social skills are enhanced by the experiences.
23. The accommodation benefits from specialist rooms, good size classrooms and wide corridors that enable pupils to move around safely. However, there are not enough hard surfaces in the outdoor playing area for the youngest pupils. The current soft surfaces are unsuitable for pupils in wheelchairs and pupils with physical difficulties.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety are **very good** throughout the school, as is the way pupils' views are taken into account. Support, advice and guidance are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff display real commitment to effectively meet the care needs of all pupils.
- The health, safety and welfare of the pupils are given a high priority in the planning of each school day.
- Support for pupils' personal development helps them become as independent as possible.
- Pupils are fully involved in making choices and decisions about what affects them.
- Arrangements to introduce pupils to the school are very good and fully appreciated by parents.

Commentary

24. All staff are dedicated to doing their best for pupils to enable them to be as independent as possible and to get out of school life as much as they can. Pupils have the confidence to make concerns known to staff because they feel safe and valued. The very detailed knowledge that all staff have of pupils ensures that they are very alert to any sign of distress or concern shown by pupils. Staff are sensitive to the small changes in pupils' responses and seek effective ways of responding to them. Pupils are treated with great respect; their privacy and dignity is given a

very high priority. The excellent relationships and level of trust that develop do much to underpin the caring and happy atmosphere that pervades the school.

25. Health and safety policy and procedures have recently been a focus of staff review and everything is up to date. Risk assessment is rigorous, first aid is effectively and sympathetically undertaken, any medication is administered correctly, and all appliances, alarms and apparatus, including any required for individual pupils, are tested as required. Fire evacuation procedure has been reorganised and trialled with very good results. Child protection procedures are very good and staff are very vigilant and regularly reminded of their responsibilities towards the pupils.
26. Staff know the pupils very well and target support effectively. Academic support and guidance, based on monitoring of what pupils have achieved is satisfactory but as yet the school does not always use its information to group all pupils in the best way possible or target support and advice to individuals sufficiently well. However, in the Post-16 unit academic support and guidance is very good, helping students to achieve their best because it is well targeted to their individual needs. Older pupils are given high quality support about the next stage of their lives from the Connexions service. Support from a range of therapists is very good. In the primary department it is very well integrated into the school day, causing as little disruption as possible to the pupils' learning.
27. Although the two school councils currently do not meet regularly, they are a very good way of gauging pupils' views on specific aspects of school life. Furthermore, as part of the school's very good efforts to promote pupils' independence and involvement, they are continually being asked about their views and to make choices and decisions about everyday and ongoing events.
28. All parents say how pleased they are with the arrangements to settle their children in school. Meetings are arranged before and after the child starts and involve the parents and school as well as therapists and personnel from other agencies. This ensures that there is a very good exchange and focus of information. The school also goes to great lengths to try to organise the right provision for pupils when they leave. The process starts early and is based as far as possible on meeting the informed choices made by them. Its planning is being developed as a model of very good practice by the Learning Skills Council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **very good**. Links with other schools include opportunities for pupils to be dual registered with a mainstream school and are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very high levels of confidence in the school.
- The school encourages parents to support each other through organising parents' meetings.
- Pupils benefit from mainstream experiences where they are encouraged to work, play and interact with other children and be independent.
- The business community provides the school with valued support.

Commentary

29. Parents have very few concerns about the work of the school. They are particularly impressed with the arrangements to help their child settle into the school, the way the school is led and especially that their children like coming to the school. Inspection evidence supports these views. A few parents are not happy with the information about how well their children are doing but evidence suggests this is very good. At the beginning of each year parents are provided with a comprehensive curriculum programme for their child setting out what it is their child will learn during the year. At the end of the year they receive a progress report detailing their child's

achievements in all areas of the curriculum. This gives parents a very clear idea of how well their child is achieving. Discussions with parents occur termly and parents are invited to be fully involved in the reviewing of their child's progress and giving their views. A new addition to each pupil's education plan is a space for how the parents can help at home; this involves parents more in the education of their child through promoting a common and consistent approach at home and school. Parents are also asked their views on whole school issues, such as the introduction of a uniform.

30. The school works hard to welcome parents and support them. Parents, particularly those with children having similar needs or difficulties, are encouraged to get together at meetings in school, organised by themselves. A few parents are also able to give valued support in the classroom, swimming or with offsite trips.
31. Primary pupils benefit enormously from their time in mainstream, which is extremely well organised and represents an example of excellent practice.

The youngest pupils attend a mainstream nursery one morning a week. They play with the other children in the sand, with water or dressing up and the Fountaindale staff keep a watchful eye from a distance. The placement benefits from the Fountaindale teacher's detailed planning including the setting of challenging personal targets for each pupil, which are shared with the nursery staff.

A Year 5 primary pupil spends two days a week at a local mainstream primary school. The teaching assistant from Fountaindale attends with him but she is seen as an extra support for the whole class group. The week's planning is sent to Fountaindale before the pupil attends so that the teaching assistant can make any necessary adaptations or preparations. The class teacher described the pupil as 'totally part of the class' and reported that the rest of the class had total empathy and understanding with him. The pupil's IEP targets are set jointly between Fountaindale and the mainstream school staff and the pupil has clearly made excellent academic and social progress. The mainstream Headteacher recalled that when the pupil had learnt to take a few steps independently this had brought tears to people's eyes and the school saw it as an affirmation of the value the pupil placed on his time at mainstream school.

32. A few secondary pupils also spend time at a large local secondary school. Their needs and abilities are carefully matched to their timetable ensuring that it is balanced with the timetable at Fountaindale. These pupils have made very good progress in their confidence and social skills as a result of their placements and can, for example, find their own way around a large secondary school independently. In addition to these excellent inclusion opportunities, the curriculum and other experiences provided for pupils are enhanced by links with other schools. Activities, such as music and drama, take place regularly providing very good opportunities for learning and for social development. Links with mainstream are enhanced by the headteacher being part of a number of groups, both at school and within the local education authority, at which he is able to put across the views of a special school and discuss mutually beneficial aspects for all types of schools.
33. The business community has raised a large sum of money to establish the 'Fountaindale Trust'. This in turn funded a research project on the use of communication aids to enhance access to the curriculum, which led to the establishment of the communication centre within school. Additionally, older pupils benefit from opportunities to experience the business world. The school also uses the local and wider community for trips and visits, including residential trips abroad.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The governance of the school is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's and governors' determination that the school and the service will make an important contribution to enhancing the quality of life for pupils is very effective.

- The headteacher has very good systems to analyse data on pupils' achievements and take action based on the information obtained.
- Finances are managed very well and are used well to enable pupils to benefit from as much one to one support as possible.
- Staff have very good opportunities to contribute to the running and development of the school.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and assessment procedures.
- The quality of the leadership and management of subjects varies from very good to poor.

Commentary

34. Both the headteacher and the governors are forward thinking and show vision for the future effectiveness of the school. They have recognised the changes in the role of the school and that the needs of pupils are now very complex. They have ensured that all pupils are included in all activities and, where appropriate, have opportunities to access mainstream education. The headteacher has played a key role in the development of the outreach service, which is now very good and ensured that there are very clear links with other agencies and other professionals in the support available for each individual child.
35. The headteacher provides good leadership and management of the school. He has recognised the importance of analysing pupils' achievements and has detailed information that enables him to have a good overview of the effectiveness of the school's provision. The headteacher has carefully analysed the data and has made use of this in taking action to further improve pupils' achievements. The results of these have been used in establishing priorities for the school's development plan. This is an effective procedure in targeting important aspects to improve the school's provision.
36. In a school of this type where there are many links with other agencies and a number of pupils are dual registered, the finances are extremely complex. The headteacher and his administrative assistant manage these very effectively. Expenditure is also very well monitored by governors; the headteacher's regular financial reports giving a very clear picture of income and expenditure. These judgements are made despite the fact two years ago there was an overspend on the budget. With assistance from the headteacher, the local authority recognised that the special school formula for financial allocations to schools was inaccurate and amendments have been made which now mean that the school receives a far more realistic allocation in which to establish its budget and cover its expenditure.
37. The headteacher has a very effective management style in ensuring that all staff have the opportunity to contribute to the school's development. This includes the establishment of focus groups where groups of staff review procedures, policies and developments. For example, a group of staff have been working at the redevelopment of a sensory room. Following regular meetings and requests for fundraising, sufficient funds have been established for the development of the new facility. The group have been responsible for putting out tenders and agreeing on the contract for the new room. Support assistants have good opportunities to contribute to the school's development. The three senior teaching assistants in the school take on additional responsibilities, which have meant that the new national regulations with regard to workforce remodelling are being implemented very effectively.
38. The deputy headteacher's absence for over a year has an impact on the time available for senior staff to monitor whole school aspects. This will have contributed to weaknesses in monitoring the quality of teaching, implementation of the curriculum and assessment procedures. Recently changes have been made to the management structure and an acting deputy headteacher has now been given an increased amount of time to consider whole school issues. This should bring about greater consistency in the quality of the leadership and management of individual subjects. The leadership and management of music, art, physical education and in the Foundation Stage and Post-16 unit are very good. In mathematics and science the leadership and management are satisfactory but in ICT unsatisfactory and in PSHCE there is no subject leader.

39. Evidence shows that the provision in the school as a whole has improved since the previous inspection. However, specific aspects regarded as weak previously have not all been effectively addressed. For example, only limited improvements have been made to the design and technology curriculum, ICT has not been given sufficient attention and there are still weaknesses within the management roles of subject leaders. Governors, who are very supportive of the school have very good arrangements to monitor its work through committees and ensure that statutory responsibilities are being met, but have not recognised the weaknesses in the curriculum and assessment.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,511,583	Balance from previous year	-103,890
Total expenditure	1,497,026	Balance carried forward to the next	13,257
Expenditure per pupil	21,084		

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

(As well as the few pupils who are resident, a few pupils have extended school days, which means that they are able to join residential pupils in evening activities up until seven or eight o'clock in the evening. There was no report written about the residential unit in the previous report so it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on improvement.)

The residential unit provides **very good** support for pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work undertaken with pupils links very closely to the targets set during for the school day.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to enhance their independence skills.
- Pupils enjoy the fun and the social element of staying in school in the evenings.
- Staff relate very well to the pupils and the quality of care is very high.

Commentary

40. Pupils who stay in residence or stay for extended school days, for one or two nights each week, benefit enormously from the experience. The main aim of this time is to help with their communication and mobility. Both of these aspects are given high priority, staff supporting and encouraging pupils to express their needs, whether it be verbally or through the use of augmentative communication aids. Staff also encourage pupils to be active participants in a wide range of games.
41. The targets for improvements that residential staff set for pupils are based on targets within pupils' individual education plans. Pupils' progress towards meeting them is very carefully supported and recorded. This information is then used by care staff to make verbal and written contributions on pupils' progress in various forums, such as annual reviews and multi-agency meetings.
42. Staying in the evenings makes a considerable impact on the development of pupils' independence skills. Pupils are encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves. Encouragement is positive and supportive and pupils respond well to this. Older pupils have good opportunities to develop their life skills. In a pilot project run with support from social services, a few older pupils are able to stay in the evening and practice the skills they will need

to live independently. They plan their own meals, undertaking shopping and cooking in order to produce them. They are also encouraged to take part in visits off site, where again they are given close support to enable them to develop their skills at dealing with different situations.

43. Pupils in the residential unit show how much they enjoy being there. Many of the activities they take part in are fun yet linked carefully to the targets to improve pupils' personal development. For example, pupils were seen acting out an imaginary journey on a train and an incident at their destination. Pupils were helped to dress up and take on different characters. They all thoroughly enjoyed the activity, which was very well co-ordinated by a teacher undertaking extra duties.
44. The quality of care from the residential team is of a very high standard. Supervision is given to pupils at all times. Staff have very close links with the medical staff and medical requirements are carried out very carefully. There are very good procedures for recording the administration of medication. Very good links have been established between the staff on duty each evening and the waking staff on duty throughout the night. Records are exchanged to ensure that staff are fully aware of all the circumstances surrounding each pupil. Good links are also made with teaching staff and useful strategies, such as putting a message on to a child's augmentative talker, are used to enable pupils to tell their teacher what they have done the previous evening.

OUTREACH WORK

Outreach work provided by the Physical Disability Support Service (PDSS) based at the school.

45. The service provides a range of very good support to schools in Nottinghamshire, including curriculum advice, safe handling training, buildings adaptation advice and ICT assessment and support. Teaching staff are released from Fountaindale for periods of time during the week to visit other schools. Secondary teachers provide specialist curriculum support and primary teachers are responsible for supporting primary schools in a particular geographical area. Referrals are made through an Access Panel, which meets monthly and includes representatives from all the agencies involved in working with pupils with a physical disability.
46. Mainstream schools clearly value the advice and support they have received from Fountaindale staff. One primary school reported that the PDSS was very helpful when the school had a pupil who suddenly became very ill and had no mobility. Fountaindale staff advised on the physical environment for the pupil and on adapting the curriculum to meet his particular needs. The school stated that the PDSS 'has definitely helped us to provide effectively for pupils with a physical disability.' A local secondary school reported that the PDSS has had a 'major impact' at the school in terms of the way they had worked with the school to assess whether the buildings, curriculum and facilities were suitable for pupils with a physical disability. The school described the close working relationship they had with the Fountaindale link teacher and commented on how much they had learnt from her skills, knowledge and expertise.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

A Post-16 Team Enterprise lesson was observed. There were brief discussions with students. There were discussions with the Post-16 and secondary co-ordinators. Planning for work related learning was read and displays were observed.

Provision for work related learning in Years 10 to 14 is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work related learning is very well led and managed by the co-ordinators for the Post-16 and secondary departments.
- Pupils have good opportunities to understand how businesses operate.

- Careers education and guidance in Years 9 to 14 are very well established; in Years 7 and 8 the programme is at an early stage of development.
- Past links with a local college have been very positive and beneficial; but recent changes to the college curriculum and organisation now restrict opportunities for students to study vocational courses at college.

Commentary

47. In recent months the Post-16 and secondary department co-ordinators have worked together very effectively to develop a new, and very flexible, 14-19 curriculum in which transition to further education, employment and independent living have been very well planned. The school is able to offer vocational courses in partnership with a local secondary school. College links, however, for vocational studies, have proved more difficult to organise this year because of changes to the college timetable.
48. Through a Team Enterprise project, Post-16 students have, with support, organised very effectively a company to make badges and greetings cards. The students have a good understanding of the different roles within the company. By participating in the project, students raise their awareness about the world of work, become more independent and financially aware. They improve their business understanding, and their social and computer skills. The flexibility of the school's 14 to 19 curriculum means that pupils in Years 10 and 11 also participate in enterprise learning as part of the course on transition into employment. Although Team Enterprise projects provide good work related experiences in school, pupils' physical difficulties, and their associated care needs, limit the range of suitable work experience placements off site. This is an area of ongoing development for the school.
49. There are very good links with the Connexions service to support pupils from Year 9. Students are prepared very well for leaving school. Employers visit school to provide pupils with experience of interviews. There are Industry Days with a range of enterprise activities with employers and training providers. Visits are arranged for students to visit colleges of their choice. Curriculum plans for careers education in Years 7 and 8 are integrated into a good quality personal and social education programme. The school is aware, however, that plans for careers education for these younger pupils require further development.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS, THE FOUNDATION STAGE AND THE POST-16 UNIT

*Throughout this section of the report, overall judgements about **provision** relate to pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and management and any other significant aspects.*

THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school has a mixed class for its youngest pupils, which includes children in the Foundation Stage. There is only one pupil currently in the Foundation Stage and the records of four pupils of that age in the previous year were scrutinised. Although there is insufficient evidence to judge each area of learning separately it is possible to judge the overall provision for this class. Five lessons were seen and discussions held with the teacher responsible for the Foundation Stage.

The provision in the class for the youngest pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and level of support given to pupils is very good.
- The classroom is both spacious and attractive and pupils feel safe and secure within it.
- Outside play apparatus is very good, but its use is limited by the lack of a suitable all-weather surface.

Commentary

50. This well organised class ensures that there are very good learning opportunities provided for pupils in both the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. All pupils have the chance to achieve in each of curriculum areas pupils of this age are expected to learn. Pupils' records indicate that overall they make very good progress. Teaching and learning are very good. The whole staff team works together very well and all staff are involved in both planning and monitoring processes. The classroom is organised to allow pupils to work and play, both individually and as a group. Its layout is based around the topic being covered and currently is designed around a beach theme. One corner of the room is covered in sand, with beach balls and buckets and spades. Music and creative activities feature prominently in the curriculum and are represented in the way in which the classroom is organised. For example, pupils enjoy the wall of lights with musical instruments attached.
51. Resources are very good and cater for the very wide range of special needs represented in the class. Outside play apparatus is very good and enjoyed by the pupils. However, the occasions that pupils can use the area are limited because the surface is unsuitable and often unfit to use. Staff take every opportunity to overcome this difficulty by using other local provision, but the lack of a safe and accessible outside play area does inhibit pupils' access to large play apparatus at all times.
52. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. The subject leader is very knowledgeable and shows a real determination to make the work interesting and as challenging as possible for the pupils. As a result the quality of the provision for pupils of this age group has developed very well since the appointment of the subject leader three years ago.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 – 4 and Post-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Although part of one lesson was seen, insufficient evidence was gathered to make a full judgement about the provision for French. Five lessons were seen in English. Additional evidence was obtained from discussions with teachers, therapists and pupils as well as a scrutiny of their work in files and on display.

Modern Foreign Language (French)

One good lesson was seen for pupils in Years 8 and 9. In this lesson pupils' enjoyed a game involving recognising and matching pictures of everyday items. After the teacher had shown a picture and said what it was in French pupils were supported in different ways to select the correct picture from a choice of six. Pupils of all abilities were able to take part. This included a pupil with significant visual impairment who was given very good support by a teaching assistant who gave her objects to feel that related to the pictures named by the teacher. A scrutiny of the subject file, however, shows that there is limited planning for how the subject will be taught and developed and there is insufficient information as how pupils' skills will be recorded and developed as they move through the school.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the work they are given is well matched to their individual needs.
- Teachers and assistants are skilled in helping pupils learn to communicate.
- Very good specialist support from a technical support assistant enables pupils to make good progress in speaking and listening.
- There are very good strategies in place to extend pupils' communication skills in all subjects of the curriculum.
- The development of reading and writing skills is not always given sufficient attention.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and what they can do to improve because of good feedback from staff.

Commentary

53. Pupils of all abilities and ages achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Pupils in the secondary department study for Entry Level certificates and a very small number for GCSE. English is covered well in the Post-16 department where students participate in weekly communication lessons leading to the OCR Basic Skills Award. Language and literature is accredited through the Open College Network and is delivered through the 'Pathways 2000+' programme.
54. Teachers are very skilled at ensuring that work is at the right level to challenge pupils and meets their individual needs. A good example of this is in Year 9 where one group of pupils are learning about onomatopoeia. Different resources, such as musical instruments and textured papers, allow those pupils with complex needs to hear, touch and produce sounds for words such as rustling and clattering. A few pupils are able to indicate what letter sounds the words begin with. The other group work independently at the computer to produce a newspaper article. One pupil has a good understanding of news reporting style and produces a good headline and opening sentence. All the pupils achieve well because they are given good individual support and their learning targets are very appropriate for their learning needs.

55. Teachers very appropriately place a great emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills and have a good understanding of the needs of pupils with physical disability. As a result all pupils make good progress in their ability to communicate. In the primary classes pupils learn to use signing, visual symbols, eye or finger pointing to indicate their understanding and make choices. Those pupils who have spoken language are encouraged to learn new words. They are able to do this because of the good questioning from the teachers and assistants. A wide variety of stimulating activities keeps the pupils' interest and they concentrate well. Pupils know when they have done well and what they might do to improve because the teachers and assistants tell them. For example, in a Year 11 lesson pupils talk about their strengths, 'I'm good at thinking of ideas', and what they need to do to improve, 'I'm not good at concentrating.'
56. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are supported well by the interventions of the specialist teaching assistant who is responsible for the technical aspects of the alternative communication systems. All pupils with communication difficulties are assessed by speech and language therapists on entry to the school and individual programmes are prepared and updated as necessary. The specialist teaching assistant works with teachers and therapists to support the pupils with communication aids. Her work ensures that pupils' aids are well matched to their needs and are programmed appropriately to support teaching and learning. The therapists and teaching assistant run regular training sessions for staff and parents so that there is a high level of expertise in the use of alternative communication aids across the school. This is evident in the teaching and learning of all the subjects in the curriculum.
57. Drama is used well to support the teaching and learning of the literacy aspect of the Primary Strategy in the primary classes. For example, as a follow up to the visit from a local theatre group, pupils learn about different characters and how they make them feel. Pupils with more complex needs use puppets to tell a story and symbols to express their likes and dislikes. In the Post-16 department, pupils are taught by a visiting teacher from the local secondary school. In a lesson seen one pupil is able to explain what 'proxemics' means. All pupils take part with enthusiasm and are keen to take on roles. Again the good teaching and support from teaching assistants ensures all pupils are fully included.
58. By the time they leave the school, a few pupils have functional reading skills. Pupils in the primary department learn to recognise single words and a few are able to read sentences. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to build simple words that they do not recognise. Pupils who need extra help are given individual support through the use of Reading Recovery strategies. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to read in lessons. Although there are detailed records in the primary department, there is no way of recording the range of texts read by pupils further up the school. The use of the school's small steps tracking documents is inconsistent and there are limited procedures in place to track the reading progress of pupils over time. In the primary classes pupils are able to make marks on paper and a few produce meaningful print. In Year 8, pupils are able to use the word processing programme on the computer to record their work and know when to use capital letters and full stops. A few pupils in Year 11 are able to write paragraphs and are beginning to make a draft to produce a story.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject manager has good subject knowledge and the literacy aspect of the Primary Strategy has been implemented in the primary department with skilful and creative adaptations to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Lessons for secondary pupils are planned well and incorporate the recommended National Strategy for this age group. The co-ordinator has not had time to properly monitor and evaluate the planning and teaching of the subject by other staff. The library has recently been refurbished but is still in the early stages of its development. There are very few interactive books and a small range of poetry books and non-fiction books. The school has a development plan to improve these resources. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The development of pupils' literacy skills in the teaching of the other subjects of the curriculum is good because of the emphasis placed on improving pupils' ability to communicate. The work of a specialist technical assistant ensures that all pupils are given very good support. As a result, in all subjects pupils use their communication aids very well to respond to questions. Reading and writing skills are not as well developed, although the secondary department focused on writing across the curriculum last term and all subject teachers agreed to make more opportunities for writing in their lessons. This remains an area for development.

MATHEMATICS

During inspection week five lessons were observed. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, held discussions with the subject co-ordinator and scrutinised curriculum documentation.

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because good planning means work meets their individual needs.
- The numeracy aspect of the Primary Strategy is used well to ensure that all pupils can make progress.
- There are a few occasions when higher ability pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the work.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well because they understand what they are expected to do.
- Insufficient attention is being given to checking the quality of the teaching of mathematics by different teachers.
- There is inconsistency in the way pupils' mathematical skills are being developed in other subjects.

Commentary

61. Pupils' achievements are good overall. In lessons pupils all make good progress. They work in different ability groups and most of the time activities are well matched to develop further what pupils have already achieved. The youngest primary pupils count forwards and backwards to ten. For example, the song '*Five in a Bed*' helps pupils understand counting backwards. Older primary pupils play skittles to help them learn the concept of 'adding on'. Secondary pupils work with biscuits to understand fractions and higher ability pupils show their understanding of 'numerator' and 'denominator'. The oldest pupils and the students in the Post-16 group make sufficient progress to enable them to gain Entry Level Certificates in mathematics.
62. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. The numeracy aspect of the Primary Strategy is adapted and used well throughout the school. Planning for lessons is very detailed and there is usually a structure for each lesson that includes starter activities and a review of pupils' achievements at the end. For example, in a lesson for the older primary children very good use of the mental arithmetic starter activity, adapted for three different ability groups, enabled all pupils to be completely focused on the lesson. Planning includes individual targets for each pupil so that staff and pupils are constantly aware of the aims for the lesson and for each pupil. In a lesson for primary pupils, for example, the target 'Today I will count up to 20' was placed in front of each pupil to whom it applied.
63. Occasionally planning does not ensure that there is sufficient challenge for higher ability pupils with the result they can spend too long doing the same activity. This is being addressed for secondary and Post-16 students through a teacher being employed to teach mathematics to higher ability pupils. This teacher's subject knowledge and good relationships with pupils is enabling them to make good progress. The multi-sensory approach to teaching also helps pupils achieve well. Teachers and teaching assistants use communication aids, sign and work

with touch, sound and smell to find ways of making sure all pupils are involved in the activities of the lesson.

64. Teaching assistants contribute well to the learning that takes place in the classroom. They are well briefed and when they take charge of various groups within lessons they are clear what the learning objectives are and, as a result, play a crucial part in ensuring that pupils make good progress. For example, in a lesson for primary pupils, one teaching assistant took charge of a group attempting to count up to thirty and used a practical activity to teach number bonds up to twenty. She was instrumental in ensuring that two children managed to count beyond twenty for the first time. In a lesson for Year 8 pupils, a teaching assistant provided very good one to one support for a pupil by giving her alternative answers on a whiteboards for the questions she was tackling.
65. Mathematics is being managed satisfactorily by a temporary subject leader. There is a three year development plan which shows how the subject will be improved. All classes receive an appropriate number of mathematics lessons but they are not always distributed well throughout the week, for example one class only has lessons at the start and end of the week. The planning for mathematics lessons is reviewed but only limited attention is currently being given to checking how well each teacher is implementing it in the classroom.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Good opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills are exploited in a few subjects, for example, the use of the pentatonic scale in a music lesson and scoring a table cricket match in physical education. However, there is not a whole school strategy for this and in subjects such as science opportunities are missed to practice and reinforce pupils' mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Five science lessons were observed. Pupils' assessment records, reports and written work were analysed. School science targets were analysed. Subject plans, risk assessments and other subject documents were read. There were discussions with the science co-ordinator, and observation of resources and accommodation.

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have many opportunities to learn through practical and sensory activities and as a result their achievements are good.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support to enable pupils with the most profound and complex learning and physical difficulties to access science work.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils contribute to pupils enjoying their science lessons.
- Insufficient attention is being given to checking teaching plans, assessments of potential risks in the science room and the quality of teaching of individual staff.

Commentary

67. Achievement for all pupils in science is good. Secondary pupils achieve science certificates at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3. Very good use of switches and electronic talking machines, signs and symbols enable pupils with the greatest physical and learning needs to achieve at Entry Level 1. Higher attaining secondary pupils develop good scientific enquiry skills when they independently use equipment and chemicals. They use Bunsen burners safely to observe the chemical change when sugar is heated and cooled and they learn the scientific names for chemical reactions when mixing ammonia with hydrochloric acid. Primary pupils develop their

fine and gross motor skills whilst learning how to make toys move with push and pull forces. Many Year 6 higher ability boys and girls know how to predict results and carry out a fair test when investigating the best material for mopping up water. Primary pupils with more severe learning difficulties investigate a good range of resources to experience different materials for making a garden wind chime.

68. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching assistants are very effective in enabling pupils with the most profound physical and learning difficulties to participate in practical work. A secondary girl with visual impairment, for example, is supported very effectively to use her senses of hearing, smell and touch to detect chemical changes when mixing the ingredients to make bread dough, and read a Braille version of the experiment. In one primary class, the teacher, teaching assistants, a physiotherapist and a volunteer parent work together very well to help develop pupils' fine and gross motor skills as part of a lesson on forces. Occasionally, though, not enough sensory activities are planned for the beginning and end of lessons leaving teaching assistants with little to do at these points in the lesson. It is the main, middle part of lessons that are planned the best.
69. Pupils respond very well in science lessons. They are very well behaved, really enthusiastic, and use science equipment safely. For example, a Year 4 boy listened very intently to the instructions, persevered to understand then, after several trials, successfully pushed a toy truck independently for the first time. The multi-disciplinary staff present were very patient and applauded spontaneously when the boy eventually grasped the idea that pushing the truck would make it move away from him. He was justifiably very pleased with his success and smiled broadly.
70. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory and greatly supported by the quality of teaching and planning in the primary department. The co-ordinator has been in post for over a year but progress in monitoring the work of the department, and updating subject plans and risk assessments, has been slow. Planning for the use of switches and electronic talking machines is very good enabling pupils to communicate their understanding of science. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

During inspection week five lessons were observed. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, held discussions with the subject co-ordinator and scrutinised curriculum documentation

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' skills in the use of ICT.
- The subject leader does not have a clear overview on how the subject is being taught throughout the school.
- ICT is used very well to assist many pupils to communicate and access the curriculum.
- Resources for ICT are sufficient and well maintained.
- Although ICT is used in the teaching of a few other subjects, this is not well monitored.

Commentary

71. Overall pupils' achievements in ICT are unsatisfactory. In the class for the youngest pupils in the school, pupils achieve well and their achievements are clearly recorded. As part of Post-16 curriculum a few students also make good progress, their achievements include developing their own web pages and setting up interactive links. However, the achievements of all other pupils are unsatisfactory mainly because of weaknesses in teaching in the secondary department and the inadequate leadership and management of the subject. There is, also, insufficient attention to recording the progress that pupils are making. It is because of this that

teachers are not sure how well pupils are developing their skills in ICT. This lack of information means that lessons are not based on extending pupils' skills so that they improve on what they have achieved previously.

72. The overall quality of teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. Plans of what will be taught are out of date and fail to show what aspects of the subject will be taught as pupils move through the school. Teachers do produce termly plans, but particularly in the secondary department these are very limited. For example, the planned termly programme for three Year 7 pupils, with complex learning difficulties, is recorded as 'Using switch programmes to develop cause and effect'. This level of planning fails to show how pupils' progress will be monitored, and what action is being taken to enable pupils to achieve to their potential.
73. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. Although teachers in the primary classes pass on their ICT planning documents to the subject leader, these are not monitored to show whether pupils will be accessing the expected curriculum for ICT. Subject documentation is weak, for example, the subject development plan is poor and gives no indication as to how the provision for ICT will be improved. In addition no reference is made to 'e-learning credits' (money allocated to schools to purchase educational software) and how these will be used to further develop the provision.
74. Technology, however, is used very well to assist those pupils who require the use of switches and talkers to assist them to communicate. Careful assessments involving the ICT technician, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and the specialist teaching assistant for communication aids are undertaken. From these assessments 'routes' are agreed to enable pupils to access the curriculum. Good arrangements are in place to model the use of switches and the effectiveness of them is regularly checked by staff. These prove to be very effective procedures and ensure that pupils have equality of access to the curriculum.
75. There are good facilities for the teaching and learning of ICT. All pupils have access to discrete ICT lessons in the ICT suite and in addition there are also computers available within each classroom. This means that resources are good and all pupils have good access to use them. In addition the school has a part-time ICT technician who ensures that machines are in working order and that the school's network operates effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. For many pupils the use of ICT could enhance their potential for learning. This, though, is not happening because insufficient attention is being given to developing its use throughout the school. Pupils, though, have opportunities to use ICT in a number of other subject areas. For example, in art a software programme is used to enable pupils to produce their own designs. In English, word processing software assists pupils to record their work. Post-16 pupils make good use of computers for internet research and are very confident in using search engines to find pictures to support their projects, such as that involved in producing Valentine cards as part of their Team Enterprise work.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Although one geography lesson was seen, insufficient evidence was gathered to make a judgement about the provision for these subjects. Two lessons were seen and inspectors looked at pupils' work, held discussions with the subject co-ordinator and scrutinised curriculum documentation.

77. History and geography are planned on a two yearly cycle using national recommended programmes of work and incorporating topic themes. Termly planning is detailed and outlines what pupils of different ability levels are expected to learn. There is a three year development plan in each subject but monitoring and evaluation of previous plans has been carried out

inconsistently. This means it is not always clear what has improved in these subjects and what still needs to be addressed. Resources are used well to make the lessons interesting. For example, in a lesson for primary pupils hot water bottles and ice were used for pupils to achieve an understanding of different climates in different parts of the world.

Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator.
- Lessons are very well planned and a good emphasis is put on all pupils being able to achieve.
- Religious artefacts are used well to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Teaching assistants are used very well to ensure all pupils are involved in lessons.

Commentary

78. Pupils make very good progress in their study of religious education because of very good and enthusiastic teaching. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus which is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. The opportunities for pupils to experience and learn from other religions are very good. For example, the major world faiths of Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity are studied and older pupils are studying world religions for an accredited course. As a result many pupils in the primary and secondary parts of the school understand the significance of what is meant by 'religious beliefs'.
79. The planning of lessons is very detailed and makes explicit what pupils of different ability levels are expected to learn. The teacher uses candles and music to create an atmosphere of spirituality in lessons and uses techniques such as re-enacting the story of the Buddha's four sights to ensure the learning is meaningful to all pupils. The imaginative use of religious artefacts in displays and lessons means that pupils have a real awareness of the 'specialness' of certain items to different faiths. For example, when a Qur'an stand is passed around in a Year 6 lesson the pupils treat it with reverence and respect.
80. Teaching assistants make a huge contribution to religious education. They show real understanding of the needs of the pupils and their enthusiastic participation in lessons, for example, joining pupils in acting roles in a drama exercise on Buddhism, ensures that the subject is accessible to all pupils.
81. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader is determined that pupils will all be involved in lessons and has worked hard to give the subject a high profile throughout the school. The subject development plan is good and successful bids have been made to enhance the resources.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and Technology

It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in design and technology because timetabling did not allow for any lessons to be seen. Evidence to assess whether the weaknesses reported in the previous report had been addressed was obtained from pupils' work and discussion with the subject manager. Three lessons were seen in art and design. Additional evidence was obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work and work on display. Two lessons were seen in music. Additional evidence was obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work on display and the subject file. Two lessons were seen in physical education. Additional evidence was obtained from a scrutiny of the records of pupils' achievements and the subject file.

82. Teaching plans for the primary department show appropriate teaching activities for design and technology, based on the themes for the term. The curriculum for secondary pupils though is limited and therefore unsatisfactory. Plans show that pupils in Years 7 to 9 follow units of study from national programmes, chosen by the subject manager to be the most relevant. However, these have not been developed to show how activities are made more accessible to the particular needs of the pupils. Most design work relies very heavily on the use of ICT and pupils have limited opportunities to follow through to make their designs. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to study food technology. Small steps tracking documents are in place to record pupils' progress but these are inconsistently used. This evidence fails to show that the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been effectively addressed.

Art and Design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities and with differing special needs achieve very well because of the teaching strategies used by staff.
- ICT is used well as a starting point for creating pupils' design.
- Displays of pupils' work are very good in classrooms but limited in other areas of the school.
- The subject leader's enthusiasm and creativity encourages staff and pupils to carry out new ideas.

Commentary

83. Pupils' achieve very well in art and design. The school provides a very good range of experiences and activities that all pupils are able to take part in. In the primary department, art is taught by class teachers and is related to the theme for the term. All staff encourage pupils to be as independent as possible, giving pupils choices and time to respond. For example, a Year 4 pupil is able to produce a simple puppet because of the excellent support given by teaching assistants. Pupils learn to use colour in a variety of ways. In a Year 6 class they respond to the theme of Chinese New Year using paint on silk with an ICT generated design providing the outline. Pupils with more complex needs can indicate their choice of colour by finger or eye pointing. A few pupils can name colours, whilst others know what colour is made when two colours are mixed. There is a range of resources available so that all pupils can find a tool that they are able to use with minimal support.

84. Art is taught by the subject leader in the secondary and Post-16 departments. She is an experienced specialist with very good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of the needs of the pupils and students. Computer design programmes, such as 'Dazzle Art', are used as a starting point for pupils to produce mixed media work. Pupils have studied the work of Warhol and assembled their own interpretations of his work. The Post-16 group produced designs for a carrier bag, one of which was subsequently reproduced commercially. Their understanding of the commercial world was greatly enhanced because it was necessary for them to consider cost as well as design and to make a funding bid to the headteacher to carry this through to completion.

85. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator's enthusiasm ensures that art remains an important part of the life of the school. In classrooms there are very good examples of pupils' work, inspired by the work of other artists and observations of the environment. Since the last inspection art has improved from good to very good.

Music

Provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good, lively and challenging teaching enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Meticulously planned lessons capture the interests of all the pupils.
- A wide variety of opportunities enables pupils to experience the work of other musicians.

Commentary

86. All the pupils, whatever their difficulties, do very well in music because of the very good quality of the teaching. For example, in a primary lesson seen, pupils learnt how to follow a graphic score and be part of an ensemble. A few pupils can name the instruments and know which are wood and metal. One pupil used the word 'beat' to describe what he could hear. All pupils are able to participate because of the very good support provided by the teaching assistants. Pupils in the secondary lesson seen, learn to compose a jingle. The teacher's careful preparation of jingles from radio advertisements enables the pupils to follow her explanation of how music is used to sell products. The choice of resources to touch and smell ensures that pupils with the most complex needs are actively engaged in the lesson. By the end of this excellent lesson all pupils were able to make a musical contribution, the more able making a short jingle to advertise a mobile phone.
87. Music is taught by a specialist with very good subject knowledge, enormous enthusiasm and a thorough understanding of the needs of the pupils. Lessons throughout the school are very well planned and leadership and management of the subject are good. The excellent pace of lessons ensures that pupils keep on concentrating and the choice of resources ensures all are involved. This is an improvement on the judgements made in the previous report.
88. Learning in music is further enriched by other musical opportunities. For example, there are regular musical links with other schools and pupils have been involved in out of school musical workshops with professional artists. After school clubs have also added to pupils' musical experiences.

Physical Education

Pupils' achievements in physical education are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education is given a very high prominence in the school.
- Pupils achieve well in a very good range of activities.
- The enthusiasm of the teacher successfully encourages pupils to do the best they can.
- Adaptations to activities and resources are very effective in ensuring that all pupils can participate in physical education lessons.
- Physiotherapists link very well with teaching staff to extend the physical education curriculum.

Commentary

89. Records show that meetings have taken place with a view to the school bidding for sports college status. This is an indication of the importance that the school, including the governors, place on pupils having the opportunity to take part in sports. The physical education curriculum is very well organised. Activities, usually in six weekly blocks, include gymnastics, dance, invasion games and striking games such as cricket. Pupils, also, enjoy taking part in swimming lessons. These include pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties working with staff in a hydrotherapy pool. The approach of staff in the hydrotherapy pool is very appropriate. The atmosphere is relaxed and conducive to pupils being relaxed and thus being able to happily move around the pool in variety of ways. A scrutiny of the records of pupils' achievements

shows that they make very good progress in all of these activities. The subject has continued to develop since the previous inspection and therefore improvement has been good.

90. The infectious enthusiasm of the teacher responsible for physical education and the excellent contribution of support staff ensure that pupils try their best in all lessons. Staff offer very positive encouragement and have high expectations that pupils will participate. They challenge pupils to carry out as much as possible for themselves. For example, in a table cricket game seen, pupils were given time to ensure that they could collect the small ball off the table ready to bowl the next ball and pupils who could hold the small bat on their own were encouraged to do so.
91. One of the significant strengths of the subject is the way in which adaptations have been made to many activities and resources. These are very effective in ensuring that pupils with very severe physical difficulties are able to participate. The subject planning file shows how effective these adaptations are. For example, hockey is played in zones, with pupils with similar disabilities, including those in wheelchairs, playing against each other yet still being part of a team. The teacher ensures that pupils have the opportunity to be competitive. For example, in the game of table cricket, pupils' scores based on where they were able to strike the ball are recorded and matched against the scores of an opponent. Programmes are also organised for swimming and this enables pupils to receive certificates for their efforts.
92. Work in physical education lessons is well supported by the work that pupils do with physiotherapists. For example, pupils take part in 'rebound therapy' sessions, which involve pupils bouncing on a trampoline with physiotherapists' support. Observations of pupils engaged in this show how much they enjoy the activity and how participation increases their awareness of their own body movements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (This is referred to as personal and social development (PSD) in the school timetable.)

Six lessons, breaks, lunchtimes, arrivals and departures were observed. Pupils were observed on visits to other schools and in the residence. Reports and assessments were analysed. There were discussions with secondary and Post-16 co-ordinators and with the SENCO and therapists. Planning documents were read.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning for personal and social education is embedded very effectively in activities throughout the school day and in the evenings in the residence.
- Programmes are very well planned to target pupils' individual learning needs.
- Lessons in personal and social development are well taught with a good range of relevant topics.
- Although there are good quality plans for personal, social, health and citizenship education, for several months there has been no subject co-ordinator to monitor their use or to develop the subject.

Commentary

93. Pupils across the school make very good progress in the development of their personal, social, independence, mobility and communication skills. This is because the development of these skills is at the core of all that the school does. All lessons and other activities during each day are used as learning opportunities for personal and social development. After-school clubs are carefully tailored to the interests of primary and secondary pupils. The clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to make choices and take turns. Pupils also have classroom duties such as collecting and returning registers and they learn the skills needed to serve on the primary

and secondary School Councils. They know how to vote, for example, and to select the best design for a 'Welcome' sign in the school foyer.

94. Pupils' individual programmes are planned very effectively by the multi-disciplinary teams. As a result pupils become more independent and communicative. Targets in their individual education plans promote specific personal and social learning needs. Individualised programmes of support enable pupils to communicate using switches, electronic talkers, signs and symbols, for example. Individual programmes improve mobility, posture and balance, body awareness, toileting and feeding skills.
95. The quality of teaching and learning in personal and social education (PSD) lessons are good. Pupils achieve well in a wide variety of activities. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learnt about choosing. They choose the activities they want to do, playing in sand, working with an adult for five minutes, looking at pictures in books, and walking independently. Year 7 pupils learn very well about the formalities of minute taking in their meeting about the Tsunami Appeal. In Years 8 and 9 pupils investigate the different countries that have produced equipment and resources found in school and at home. Year 10 pupils learn about the various roles of adults in school whilst higher ability pupils in Year 11 know about the work of Members of Parliament. Enterprise projects in Years 10 to 14 enable pupils to appreciate the value of team work to create a successful company. They meet employers to learn interview skills. Post-16 students understand the meaning of 'family' and investigate family celebrations in different cultures, whilst a few put their independent catering skills into practice very well when they stay in the residence. More could be done, however, to develop the social skills of Post-16 students at lunchtimes.
96. Currently arrangements for the overall leadership and management of this area of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. This is because the co-ordinator has been on sick leave for many months. However, good quality planning documents are in place and this is ensuring that, in the short term, pupils continue to learn very well. In the Post-16 unit the subject is very well led and managed and a wide range of support agencies are integrated together very well to prepare students for leaving school. It is not possible to report on improvement in the subject because it was not reported separately at the time of the last inspection.

POST-16 UNIT

Six lessons were observed. There were discussions with the Post-16 co-ordinator. Planning documents were reviewed and brief discussions with students.

Provision for Post-16 students is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good progress, particularly in the development of their personal, social and independence skills.
- The recently developed 14-19 curriculum, 'Pathways 2000+', is very relevant and gives extensive opportunities for pupils to gain certificates for their efforts.
- The unit is very well led and managed and arrangements for students leaving school are very good.
- Arrangements for studying vocational subjects at college have declined this year following organisational changes at the college.

Commentary

97. Students achieve very well because they have very good attitudes to work. They are taught very well and the programmes they follow are very relevant. For example, through a Team Enterprise project, students set up a company and elected the senior managers and other staff to run the company. This enterprise learning also promotes their social skills, independence and financial awareness. Work in food technology links very well with students' life skills targets. In the residence, Post-16 students demonstrate their independence through domestic routines like shopping, preparing meals, personal care and self-sufficiency. Students make good use of computers and the internet. In art they download images to help them with their designs. As part of the independent living course, students research on the internet to find solutions to their real life physical difficulties, like finding suitable furniture and storage solutions for their bedrooms. Students, also, integrate very well with students from a local secondary school for drama and child care studies.
98. The Post-16 curriculum has a core of required subjects, English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and an extensive range of options. The whole programme has three main and very relevant strands, namely, transition into independent living, into further education, and into employment. The flexibility of the curriculum, and the opportunity it affords for students to make choices from an extensive option list, is its strength. It provides students with opportunities for study similar to those in larger mainstream establishments. The curriculum combination of academic, vocational, personal and social education is very good. The new flexibility of the 14 to 19 curriculum enables students to catch up on courses and accreditation they may not have had chance to study or complete in Year 11. By the end of Year 14 students achieve certificates in a good range of Entry Level courses and GCSE. Lower attaining students achieve certificates in the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology.
99. Prior to the start of this academic year the school had built up very good links with a local college and students attended college for vocational courses. This year, as a result of changes in organisation and management at the college, it has not been possible for students to study at the college. There is, however, excellent work with a local secondary school which means students can study drama and child care. Finding external work experience placements continues to be difficult to manage because of the extensive care needs of many of the students, but developments in this area are being continued. In their preparations for leaving school, students choose the colleges they wish to visit for their further education, and the visits are then arranged.
100. The very good leadership and management of the Post-16 department has resulted in a new and flexible vision for 16 to 19 education becoming a reality. As a result, students are prepared very well for leaving school. It is not, though, possible to report on improvement in the Post-16 department because there was no separate judgement on Post-16 provision in the last report. The school's response to recent national 14-19 initiatives is, however, very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Grade

Inspection judgement

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.