

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **FOXWOOD SCHOOL**

Seabrook Road, Hythe

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119057

Headteacher: Mr Chris Soulsby

Lead inspector: Mrs Sue Aldridge

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2004

Inspection number: 268565

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	99
School address:	Seabrook Road Hythe
Postcode:	CT21 5QJ
Telephone number:	01303 261155
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Yvonne Gilbertson
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2002

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Foxwood is a mixed, day and residential school for pupils from 2 to 19. All pupils have statements of special educational needs, or are being assessed for one. Their attainment on entry is very low, and this is linked to their severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Roughly half of the pupils have autism, and a small number have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition there are very small numbers with physical difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. There is an uneven spread of age groups, with roughly a third in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils are white, with small numbers of other ethnic origins. For six pupils, English is not their home language, and they are at an early stage of acquiring language. Six pupils are in public care. Pupils come from a wide area and many different socio-economic groups, but overall their socio-economic circumstances are average. One in five pupils is residential.

The school occupies two sites, several miles apart. Students over 16 are based at a site close to Cheriton High Street. The Foundation Stage class is based on the main site in the Children's Centre which is jointly shared between the education, health and social services. This allows observation, assessment and joint agency planning to take place efficiently. For children who require it, suitable therapy is provided here too. Children may attend this class full or part-time, depending on their needs. For example, some children attend part-time solely on an observation and assessment placement; some attend on a part-time basis because they also attend a mainstream early years provision, while others in the Reception class attend full-time.

The school has a well established outreach service that provides support for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools of all types, but mainly Nursery, infant and junior schools. Opportunities are provided for Foxwood pupils to learn alongside peers in mainstream schools and for mainstream pupils to have lessons at Foxwood. There are partnerships also with a local college, social services, the health trust, and schools in the Shepway cluster.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Modern Foreign Language; Design and Technology.
19692	Bob Folks	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23390	Melvyn Blackband	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Religious Education; Music; Art and Design.
17855	Gordon Gentry	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Geography; History; Physical Education
22178	Kate Robertson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Personal, Social and Health Education; Citizenship; Information and Communication Technology; Work Related Learning; Special Educational Needs.
3055	Clive Tombs	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Mathematics.

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school's effectiveness is satisfactory.** Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, and they are well prepared for adult life. They enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to work are good, as is their behaviour. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it is very good at the Foundation Stage and Post 16. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

**The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Children at the Foundation Stage and students over 16 achieve very well. Achievement in music is very good.
- The school's outreach service is very effective, and is well regarded by parents and professionals.
- Good numbers of support staff help to ensure that pupils are engaged well during lessons.
- The school's accommodation is not suitable for pupils of all ages or the range of their special education needs (SEN).
- The roles of subject leaders are not sufficiently well developed.
- Few parents feel that they are seen as partners in their children's learning.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case. Governance has improved considerably, and there has been satisfactory improvement in leadership and management. Monitoring and support for teaching has helped to improve teaching and learning. The curriculum is now broader and better balanced. Although much has been done to improve partnership with parents, there is significant dissatisfaction amongst a small number of parents.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Overall, achievement is satisfactory.** Children at the Foundation Stage get a very good start to their education. They make rapid progress towards the Early Learning Goals and their achievements in all areas of learning are very good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well because teaching is good. At this stage, achievement in English is good. In Years 3 to 9, where most of the school's pupils are placed, achievement is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, achievement is satisfactory overall. In Years 3 to 11, achievement in speaking and listening, reading and writing is satisfactory. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils and students achieve well in personal, social, and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Students at the Norrington centre achieve very well; all the teaching here is very good, and the curriculum is highly relevant to students' needs. When they leave school, students go on to suitable placements, including further education. There has been good improvement in developing the residential provision to address the minor shortfalls identified in its recent inspection.

**Overall, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, is good.** Attendance, punctuality, pupils' attitudes, and their behaviour are all good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory.** Across the school, inspectors saw a high proportion of good and very good teaching, although a few unsatisfactory lessons were also seen in Years 3 to 9. Large numbers of teaching assistants present in classes help to make sure that pupils are attentive and busy throughout lessons. Pupils respond well to the encouragement that staff give by being generally co-operative and trying their best. Staff expect pupils to behave well, and pupils with challenging behaviour are usually managed skilfully so that there is little disruption to learning. Staff use a good range of resources to stimulate and interest pupils, and visits are well integrated into teaching programmes to make learning meaningful to pupils. As part of the very productive links with other schools and colleges, there are good opportunities for pupils to learn alongside peers from mainstream schools. There are many weaknesses of the school's accommodation, including a main site unsuitable for pupils with mobility difficulties, a lack of specialist rooms for secondary pupils, and no hydrotherapy pool. Despite the poor accommodation, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall. At the Foundation Stage and Post 16, the curriculum is very good. There are good arrangements to secure the welfare, health and safety of pupils, and good advice, support and guidance. A close watch is kept on pupils' progress and changing needs, and pupils' views are taken into account well. Induction arrangements are very good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** Governance is good. Governors both support and challenge the school, and they are developing a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Through their committees, they keep the work of the school under review, and they meet all their statutory obligations. Leadership by the headteacher and other key staff is satisfactory overall. Leadership and management of the outreach service is very good. Delegation has improved, but there is scope for further delegation to middle managers to reduce the workload on the two deputy headteachers. There is a strong commitment to working in partnership with mainstream schools in the interests of all pupils with SEN. Staff are very well supported in developing their skills, and induction is good. School review and self-evaluation is satisfactory and developing. Although there are several long-term improvement plans in departments of the school, the overall five-year plan is not yet complete. The local education authority (LEA) has provided good support for improvement since the last inspection.

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

Through questionnaires, letters and the parents' meeting, a small number of parents expressed dissatisfaction about many aspects of the school's provision. Inspectors looked into all their concerns, and found that only a few were justified. Pupils are positive about the opportunities that the school provides, and they clearly enjoy good relationships with staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- In conjunction with the LEA, improve the accommodation to address the weakness identified in the report;
- extend the roles of subject leaders so that they are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and achievement;
- further develop partnership with parents, particularly opportunities for parents to be involved in supporting their children's learning.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Standards are well below those expected for pupils of a similar age because of the nature and extent of pupils' learning difficulties.

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

- Children at the Foundation Stage and students over 16 achieve very well; those in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.
- Across the school, achievement in music is very good.
- In Years 1 to 14, achievement in PSHE and citizenship is good.
- The school is successful in returning a small number of pupils to mainstream schools each year, or enabling pupils to take examination courses in mainstream.

#### **Commentary**

1. There has been a satisfactory improvement in achievement since the last inspection. At that time, there was underachievement in science in Years 10 and 11, in geography and history, and in French. The underlying causes of underachievement, chiefly weak planning and teachers' expertise, have all been successfully addressed.
2. Children at the Foundation Stage get a very good start to their education. Here, staff are skilled and teaching is mostly very good. The purpose-built accommodation and good levels of resourcing help to promote progress well. Not all children reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1 because of the extent of their learning difficulties. A few, who attend for assessment purposes, do well enough to move on to a place in a mainstream school. There is a similarly high achievement at the Norrington Centre, where students over 16 spend much of their time. Here, teaching is highly individual, and students are very well supported by a skilled team of adults. Although the accommodation has weaknesses that impinge on students' leisure opportunities and welfare, they do not limit their academic achievements in any way. All leave school with suitable accreditation that can, if incomplete, be finished at a college. The higher attainers are successful in achieving the Award Scheme Accreditation and Development Network's (ASDAN) Bronze Award; lower attainers are successful in achieving modules that go to make up the 'Towards Independence' award, also accredited by ASDAN.
3. Good achievement in Years 1 and 2 is associated with good teaching and learning. Records provide clear evidence of pupils' progress.
4. In music, very good achievement is associated with the consistently high quality of teaching and learning. A skilled musician makes the subject accessible to all pupils by using very good resources. High expectations of what pupils might achieve are matched by pupils' positive attitudes, and these factors contribute well to promoting high achievement. One student, with a particular musical talent, at the Norrington Centre is working towards General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) music.
5. In Years 3 to 11, achievement is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection, assessment procedures have been further developed, and the school now has sufficient information on how well pupils are doing in most subjects to begin to set realistic targets for raising achievement. The targets that were set last year were challenging, but were not all reached. An explanation of this lies

in changes to cohorts of pupils, sometimes involving a single pupil, who may have now left the school. A great deal of work has gone into analysing assessment data, and tracking pupils' progress. Senior staff are beginning to raise questions about the achievement of individual pupils as a result. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

6. In the key subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education, information and communication technology (ICT) and PSHE and citizenship, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Although much good teaching was seen during the inspection, and pupils generally achieved well in lessons, inspectors did not see clear enough evidence of good achievement over time. This was because pupils' annotated portfolios, containing photographic evidence, were not consistent in their quality, and it was not always possible to track pupils' progress clearly enough. A few examples of inaccuracies in the levelling of pupils' work were also seen. It was not always possible to evaluate achievement by examining the targets set for pupils in their individual education plans (IEPs). Occasionally, targets are not precise enough. However, where precise targets were set for individuals, these were generally challenging and were met, or partly met, each term. Inspectors found no evidence of differences in achievement between pupils of different abilities, genders or ethnic origins.

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

The pupils have good attitudes to school and take a full part in its life. Their behaviour is good overall, and sometimes very good in lessons. At the Foundation Stage, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships within the school are good. Moral and social development are very good. Spiritual and cultural awareness is well developed.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attitudes and behaviour are good in lessons and are sometimes very good. At the Foundation Stage, they are very good.
- Behaviour is good in and around the school.
- Moral and social development are very good.
- Spiritual and cultural awareness are well developed.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

### **Commentary**

7. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and both contribute and respond well to the many methods used by the school to engage their interest. This is seen at its best in the Foundation Stage, where the children's attitudes and behaviour are very good. Here, children settle well, and staff quickly get to know them. Warm relationships between adults and children mean that children feel secure, react well to adult encouragement, and respond very positively to the wide range of experiences offered.

8. The school makes full use of a range of sensory equipment and devices, switches and interactive boards to which the pupils respond well and sometimes very well. Examples of this were seen in Years 1 to 6 and in Years 10 and 11. At Post 16, a wide range of ICT is well used by the pupils. At the start of the day, and in some of the lessons, some wonderful relationships were seen between the staff and the pupils, and relationships generally throughout the school are good.

9. Parents confirm that most pupils like coming to school. Attendance compares favourably with similar schools nationally, and the school has good procedures for monitoring attendance. Transport is punctual, and lessons start and end on time, so there is no slippage during the school day.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.4

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

10. Outside lessons, behaviour is good. Staff have high expectations and the pupils respond well to this. A good level of supervision is provided at all times. Pupils co-operate well when staff engage them in feeding programmes at lunchtimes. There is a good range of activities available to occupy the pupils at lunchtimes and the 'go-karts' are an obvious success. At Post 16, students were pleased to entertain inspectors for lunch. Following lunch, students settled readily to leisure activities of their choice, and demonstrated independence in selecting and pursuing an interest, such as using computers, listening to music, reading books and playing games appropriate for their age. Their behaviour was good and the quality of the relationships and the family feeling was very evident. No bullying or harassment was seen during the inspection. Staff report a reduction in pupils' frustration at being unable to communicate their feelings following the introduction of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) just over a year ago. A few parents expressed some concerns about inappropriate behaviour being ignored, but inspectors found well-constructed behaviour management plans, and strategies that were successful in improving pupils' behaviour. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

11. Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility and independence on an individual basis. This forms part of their IEP, and many were seen to show others, by example, how to do things. Examples of this were seen in physical education lessons or when the interactive white board was in use. At Post 16, pupils go shopping for food, bring it back, prepare and cook it, serve it and clear up afterwards. They are good at entertaining guests and looking after them. Pupils have good self-esteem and confidence, which are encouraged and fostered by the teachers and many support staff. The majority of pupils have individual support and, generally speaking, this works very well.

12. The pupils are taught through lessons, lunchtimes and at all times how their actions may affect others, and how to behave correctly and appreciate others' feelings. Religious education lessons teach the pupils proper values, helpfulness and understanding. The teachers and assistants set good examples of how to do this, and how to distinguish right from wrong. The school's codes of behaviour are understood and complied with, and the pupils respond well to the high expectations set.

13. Social awareness is developed very effectively through a wide range of visits into the community. Pupils have an awareness of the school as a community, and know how they fit into this. This is very apparent at Post 16, where the unit operates as a small family with everyone in it having their part to play. Citizenship helps them to relate this to the wider community, and they have the opportunity in many different ways to further explore other organisations through visits and work experience.

14. At the start of the day, the pupils are met as they arrive and are made to feel very welcome. They move into their welcoming routine easily and happily, and the warmth of the relationships between the staff and pupils is readily observed. In another example, the excitement of the pupils in a science lesson was clearly observed as the teacher made shadows on the screen for the pupils to recognise. There was obvious joy and pleasure as junior pupils used the 'Magic Pen' when learning letter sounds. Finally, the Reception children's visit to the sensory garden to explore the sounds of tinkling bells, the smells of mint and other plants, to see and feel the sensations of touching running water, picking up leaves and birds' feathers, was a pleasure to see.

15. Cultural awareness is developed well through art, music, visits and visitors to the school. Various religions are examined through religious education (Jewish New Year) and by visits to churches of various denominations in the community to celebrate religious festivals. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own culture through the lessons and visits. They have also looked at other

cultures, such as the West Indies (a Caribbean Day), Africa (dance and music including The Lion King), India (Tabla drums played by a visitor), Australia (playing the didgeridoo), North America (Indians and Inuit), South America (making masks), and have researched Canada on the Internet.

16. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the quality of its provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and so is the curriculum and its assessment. There is good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has satisfactory links with parents, good links with the community and very productive links with other schools and colleges.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good at the Foundation Stage and Post 16; music teaching is very good.
- The generous levels of support staff help to ensure that pupils are well supported, engaged and productive in lessons.
- Pupils are managed well; those with behaviour difficulties are not allowed to disturb the learning of others.
- Teachers do not work closely enough with parents to extend pupils' learning at home.
- Assessment procedures have developed considerably since the last inspection, but records are not yet kept consistently well across all classes.

### **Commentary**

17. The most consistent teaching was seen at the Foundation Stage, where most lessons were very good, and at Post 16, where all lessons were very good. At the Foundation Stage, all aspects of teaching and learning are strong. The seamless teamwork between teachers and a large number of support staff promotes very good achievement. Teachers and support assistants have high expectations and are particularly skilled and patient at managing children's behaviour. Close co-operation with parents and professionals from health and social services has a beneficial effect on the progress children make. Close links with mainstream schools and other early years providers ensures children move comfortably between them and the centre. Initial, ongoing assessment, and end-of-year reports are very thorough, and this information is used well to identify priority learning goals, plan relevant and motivating experiences and, ultimately, to decide the most appropriate placement.

18. At Post 16, there is a similarly high level of support, although students are encouraged to be as independent as possible. Teaching in ability groups works very well, and students' individual targets are taken into account when planning lessons. Much of what students learn is practised and consolidated in the local community, so it has a direct relevance that students can see. This motivates them well. For instance, students out shopping for the lunch that they are going to prepare are learning also about safe practice as pedestrians. A particular strength at Post 16 is the way in which students are involved in assessing how well they have done. This gives them a good idea of what they need to do to improve. Staff, using ICT, very professionally produce learning materials, including worksheets and self-assessment forms. Students learn to file their completed work themselves, and take pride in completing their work to a standard that matches that of its preparation and presentation.

19. Inspectors were well aware of the difficulties that a few teachers' faced at the start of a new school year; a few were new to special education. Although the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons appears high, there were extenuating circumstances in three of these. In two lessons, lower attaining pupils were set tasks that were too difficult. In a third lesson, the whole class session went well, but a follow-up task confused pupils. In an ICT lesson, there was too little focus on ICT, and in one religious education lesson pupils were not managed well enough. The school's and the attached adviser's monitoring evidence suggests that unsatisfactory lessons are rare, even in unannounced observations. As a result, teaching is judged as satisfactory overall. However, few teachers provide homework other than the taking home of reading books, or words to learn. Too little thought is given to ways in which parents might consolidate or extend pupils' learning at home. Several parents expressed concerns about this and indicated that they would like to do more to build on their children's learning.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 62 lessons**

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
1 (1.6%)	20 (32.3%)	21 (33.9 %)	15 (24.2%)	5 (8.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. A significant strength of teaching is the large number of support staff present in classes. In many lessons seen, these were sufficient for each pupil to be supported by an adult. In most cases, support staff were well briefed and had a clear understanding of how best to work with pupils so that they were challenged to do as much as they could themselves. In a small number of cases, support staff did too much, or were too quick to intervene. In one instance, where one of the learning objectives was to develop skills in applying glue with a brush, a teaching assistant applied the glue whilst a pupil tore paper into small pieces. The teacher did not spot this weakness. However, on other occasions, teachers and support staff worked most effectively together, adapting their plans and strategies as the circumstances changed.

21. Staff generally manage pupils effectively. They know them well, and how to get the best from them. Encouragement and praise are given appropriately, and instances of disruptive behaviour are well managed, in accordance with clear behaviour management plans. In an English lesson, one pupil with behaviour difficulties hit out at a member of staff. He was swiftly removed from the room by two staff, and he returned after a minute or so, quickly constructed a message using PECS and then carried on with the lesson. There was minimal disruption. Staff report that the use of PECS has reduced pupils' frustration. Pupils now have a means of communicating clearly their wishes. In this instance, the pupil's message was that he wanted to be supported by the teacher, rather than a teaching assistant. He was fully co-operative for the remainder of the lesson.

22. Resources, such as real objects, signs and symbols are used well to help pupils to understand and recall previous learning. Some good examples were seen of new technology being used to good effect. For instance, video clips, switches with recorded messages on them, and interactive whiteboards were used successfully, and these proved particularly motivating for pupils. Schedules, showing pupils what activity is due next are also used effectively to help pupils who find change difficult.

23. Teachers plan a broad range of learning experiences, including first-hand learning through visits, which are closely linked to the curriculum topic being studied. Planning has improved since the last inspection, particularly in science, geography and history, where it was unsatisfactory. In addition, teachers specify clear learning outcomes, and record whether these have been met at the end of each unit of work. Gaps in learning are identified, and this information is used in subsequent plans. As a result, pupils build systematically on their knowledge, skills and understanding. In addition, individual targets are set where there is considered to be a particular need. In most cases, these targets are challenging, and are met or partly met in the space of each term. Where necessary, targets are carried forward to the next plan. However, in a small number of cases,

targets are not really about learning, but about what adults should do to support pupils. Occasionally, targets are not precise enough or recording is unclear, and so it is not possible to say whether they have been achieved. Weaknesses are few, but have gone unnoticed when records and IEPs are monitored. There is scope for tightening up on the monitoring so that consistent, good recording is achieved.

24. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced annotated portfolios of pupils' levelled work. The intention is that there should be a piece of work for each subject, and each attainment target in English, each term. This is a useful development. For the most part, portfolios are completed well, but in some classes they are completed better than in others. Occasionally, there are gaps, or incomplete annotations. In a few instances, work is not correctly levelled. The portfolios are sampled by senior managers, key stage managers and subject leaders as a means of monitoring. This needs to be tightened up, so that a thorough check is made on each portfolio. Teaching, learning and assessment have all improved since the school was last inspected.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage and at Post 16. The curriculum ensures that pupils develop their skills steadily as they move through the school, and there is a very good range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. Taken together, accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory; although resources are satisfactory overall, poor accommodation limits the effectiveness of the curriculum.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and at students at Post 16 is very good.
- Enrichment provision is very good and provides a range of visits to support and enhance the curriculum.
- There are effective opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills.
- The large number of teaching assistants has a significant positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- The unsuitable accommodation has a significant negative impact on the curriculum.

## **Commentary**

25. Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection and an appropriate range of learning activities is now provided for pupils. In most subjects, the planning that teachers follow now ensures that pupils gain in knowledge sufficiently as they move through the school. The provision for music is a strength, providing a wide range of activities based on sensory principles.

26. The very effective 16 –19 curriculum ensures activities are relevant, practical and matched closely to students' wide ranging needs. It continues to build on the key skills of communication, numeracy, literacy, and ICT. A range of nine ASDAN modules provides suitable accreditation and helps students to become more independent. There is a strong emphasis on key skills and, because of the wide range of abilities, the Adult Literacy and Numeracy curriculum has been introduced. Students achieve well because the department is very skilfully managed and extremely well led.

27. Since most pupils travel home by organised transport, activities outside the school day are limited. However, the school works very successfully to widen pupils' experience and understanding of their locality and community with a range of visits out of school and visitors into school, which support the curriculum. Enrichment provision is very good and provides good opportunities for first-hand learning, in addition to developing pupils' personal and social skills. For

example, visits to Sandgate and Hythe canal support learning in geography for younger pupils, whilst eating at local cafés provides older pupils with an opportunity to practise their social skills. Pupils also integrate with peers from other schools as part of the inclusion programme, creating additional opportunities to develop personal and social skills.

28. Provision for PSHE is good and is an important constituent of the curriculum. It is built into all lessons and includes pertinent activities such as feeding, behaviour and self-help skills, in addition to directly-taught elements such as sex and relationship education, attention to alcohol and drug misuse, and citizenship. Aspects of PSHE are reinforced throughout the day, at meal times, playtimes, on visits into the community and through links with other subjects, for example work-related learning (WRL) and science. Good use is made of part of the lunchtime for pupils to work on relevant individual, personal targets.

29. The match of teachers and resources to the curriculum is satisfactory. The high number of support staff contributes to good achievement in lessons. The speech and language therapist works closely and very effectively with the teaching staff to support pupils' individual needs and wider curriculum planning. The school supports staff development well through programmes such as National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). All staff have had New Opportunities Fund training in ICT and, in addition, support assistants have recently benefited from the schools' own basic ICT training for beginners, which is beginning to have an impact on teaching and learning.

30. Although the accommodation and resources at the Foundation Stage are good, overall the school's accommodation is poor. It is outside the scope of the school's budget to rectify all of the following weaknesses:

- \* The main site consists of a number of buildings on the side of a hill. This limits access for some pupils and is unsatisfactory during inclement weather. The library, which is too small for class groups, is not readily accessible. Staircases in some buildings limit access as well as pupil's independence skills.
- \* There are no specialist facilities for science, art, design and technology or ICT for pupils of secondary age.
- \* There is no hydrotherapy pool, and no dedicated areas in which therapists can work.

31. For Post 16 students at the Norrington Centre there are no outdoor amenities. Students and staff share the same toilet facilities, and changing facilities are not separate, resulting in a loss of privacy and dignity for those that need help with changing. There is no medical room or staffroom at the centre.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The care, welfare and safety of pupils are **good**. Careful monitoring ensures that the pupils are supported, advised and guided well. The pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon well.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- Provision of support, advice and career guidance is very good at Post 16.

## **Commentary**

32. The school has good procedures for health and safety, and governors and staff undertake regular inspections of the buildings and grounds. Risk assessments are done for individual pupils, trips and visits and for a wide range of different situations.

33. First aid procedures are good. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, as confirmed by the report of inspection of the residential provision undertaken earlier this year by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). All of these ensure a safe environment for the pupils. The school has taken suitable action on points raised in the NCSC report and has made good progress in dealing with the recommendations.

34. The members of the staff know the pupils very well. They care for and look after the pupils well. Each pupil has a number of caring adults to approach or look after them if they have any problems, and the teachers are always available. There is a strong 'family' feel to the school and this is at its strongest in the Foundation Stage and at Post 16. Everyone has their part to play and this ensures that the pupils are well supported at all times during their time in the school. Outside specialists, such as the speech and language therapists and those from the physiotherapy department, contribute strongly to the pupils' support and learning at the school. Their expertise is passed to the teaching assistants, who put these specialist skills into action on a daily basis, which benefits the pupils considerably.

35. Suitable tracking and monitoring ensures that pupils are given good advice and guidance as they pass through the school. This is particularly good at the Foundation Stage, and independent learning and careers advice at Post 16 is very good. Close liaison between staff at the main site and those at the Norrington centre, led by one of the deputy headteachers, ensures that there is a smooth transition from Year 11 to Post 16. This includes older pupils visiting the Norrington centre and following part of their ASDAN course there, which prepares them well for the different approach and environment at Post 16. Good liaison with the Connexions service ensures that pupils and students are well supported in planning the next steps.

36. Pupils' views are sought on a day-to-day basis, but also through the school council. These views are taken into account and acted upon as considered appropriate. These findings are similar to the last inspection. Parents are generally happy with the care and support given to their children. However, there were a few concerns raised at the pre-inspection meeting. One parent suggested that more accidents happened on a Friday, when pupils often go out of school on educational visits. An examination of the school records showed that this was not the case. There was some concern about accidents not always being notified to parents. The school uses the home/school book for this but in some instances, such as when a pupil suffers a bump to the head, immediate notification by telephone would be more appropriate.

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

Links with parents are satisfactory, although many would still like to be able to work more closely with the school to help their children progress. The school has good links with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The work of the inclusion/outreach team is very good.
- The school works most constructively with other schools and colleges, as well as the local community.
- Parents do not yet feel sufficiently involved with the school to enable them to help their children progress.

### **Commentary**

37. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were mostly happy with what is happening in the school but had strong reservations about a number of areas. These included the information they were receiving about their children's progress, their unease at coming to the school with a problem or complaint, and how much the school seeks their views and takes account of their suggestions and concerns.



38. At the last inspection, parental partnerships were identified as in need of improvement, and had been commented upon at the inspection before that. In the last year to 15 months, considerable efforts have been made by the school and governors to address these problems. The Foxwood Association has been revived, the home/school book has been reviewed and amended, newsletters are now being sent out half-termly, workshops have been held and parents interviewed. A parent survey undertaken in June of this year showed an improvement in the parents' views, but it is apparent from the OFSTED questionnaires that there is still some unrest and still more work to be done.

39. The Foxwood Association organises a wide range of events and has raised considerable amounts of money from the community towards the provision of a new mini-bus. This and their work to establish the sensory garden, and other school events, make valuable contributions to the school and to the pupils' learning. Parents have been instrumental in cataloguing all the library stock, thus saving valuable staff time.

40. The information now provided to parents is considered satisfactory. The school prospectus is friendly and informative and is well supplemented by the governors' annual report to parents. Annual pupils' reports are satisfactory but do not identify areas for improvement with which the parents could help. The newsletters are of a good quality and are well presented. They are beginning to provide information on the curriculum, so that parents will be better able to reinforce children's learning at home.

41. The inclusion/outreach team is very well led and managed, and members work with much enthusiasm and professionalism. They are well respected by the staff of local schools, and provide an inclusion service over a broad area. Their expertise is very much appreciated by many schools in the area. They support the inclusion of Foxwood pupils into mainstream, as well as 'reverse inclusion', where pupils from mainstream schools have lessons at Foxwood. Inspectors saw several successful reverse inclusion sessions. In these, both sets of pupils benefited socially as they learned alongside one another.

42. The outreach team works in a wide range of ways to support colleagues in mainstream. The team's advice is sought by mainstream staff about their own pupils with special needs. Members of the team observe and evaluate pupils, suggest courses of action and even train the school staff to continue with the necessary support. They keep in touch with schools about pupils they have included and, in all cases, monitor them long after they have left to ensure that they are still thriving. They oversee and organise the transition of pupils to their next school to make sure the pupils' move is as smooth as possible. They provide support as long as it is necessary with inclusion, training and transition. One of their more recent projects was with gifted and talented pupils in rural schools and this was very successful. The Post 16 department has good links with colleges and uses the courses offered very well to extend the pupils' learning.

43. The school uses the local community very well as a learning zone. Well planned visits widen pupils' learning experiences. There are also links with local businesses that have helped to fund the sensory garden, with the Rotary Club, local supermarkets, theatres, the library and local sporting organisations. Post 16 students are often in the local community, where they practise mobility skills, shop for food, and pursue leisure activities such as dry-slope skiing.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **good** and the governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met. Leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very active and efficient governing body.
- Delegation has improved since the last inspection, but there is scope for further involvement of subject leaders in order to relieve the burden on the two deputy headteacher's.
- Provision for the continuing professional development of staff is very good.

### Commentary

44. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and is well supported by an efficient senior management team. He is more closely involved in the management of the school than at the last inspection. He involves and motivates staff and they are supportive of him. The staff have very positive attitudes in their desire to improve standards of education for the pupils. Recent productive work on developing the curriculum has enabled senior staff and other teachers to clarify goals and strategies for improvement. The headteacher and senior staff have maintained a system of thorough monitoring of the teaching and learning in the school which has had a positive effect on raising standards. Strong support from officers of the LEA has contributed to the improvements in leadership and management since the last inspection.

45. The headteacher and two able deputy headteachers have successfully introduced widespread curriculum changes, underpinned by a well thought out system of assessment of pupils' progress. This is supported by an appropriate school improvement plan which is being extended to plan for improvement over a longer period. The headteacher has successfully widened the leadership of the school. Subject leaders have clear responsibility for the development of areas of the curriculum. They have satisfactorily taken on a greater responsibility for monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. They are successfully developing their management skills, and have recently provided detailed development plans over a three year period. There are appropriate and successful lines of communication from subject leaders to the senior management team, who retain strong leadership of the curriculum and the standards of teaching and learning. This model has been successful in securing the necessary changes in the last two years. However, it is now time to extend the roles of subject leaders so that they take on the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in their subjects. This will reduce the burden on the two deputies, who currently monitor teaching and learning across all subjects, track pupils' progress and set targets for raising achievement.

46. Historically, the headteacher has been very successful in developing links with other schools. Outreach provision, very well managed by an assistant headteacher, has become a strength of the school.

47. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and staff, and is maintaining clear oversight of the work of the school. Governors have a good grasp of the priorities for school improvement and have established an effective monitoring role for each aspect of the school's work. Consequently, governors are well informed about the school's strengths and continuing areas for development. Through a well organised committee structure, the governors review progress regularly with the headteacher. They have a significant input into school development and have developed very good relationships with school staff. Governors feel confident to challenge and support the leadership of the school. They have increased their understanding through specific and focused training and they systematically monitor the headteacher's performance.

48. The management of the school is developing satisfactorily. Senior staff have begun to establish clear monitoring procedures and have made a reasonable start in the formulation of self-evaluation strategies. There is as yet no review and evaluation cycle, although elements of review and evaluation have been developed, such as parental surveys and measurement of value-added. There are well-managed procedures for the management of staff performance. These are beginning to inform the school's self-evaluation and are linked to planning for the professional development of staff. There are very thorough induction procedures for new staff, and a high level of support for the training of teaching assistants. Teaching staff are encouraged to seek further qualifications and training in provision for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The school has invested appropriately in significant training to provide for pupils with autism, and maintains productive links with local higher education colleges. The emphasis on professional development for staff has had a positive effect on standards. The school would, however, benefit from instituting closer links between the priorities expressed in the school improvement plan, the projected costs for training and the monitoring information available from the performance management of staff.

### ***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>		<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Total income	2,645,013.00	Balance from previous year	188,802.00
Total expenditure	2,708,717.00	Balance carried forward to the next	125,098.00
Expenditure per pupil	20,890.00		

49. Although pupil costs are high, this is explained by the decision to employ a high number of teaching assistants, which contributes well to learning and achievement. The budget is well managed, and carefully monitored by the finance manager and a deputy headteacher. Governors have established exemplary monthly finance checks. Rigorous management of the budget is essential, since funds made available by the local authority to support individual pupils are paid in retrospect and this can affect the viability of the budget causing it temporarily to go into deficit. The school has clear policies for obtaining the best value in its expenditure. Overall the school offers satisfactory value for money.

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

Provision for work related learning (WRL) is **good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The programme for WRL at Post 16 is very good.
- Good developments in Years 7 to 11 have been made since the previous inspection.
- A range of visits supports the curriculum very well.

### **Commentary**

50. Requirements in WRL are met fully. A suitable, relevant programme, in the form of a 14 to 19 work related curriculum, has been recently established and is proving successful; this is being extended to Year 7. Good emphasis on vocational education, underpinned by other courses that promote a greater understanding of the world and citizenship, further basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The curriculum for pupils from 14 to 16 takes full advantage of the flexibilities in the National Curriculum. There is a comprehensive work experience programme and very good use is made of the local community to give pupils first-hand experiences.

51. The enthusiastic Post 16 co-ordinator has made substantial improvements by thoroughly reviewing and revising the curriculum, so that it builds well on experiences in Years 10 and 11, but provides more work- and life-related experiences. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are given the opportunity to deliver milk and take registers to the office whilst, at Post 16, all students have the opportunity to work in the local park. The more able attend placements off-site, such as a

local Nursery and playgroup. College links are well established and those with the careers service are strong. The local community is also utilised through visits. For instance, there are shopping and leisure activities, enabling students to acquire literacy and numeracy skills in a social context. The curriculum provided for students is based on a sound rationale, that is for them to become as independent as possible, with the social skills and knowledge for them to function in the community. The work- and life-related curriculum prepares students well for adult opportunities and responsibilities.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Years is **very good**.

52. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in every area of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result, children achieve well and make very good progress. Accommodation and resources are very good, and motivate children to engage in learning. Leadership and management are also very good. The high quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

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

- Children feel included, secure and valued.
- Children are encouraged to make choices and develop independence because equipment and materials are well organised.

#### **Commentary**

53. Children part happily from their parents or carers because they are immediately welcomed and engaged by their key workers. They feel comfortable and confident in the well-planned environment, both indoors and outdoors. Routines are well established. Children settle quickly, and sit independently at a table to look at books. The 'Hello' song, accompanied by the showing of a photograph of the child, welcomes each child in turn and develops in them an awareness of being a member of the group and a part of a community. At certain times, children are encouraged to initiate tasks by making choices, for example by dressing up and looking at themselves in a full size mirror, or playing with the train or road set. Staff ensure that, over time, children extend their choice making in a meaningful way. At snack times and lunchtime, children learn to wait their turn, recognising the rights of others. They show increasing independence in dressing, feeding and toileting, and learn to express their needs and feelings through short phrases, gestures, or the use of newly acquired symbols. Very good relationships between children and staff, and high quality care, underpin all areas of learning and ensure that children are always included and try their best.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication, language and literacy skills are promoted in every part of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Signing, symbols, gestures and unambiguous language are used well to ensure children understand what is expected of them.

### Commentary

54. All staff use play, language, gestures, pictures, symbols and signing consistently well to support and promote children's listening and communication skills. They do this in all activities and throughout the day. They provide very good role models for children to copy. All children enjoy looking at a range of books and do so with very little prompting. They show an interest in illustrations and print in books in the 'shared reading' activity that starts the day. Higher attaining children know that print is read from left to right and top to bottom, and recognise high frequency words. The one-to-one staffing means that, whenever children make a positive response or choice, there is always an adult to praise and encourage further responses, for example 'good looking' or 'good listening'. Over time, children recognise their own names. Some form the individual letters of their names in sand or accept hand-over-hand support to write it on a board or type it on the computer. Key words are identified in this term's topic on 'Ourselves', and are reinforced in all areas of learning.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of mathematical activities and talk to children as they play.
- Children develop their mathematical awareness as they explore a range of objects and material.

### Commentary

55. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that children use the language of number whenever possible. For example, they encourage them to use number when serving snacks, 'Would you like *three* biscuits?' or when calling the register, 'Lets count *how many* are here today'. When children are playing, staff ask them questions which require them to count and compare, and they use the terms 'more' or 'less' and 'big' and 'small'. Children's understanding of number is consolidated by stories and Nursery rhymes, and by trips out into the community where they are made aware of the numbers on addresses, roads and on motorcars. In focused but imaginative play, children develop the language of capacity, size, shape and position while pouring coloured water into different size containers, burying big and little shaped objects into sand, or moving objects in, on, under and over a bridge. As a result, children develop good sorting skills, recognising the similarities of objects by colour, shape, size, texture and function and, with support, they make up sets of small numbers and basic shapes.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of the outdoor environment of the school and the locality.
- Children are encouraged to be curious about the world around them.

### Commentary

56. Children make very good progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding that helps them make sense of the world, because teachers plan first-hand experiences that encourage observation and exploration. They also make very effective use of their own base, and the school and local environment. The classroom base and outside area is like an Aladdin's cave, rich in resources and materials that children explore by touch, sight, smell and sound. For example, there are chime bells that ring when the wind blows, and specially adapted rooms for deep sand play and sensory light experiences. The digital camera is used well to record visits and visitors, for example, when a lamb visited the class. These photos help children appreciate the passage of time. While the computer was out of use at the time of the inspection, children's portfolios show that this is a popular activity, with children learning cause and effect as they press jelly switches, the touch screen or the mouse to activate a program. As children visit different parts of the school, such as the gymnasium, they are encouraged to explore the sensory garden, which contains a water feature, a bridge, chime bells and lots of plants to feel and smell. In visits into the local community, such as the local shops, park or animal centres, children find out about people, creatures, plants and food.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress across a wide range of physical activities.
- Children's fine motor control is also developed well.

### Commentary

57. Teachers plan and provide a range of suitably challenging activities. Children develop their confidence; control and co-ordination in the soft play area, in the gymnasium, in the swimming pool and in the outside play area. In physical education lessons they learn how to respond to a signal to stop, hop, skip and jump, and in doing so develop an awareness of space. They learn body awareness and good posture from walking with a beanbag on their heads. In soft play, they crawl under, slide down and climb through apparatus. In swimming, they learn to relax in the water and move on their front and back, supported by staff or by buoyancy aids. In the outdoor play area, they learn basic ball and ball-striking skills, and the balance and co-ordination associated with riding and manoeuvring a tricycle or pushing a truck. Their fine motor skills are steadily developed as children paint, glue, stick, tear tissue, thread beads, complete body puzzles and construct models. They gain in competence in mark making and writing, and in using scissors with increasing efficiency.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan opportunities for children to express their ideas through a wide range of types of representations.
- Children benefit from the expertise of a music specialist.

### Commentary

58. The very good progress made in this area of learning is the result of well-organised activities that allow children to explore and respond and use their many senses and talents. In art activities, for example, children explore colour, shape and form. With support, they produce patterns made up of car tracks, repeat patterns with hands and sponges, and collages made up of materials with different colours and textures. In free play they take up adult roles in the home corner and prepare cups of tea or make the bed. In the dressing up corner, they experiment with different roles and garments, becoming characters such as Father Christmas or a space man. Staff interact and support children in developing their confidence in making choices. They talk or sign to children about their work, and introduce relevant vocabulary. In this way, the teachers and support staff extend children's thinking and learning through well-timed and considered comments and questions. They intervene only to help children acquire skills in using tools and equipment correctly, for example how best to use a paint brush or glue stick. In music, children sing songs from memory, dance to music and explore the sound of a variety of instruments. They benefit enormously from the enthusiasm and expertise of a music specialist. Music lessons are full of interactive activities, for example where the teacher plays an instrument to each pupil in turn, and they respond by touching, banging or rubbing the drums.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 5

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students over 16 and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.
- The introduction of the PECS and assessment of pupils for communication aids have strengthened the school's provision for developing pupils' communication skills.
- There are many good features of teaching but some weaknesses in assessment; teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
- The school has a good stock of books, but the size, location and accessibility of the library are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

59. Overall, pupils' achievements in English are satisfactory. They are satisfactory in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils made too little progress in developing their writing skills. Since then, staff training has been provided, and additional resources procured for teachers to use in teaching writing skills. Younger pupils are given suitable opportunities to develop the necessary skills for handwriting. They learn to join dots to trace a line, form letters, and write their own names. Higher attainers in Year 11 write



independently. For some, the PECS system is used, and pupils learn to construct sentences, requesting things, or describing what they see. Where it is beneficial, pupils use computer software to generate symbols and text. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils were studying *Oliver Twist*. The teacher used a video clip, as well as real resources, such as a bowl of gruel, to remind pupils of the storyline, and pupils then followed this by constructing simple sentences of their own. Different tasks and methods were used so that each pupil was suitably challenged. Well judged support ensured that pupils did as much as they could themselves, and all made good progress in the available time.

60. At Post 16, students achieve well, and this is associated with consistently good teaching. Here, grouping by ability works very well; teaching is individual, with different objectives for each student. High levels of adult support, and very good quality teacher-made worksheets motivate and engage students, who are keen to do well. They learn to file their work away in the correct sections. All tasks are life-related, so students see the purpose in their learning. Well-established routines, and an adult approach to learning builds students' confidence well. A morning session for higher attaining students began with a conversation about what they had done the previous evening. All were able to describe their activities. In a form completion exercise, students knew the difference between *forename* and *surname*, and were able to write these. One student knew why block letters are used when completing forms, and all made very good progress in completing their forms, which were not all the same. This ensured that each student was challenged by the task. Students make good progress against challenging termly literacy objectives, derived from a national adult literacy scheme. Staff have identified the need to adapt this scheme, to break objectives down into smaller steps, so that lower attainers' small gains are demonstrated.

61. Although inspectors saw good achievement in many English lessons in Years 1 to 11, achievement over time was not consistently well demonstrated in pupils' records, except in Years 1 and 2. At this stage, target setting is good, and there is clear evidence of pupils' progress in their portfolios. In Years 1 to 11, there are gaps in the evidence in some portfolios. For example, in a few cases, there was evidence of achievement in speaking and listening one term but not the next, making it difficult to track progress. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that pupils generally achieve the generally precise targets set for them, and they improve their knowledge, skills and understanding over time.

62. The school's provision for communication has been strengthened by the introduction of the PECS system. Many staff have been trained, and training is ongoing. With such a large number of staff this is quite a task. Since the last inspection, the school has become a centre for assessing pupils for a communication aid. So far, six pupils have been assessed, and a few have received electronic communication aids. These are proving beneficial in enabling these pupils to communicate. For some time, the school has used Makaton signs and symbols, and staff are trained in their use too; not all are equally skilled in signing though. In a particularly successful session in Years 10 and 11, pupils were communicating using PECS. There was a lively pace, and learning was fun. A treasure hunt had pupils finding objects in an adjacent room, then constructing sentences, such as '*I see a ball*', using picture/symbol cards affixed to a Velcro strip. Pupils were well supported, and worked with a sense of urgency. This meant that they all achieved a good deal in a relatively short time.

63. Symbols are used well to support pupils' understanding of the written word, and letter sounds are carefully taught. A good lesson was seen in Year 6, where an interactive whiteboard and 'magic pen' were used most successfully to teach pupils letter sounds. Pupils were highly motivated by this use of technology. Higher attainers learn to read words, then sentences. Across the year groups, there is a good stock of books, including taped stories, and books with sensory resources to accompany them. Pupils with communication difficulties are involved in story telling by giving them switches to press that activate sounds. Pupils learn to press these at the appropriate time. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils read a part in a play, and have been introduced to a satisfactory range of literature. The library is well stocked, and parents have recently been busy cataloguing the stock. However, it is housed in one of the buildings on the main site and is not easily accessible to pupils outside that building. It is too small for whole class groups and has no computer or listening station in it.

64. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator role has been extended to include monitoring of teaching and learning; two staff act as co-ordinators and they work well as a team. However, not enough lessons are seen to give a clear picture of where strengths and areas for improvement lie. The role of co-ordinator now needs to be extended to cover monitoring of pupils' progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

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

65. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in subjects other than English. Opportunities for developing literacy skills are identified in the planning for all subjects and, occasionally, pupils' individual communication targets are incorporated into lesson plans. Snack-times and lunchtimes are used well to work on suitable individual communication targets, and teachers are careful to include opportunities for reinforcement when targets have been achieved. For example, pupils are given choices, between resources for instance, during lessons such as art and design and technology. Switches were used successfully to elicit responses from pupils during a science lesson, art work was linked well to the story of a very hungry caterpillar, and the teacher developed pupils' understanding of positional language well in a religious education lesson.

### **Modern foreign language**

66. Although the subject was not a particular focus for this inspection, a weakness in teachers' expertise identified last time was followed up. The school has addressed the issue of teachers' expertise well. All staff in the two lessons observed on this inspection had adequate expertise in teaching the subject. In one lesson, teaching was good. Staff used French well, and sensory methods were successful in eliciting a good range of responses from pupils. It was clear that the pupils, all of whom had complex learning difficulties, were developing an understanding of the language. One bade the inspector *Au revoir* at the end of the lesson.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; it is good at Post 16.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not sufficiently monitored.
- Pupils in Years 11 – 13 work towards suitable accreditation; students over 16 achieve well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

### **Commentary**

67. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. In the best lesson on shape, for pupils in Years 8 and 9, learning objectives were clear and there was a good match of work to pupils' level of attainment and prior learning. A brisk pace and high expectations maintained pupils' commitment to learning. A generous number of support assistants provided one-to-one support and ensured that everyone was included and engaged. Support staff were particularly skilled at dealing with pupils' unpredictable and idiosyncratic behaviour so that the learning of others was not disturbed. In a very good summary at the end of the lesson, the teacher reviewed progress and shared pupils' work. The teacher challenged the class, 'What did we learn? What can we now do?' and this confirmed learning and set an agenda for the next lesson. Higher attaining pupils showed that they can identify common two dimensional shapes, produce a repeating pattern using those shapes, and identify items in a geometry set, such as a compass and protractor. Lower attaining pupils needed hand-over-hand

support to produce their repeating pattern. Other good features of teaching include the very good use of ICT in Year 4 to enhance and support the counting of numbers to 20, and the very good management of pupils' idiosyncratic behaviour in Years 10 and 11. At Post 16, numeracy is well integrated into daily routines, and tasks are real and relevant. This motivates students well. As they are well involved in assessing their work, they develop a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Staff at Post 16 use the adult numeracy programme 'Milestones', which again focuses on numeracy life skills. Students make good progress in these lessons because they are well motivated, teaching is well planned and lively, and support assistants give the right level of support.

68. When teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were not sufficiently engaged. Tasks were too difficult for lower attaining pupils, and the pace of the lesson was too quick for pupils to keep up. In one instance, a poorly planned task confused pupils. On a few occasions, support staff gave pupils too much help.

69. There are good systems in place to confirm pupils' progress and record their achievement. In particular, the work undertaken in setting up pupils' profiles is good. These now contain evidence of pupils' work, which have been assessed at a level, such as P level, dated and annotated. The profiles contain clear criteria to demonstrate pupils' progress, for example how much support is given and how long it took a pupil to complete the task. However, these have not been completed with any consistency and, as such, do not clearly demonstrate pupils' progress and achievement over time as they should. There is clearly a need for more rigorous monitoring, and this would best be performed by the mathematics co-ordinator.

70. Pupils in Year 11 follow a course leading to accreditation by ASDAN 'Transition challenge' and students in Post 16 are accredited by ASDAN 'Towards Independence'. This is entirely appropriate as these courses concentrate on functional mathematics, for example time and money skills, that pupils and students will need in order to be independent after they have left school. Pupils' skills and knowledge are further consolidated by well-planned visits into the community where they travel and shop, and by taking responsibility for the school café and tuck shop.

71. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, resulting from satisfactory leadership and management. Support staff are now clearer about their roles and usually make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning. The curriculum and teaching are routinely monitored. A recent training day on mathematics has enthused staff and given them new ideas. Numeracy across the curriculum is now part of all teachers' planning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

72. This is satisfactory. Teachers routinely plan to promote numeracy skills in other subjects and across the school day. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. For example, in food technology, pupils weigh and measure, and in physical education they count aloud the number of movements in a sequence. At snack times in one class they exchange money for food and drinks and, in Post 16, a higher attaining student calls and marks the register and counts how many classmates are present or absent.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory; relationships between staff and pupils are good, and so is behaviour management.
- Lessons are introduced well and there is good ongoing evaluation throughout the lessons.
- Planning in science is generally good and lesson plans contain targets for individual pupils; but in one unsatisfactory lesson, the task was too difficult for lower attainers.
- Monitoring of science teachers by the subject co-ordinator is unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

73. Standards in science throughout the school are well below the national average because of the complexity of pupils' learning difficulties. Good schemes of work are now in place and pupils have a good range of learning experiences, which are closely linked to the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment of pupils' progress has also improved. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and so is pupils' achievement.

74. Pupils enjoy science and this reflects the quality of the teaching. Particular strengths of teaching are provision of a high number of teaching assistants who work effectively with the teachers, very good introduction to lessons, the close relationships shared by staff and pupils and good behaviour management. Most staff know the individual needs of pupils well and good lesson plans take into account the individual targets of the class group. However, in one unsatisfactory lesson in Years 7 to 9, where pupils were learning about elements, mixtures and compounds, the teacher had not planned well enough for lower attaining pupils, and they did not grasp the idea at all. In a subsequent lesson, though, the idea was presented to pupils by combining ingredients and cooking them; this was successful in securing the pupils' understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most are skilled at making science accessible to their pupils. Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is used very effectively in all lessons. Outstanding use was seen when teachers linked it to laptop presentations on a whiteboard and pupils were enthusiastic in helping with the presentations.

75. The youngest pupils were exploring growth from seeds and bulbs. They were very excited to see how their seeds had grown in a week. They handled bulbs and compost and learnt that growth requires water and that compost contains food for their plants. In another lesson, they learnt that switches make things happen on a computer, and further explored switches in a sensory area. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, in learning about a range of light sources, explored how shadows are made. They were very adept at identifying what objects were making a series of shadows. Staff praised their success and almost tangible gains in confidence were seen. At all levels, pupils learn through practical experiences how science is linked to life outside school. Older pupils encounter science in their broader studies, which are preparing them for life when they leave school. In one lesson, by using a camera and interactive whiteboard, older pupils were able to see pictures of themselves eating and swallowing. This aroused great interest.

76. Ongoing assessment in most lessons enables staff to judge the progress of pupils and to see how effective lesson plans are. The improved resources are well used to support teaching and much of the learning is carried out by means of investigative work. The good number of support staff enables pupils to get one to one attention in many lessons and this greatly enhances the learning process. In nearly all lessons, teaching assistants are well integrated and their contributions maximised. This level of support makes a major contribution to the very positive attitudes of the pupils. They are well behaved and co-operative. Occasional behavioural problems are skilfully managed by staff. There is a marked enthusiasm on the part of pupils to attain their personal targets. In most lessons the use of praise is carefully and effectively used and this greatly enhances gains in confidence.

77. Science is satisfactorily managed. The main weakness is the ongoing absence of a science room. The way in which pupils participated in experiments during the inspection underlined the need for this specialist provision, especially for older pupils. Leadership by the co-ordinator is good. He is very enthusiastic, and science teachers greatly respect his advice and support. Staff feel that the profile of science within the curriculum has grown considerably. Professional development in the subject is good and senior management encourages this. A school governor takes a special interest in science, monitoring the curriculum and visiting lessons. The staff appreciate this support.

78. Cross-curricular links are good. They are reinforced by the good use of the immediate environment and a large number of trips to historical, rural and industrial sites. These enrich the scientific learning of the pupils. Because pupils have limited ability in recording their work, staff and pupils build up excellent photographic evidence. A weakness noted during the inspection was the underuse of ICT by pupils. Records show that this is generally the case. There is a good all round improvement in science since the previous inspection. The developing strength of the subject means that it would be worthwhile introducing further external accreditation.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Technical difficulties have affected the use of computers in the classroom.
- Improvement has been secured through staff training and resources.
- Good use is made of digital photography to record achievement and provide material for displays.
- Additional resources and training have improved staff confidence in teaching and using ICT to develop resources.
- Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' learning are inconsistent.

### **Commentary**

79. The school has improved the quality and quantity of learning resources since the last inspection, and this has gone some way towards supporting improving levels of achievement. All rooms have ICT stations and digital cameras, and are connected to the Internet. However, during and before the inspection, technical difficulties of the school's network meant that, although use of computers in lessons had been planned, this did not always happen. Ongoing difficulties have adversely affected both teaching and learning over time.

80. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. They make satisfactory use of the Internet, and computers are used to enable pupils to write. The digital camera is used to make records that are meaningful to pupils. Higher attaining pupils use the keyboard and the mouse correctly. There is evidence of data collection through mathematics and use of everyday devices such as telephones, pedestrian crossings and light switches. Within sensory rooms, equipment such as fibre optic lights and switches successfully helps to stimulate movement in those pupils with the most severe disabilities. Post 16 students are given the opportunity to extend their skills through an ASDAN module on using computers during their three-year course. Higher attaining students can import graphics into their work, use music programs to compose music and the keyboard to complete forms.

81. Although teaching and learning are currently satisfactory overall, discrete lessons seen have good features, and the capacity for improvement is good. Lessons are characterised by very good relationships between staff and pupils, the appropriate use of encouragement and praise, and the patient approach in explaining techniques and processes to pupils individually. In some dedicated ICT lessons, teachers' resources are used well to communicate. For example, in a Year 6 science

lesson, an interactive whiteboard was used well to present information using PECs symbols. In a Year 9 lesson, photographs from a morning history session were incorporated into a presentation where less able pupils recognised photographs of themselves, whilst a higher attaining pupil received one-to-one instruction on labelling the presentation. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of symbol vocabulary as an aid to communication. Examples of pupils' work show that use is made of the Internet to gather information, and new technology is being used to record using symbol programs.

82. Although the school has adopted a good whole school system for assessment, evidence of pupils' progress is insufficiently monitored and some staff do not record pupils' achievements in portfolios clearly enough. This has a particular relevance when trying to identify exactly the rates of pupils' progress and the achievements of individuals and groups

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

83. This is satisfactory overall. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used particularly well in music. For instance, tape recorders, Big Macs and portable microphones support individual access to lessons very effectively. Digital cameras are used well to record individual achievement and in producing displays to support learning and celebrate achievement. In one Year 6 mathematics lesson, the interactive whiteboard was used very well to focus pupils' attention on identifying numbers. Although teachers make good use of new technology to provide symbols, ICT resources are not always used consistently well for all pupils. For instance, in one Year 9 lesson a visually impaired pupil could not see the whiteboard and, therefore, missed a large part of the lesson.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and geography**

84. Although these subjects were not audited fully, and judgements on achievement and provision cannot be made, inspectors looked at improvement as a particular focus. At the previous inspection, the curriculum was strongly criticised and judged unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress was unsatisfactory as a result. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection. Planning and management in the subjects are good. The curriculum has good breadth and there is clear evidence of pupils' progress. Resources are good.

85. There are now comprehensive long- and medium-term plans. Reference files for teachers contain specific weekly topics and model lesson plans. Resources appropriate to these topics are listed. There is a note of links to other subjects and a directory of useful places to visit. Guidance on how to evaluate pupils' work is given and good samples of their work, mainly as photographic evidence, are included. Teachers are monitored regularly and good professional development is undertaken.

86. Only one lesson, for a Year 4 class, was observed during the inspection. The pupils were following a trail in the school grounds and relating this to their study of Africa. Teaching, learning and achievement were all satisfactory.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory** and has maintained its quality since the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a clear planning structure which matches the lesson objectives.
- Lessons are well structured to promote a sense of spirituality.
- Co-ordination of the subject is developing well.

### Commentary

87. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education throughout their time at the school. By the end of Year 6 they have a suitable understanding of the Christian faith and aspects of other faiths. They study units of work about ceremonies and leaders of the different religions and their learning about the Christian faith is linked appropriately to issues common to all religions. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were making progress in learning about Jewish festivals, and pupils in Years 4 and 5 were preparing for visits to Christian churches. In Years 7 to 11, pupils gain a deeper understanding of moral beliefs in the different religions, linked to modern day issues. Pupils in Year 8 were able to describe their experiences of a recent visit to a church, and to recreate aspects of the stained glass windows. By Year 11, the pupils learn about death and bereavement; they explore the meaning of death in plants, animals and people.

88. Pupils show interest in the subject. Lessons are generally practically based and the pupils respond well. They are well supported and enjoy responding to the questions that their teacher asks them. Where signing and the use of symbols are well used, the pupils make choices about their work. They work in partnership with the teacher and teaching assistant to produce appropriate and, sometimes, imaginative work. Pupils in Year 2 were enthusiastic to work with real twigs and leaves to recreate an ancient Jewish settlement. Pupils in Year 8 successfully used paint on transparent plastic to produce a decorated window and so enhanced their understanding and appreciation of stained glass in the church they had visited.

89. Teaching is characterised by good attention to development of spirituality. Each lesson begins very well because teachers light candles and begin the session with suitable music to help pupils to concentrate on the lesson objectives and to understand that the lesson is beginning. The Gregorian chants used in one Year 4 lesson set a very effective tone for a lesson on St Augustine and the early Christian church. In the most successful lessons, the teachers make effective use of symbols and signing to help the pupils to understand. Teachers and support assistants communicate well with pupils through their use of these systems, and they check their pupils' level of involvement and understanding. In one very good lesson in Year 8, a pupil with severe and complex difficulties was able to communicate through eye movements to guide his support assistant in creating a decorated window. This partnership was most successful in enabling the pupil to decide the colour, shape and size of his window and then to evaluate his memories of the church windows. In one unsatisfactory lesson, however, the support assistants were unable to give enough time to using the very good strategies for communication that the teacher had created in the classroom. The pupils' learning was hurried and this limited achievement.

90. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Teaching assistants are well briefed and are able to contribute effectively to pupils' learning. The co-ordinator works well with her colleague in the senior part of the school and has managed the successful development of an efficient monitoring system of both the teaching and planning for the subject. The development of the curriculum is satisfactory and has maintained progress since the last inspection. It is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus and relates well to other subjects in the curriculum, while appropriately

emphasising the spiritual and moral aspects of the syllabus. The scheme of work ensures that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. The co-ordinator leads her colleagues well in planning suitable practically-based activities to help explain some of the difficult concepts associated with the subject. Assessment in the subject is developing successfully.

91. The resources are good and are suitably stored and accessible. There are some attractive displays of pupils' work in the school. For instance, there are some beautifully decorated coats that illustrate 'Joseph and his amazing dream coat'. In making these, pupils have made very good use of a variety of techniques in art, and design and technology, to enhance the decoration.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

92. The subject was sampled, not given a full audit. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on achievement or provision. Two lessons were seen; in one the teaching was good. In this lesson, high levels of support staff ensured that pupils were engaged well and made good progress in making *papier maché* animal masks. Staff gave just the right amount of support so that pupils did as much ripping and gluing as they could. The second lesson was unsatisfactory. Here, a newly appointed teacher had not planned well enough for the wide range of abilities of pupils in the class, and insufficient use was made of the support staff. As a result, pupils made too little progress making foods linked to their topic on Africa.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art

93. It was possible to observe only two lessons in art. In one the focus was the inclusion of pupils from mainstream. Here, the making of a collage, linked to *The very hungry caterpillar* story, by pupils in Years 1 and 2, was used well to encourage social interaction between pupils from mainstream and Foxwood. In a second lesson, teaching and learning were satisfactory. There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on standards. Work displayed in classrooms and corridors suggests that the subject has maintained the quality of provision since the last inspection.

### Music

Provision for music is **very good** and has maintained the quality seen at the last inspection.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is taught by a specialist who has a very good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of what pupils might achieve.
- There is a wide range of learning opportunities for the pupils.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and respond very well.
- There are very good resources.

### Commentary

94. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in music. Through clearly planned progression in their learning they develop their understanding and response to a wide and rich variety of rhythms. They experience instrument playing and singing, and hear and play musical instruments and music from around the world. In each lesson, the pupils hear and perform different rhythmical activities and their musical knowledge is encouraged by playing simple tuned and untuned percussion instruments, both independently and led by the teacher. All the pupils listen in each



lesson to musical instruments from other parts of the world. They are encouraged to play and perform on these instruments in activities designed to help them understand the variety of sounds and effects that it is possible to make by blowing or tapping the instrument. Lessons always involve a high degree of shared activity where pupils join in moving and shaking large brightly coloured blankets, or in sharing instruments. Older pupils are able to experiment on tuned instruments such as ukuleles and keyboards. Pupils who demonstrate sustained interest in music are given every encouragement to develop their interests and ability further. One Post 16 student is being entered for a GCSE music examination.

95. Pupils enjoy their lessons and make very good gains in their understanding. Their listening skills are developed well in each lesson when the teacher encourages the pupils to experiment with percussion instruments to match the beat in recorded music or to play together, adjusting their rhythm to that of others. A notable feature of each lesson takes place at the end of the sessions. At this time all classes sit or lie down surrounded by blankets and listen silently to slow and peaceful music. Even very young pupils retain concentration for several minutes, enjoying the music and the calm emotions which it engenders.

96. Teaching is very good and is sometimes excellent. The teacher has a very good understanding of the subject and prepares extremely stimulating, fast moving and exciting lessons for all the age groups. She manages the pupils very well. She is a skilled musician, and has the ability to support and encourage the pupils and to seamlessly adapt learning activities to take account of individual pupils' interest or response. In a lesson with very young children, the teacher enabled a boy with no sight to experiment with the deep and resonant sounds of a large chime bar. The boy placed his hands on the instrument and was able to both feel and hear the resonance with great satisfaction and enjoyment.

97. The teacher has very high expectations of the pupils' achievement in lessons. On frequent occasions in each lesson the pupils are encouraged to listen and respond to music both individually and in groups. The pupils' experimentation with sound is promoted and celebrated. As a result, they make very good gains in their confidence, appreciation of musical sounds and in their knowledge and understanding.

98. In an excellent lesson with older pupils, the teacher made very good use of ICT to encourage the pupils' imaginative use of instruments and their skills in individual and group playing. Images of 'night' were portrayed on a whiteboard and pupils were asked to respond with an instrument when familiar images such as a cat or an owl appeared. The pupils watched intently and responded thoughtfully. By manipulating the sequence of the images, the teacher promoted individual response and groups of pupils playing in unison. The pupils worked throughout this activity with real feeling and intensity, and produced a group *ensemble* effect, which demonstrated a high level of achievement.

99. The teacher leads the lessons very well. She confidently manages the high level of available resources and has developed the skills of the teaching assistants to a level where they confidently support each pupil's efforts and help to raise their achievement. The management of the subject is good. There is a clear policy and explanation of the methods used in lessons based on a wholly appropriate sensory approach. Assessment in the subject is developing satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a closely-structured target-setting system to inform her of pupils' progress, supported by detailed assessments of the pupils' achievement at the end of each lesson. Pupils' achievements are further celebrated in many recordings of their activities.

100. The co-ordinator has secured good improvements since the last inspection. She has introduced a music sensory room containing instruments, hanging wind chimes and soft furnishings. Here, pupils may spend time experiencing and producing music in their own way. Practice facilities have also been established for older pupils who wish to develop their skills on keyboards or other tuned instruments.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. This subject was sampled, not fully audited. Four physical education lessons were observed. The youngest pupils were exploring spatial awareness through dance. Good teaching successfully introduced the pupils to the experience of space in the gym, when they imitated caterpillars and cocoons to suitable music. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and good learning occurred. In another good lesson, Year 6 pupils participated in a reverse inclusion lesson with pupils from a local primary school. By working with their mainstream peers, Foxwood pupils succeeded in various jumping activities which they would have considered beyond their reach. This was a highly successful venture. Year 11 pupils took part in a most satisfactory lesson on goal scoring and goal keeping in soccer. They thoroughly enjoyed this activity. A very good lesson for Post 16 students gave them an opportunity to practise for a visit to the ski centre. Very good teaching created an atmosphere in which the students learnt useful skiing disciplines for their forthcoming visit.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for PSHE and citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities planned for pupils to develop personal and social skills throughout the day.
- A good range of citizenship activities is being developed.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by visitors and by the pupils' many visits into the community.
- The monitoring of pupils' portfolios is not rigorous enough.

### Commentary

102. All staff are very aware of the importance of promoting pupils' personal development. Because they understand pupils very well, they are very good at doing this, in lessons and in other activities. Each pupil has five targets for personal development and a suitable emphasis is placed on helping pupils to achieve them. There is a good programme for developing the pupils' PSHE and citizenship skills. Snack and lunchtime arrangements promote pupils' self-help skills, whilst providing important opportunities for modelling and developing relationships and social skills. These range from skills learned through individual feeding programmes, to pupils taking turns and serving themselves at Post 16, where they make decisions about snacks and drinks, interact well with staff and confidently make their own drinks.

103. Pupils achieve well in PSHE and citizenship as they study a range of topics that are appropriate to their age and interest. Teaching is good. Much of it is based on practical action, meaningful to all pupils. Projects such as recycling and improving the environment bring learning to life and build very much on pupils' own experience. For example, a Year 11 lesson reinforced pupils' understanding of keeping their environment tidy by learning to use bins. The practical use of bins, a variety of 'junk' articles, and the very good help from a large number of support staff ensured that learning for all was good. Students at Post 16 shop for and prepare simple meals. Practical activities are supported by the use of high quality worksheets reinforcing their understanding of aspects such food storage. They know that some foods need to be stored in a refrigerator and others in a freezer. These practical activities offer good opportunities for integrating key skills into real and relevant tasks.

104. Younger pupils show an increasing ability to express preferences and choices, supported by the good use of PECs and signing. These pupils are encouraged to play co-operatively and to strive to overcome communication barriers. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 and students in Post 16 are

aware of the consequences of different behaviours. They learn to identify critical factors in situations, how to resolve problems, and strategies for avoiding risks. In a very good Post 16 lesson, for example, students were clearly aware of the dangers of fire, the importance of using the centre's fire exit and which rules to follow if the alarm sounded.

105. The citizenship element of the curriculum is developing well, and it meets requirements. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, and those in the Post 16 unit, there is a great emphasis given to this subject, preparing pupils for life after school. This is done through accreditation such as the ASDAN Transition Challenge and Towards Independence, which aids their motivation and self esteem, and helps them try their best. Careers work and work-related activities help older pupils and students to gain confidence and independence. The very good use of visits and visitors extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the community and the world of work, as well as extending and enriching their social experiences. Pupils show a growing knowledge about people's jobs and roles in society, community issues, the world of work and their role as citizens.

106. The new subject co-ordinators for the primary and secondary departments are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of how the subject can be developed. They are aware that evidence in portfolios is inconsistent and annotations do not always indicate progress sufficiently. It is not possible to evaluate improvement since the last inspection as this subject was not reported on at that time.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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