

INSPECTION REPORT

FREDERICK HOLMES SCHOOL

Hull

LEA area: Hull

Unique reference number: 118139

Headteacher: Dominic Boyes

Lead inspector: George Derby

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 June 2005

Inspection number: 268566

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	87
School address:	Inglemire Lane Hull
Postcode:	HU6 8JJ
Telephone number:	01482 804766
Fax number:	01482 806967
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Steve Bevan
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Frederick Holmes ('Freddies') is a slightly larger than average special school for pupils with physical disability. Most pupils have learning difficulties in addition and a small number of pupils have severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The Post-16 department is for students in Years 12, 13 and 14. There are currently 19 students on roll in this department. Most other classes also have mixed age groups. The Foundation Stage provision is made up of two classes. Six children attend mornings in the nursery and there are seven children in the reception class who attend full time. The needs of pupils admitted to the school have changed over recent years. As a result, the school now has a class for pupils with PMLD in Years 7 to 14 in which pupils are taught mainly through a multi-sensory approach.

The school draws its pupils mainly from Hull and the other unitary authorities of East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. All pupils come from white (British) backgrounds and all are entitled to free school meals. Hull local education authority (LEA) provides these to all schools in the local authority. Most pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment because of their physical and learning difficulties. Very few pupils reach the attainment levels expected for their age, although one or two do in certain subjects. The majority of children in the Foundation Stage are unable to reach the goals expected by the end of reception.

The headteacher and one of the two deputy headteachers manage the Education Service for Physical Disability (ESPD). This is part of the Hull LEA's provision and other unitary

authorities from the surrounding region 'buy in' the service under joint arrangements. The service has three senior teachers who support the inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools in the region and is based on the school site.

The school gained a Sportsmark award in 2005, the primary and secondary Basic Skills Quality Marks in 2003 and two local authority healthy schools awards in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector	
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	English Modern foreign language
22466	Diane Pearson	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Physical education Foundation Stage Special educational needs
11642	Carol Parkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Science Music Post-16

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus ltd
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Frederick Holmes School ('Freddies') is a good school which has some very good features. Pupils' achievements are good, as is the quality of teaching and learning. The personal care that pupils receive is very good and the attention to pupils' welfare is excellent, especially for those pupils with the greatest disabilities. The leadership of the headteacher is good; he has a very clear vision of what needs to be done. Overall, leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money. The Education Service for Physical Disability (ESPD) provides good and effective support for pupils and schools.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' medical and welfare needs are exceptionally well catered for.
- Links with the community are excellent and used extremely well to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development.
- The relationships between pupils and those between staff and pupils are very good.
- The provision in English, science and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is very good.
- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good.
- The school's climate for learning and its support for pupils' personal development are very strong.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory; in many areas it does not meet pupils' needs or the demands of the curriculum.
- Pupils make insufficient progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The roles of some staff with leadership and management responsibility are insufficiently developed.
- Assessment is insufficiently developed in subjects other than in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Improvement since the school was inspected in 1999 has been satisfactory. All six key issues have been addressed. Pupils' progress is largely similar to that seen previously. First aid procedures and the number of staff qualified have improved well. Strategic planning, the time pupils spend out of lessons, teaching time, and safe arrival and departure of transport have all improved satisfactorily. However, on-site accommodation for science and design and technology has not improved. Pupils are now taught off-site in a mainstream school, instead.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	Very good	Very good
Year 6	Very good	Very good
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good
Year 14	Good	Very good

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

Pupils' achievements are good. These are good in the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes) and based on well-planned routines. The best progress is in their communication and physical skills where it is very good. Achievement is very good in the primary department, largely because of very good teaching. Achievement is good in the secondary department and in Post-16 because of the good attention to pupils' needs, particularly for their communication and physical development. Achievement in English, science and PSHCE is very good. It is good in mathematics. It is unsatisfactory in ICT, especially in the secondary department where the school does not yet have programmes of work in place to underpin pupils' progress.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness are good and their moral, social and cultural development very good. Pupils' interest in their lessons and their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good as is the quality of teaching and learning. The very good teaching in Years 1 to 6 is because staff know the children very well and very carefully plan what they need to learn. Along with this, their lively teaching and the able support of teaching assistants make learning highly successful. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are challenged exceptionally well. Teaching is good elsewhere in the school. Teachers are knowledgeable about pupils' needs and work hard to meet these. They make good use of ICT to support pupils' communication skills and learning, although the extent to which this is used is not always consistent across the school. In addition, the level of challenge decreases over the pupils' time in school and, although satisfactory by the time the pupils leave the school, this is significantly less than that seen in Years 1 and 2. Planning is thorough and detailed. In the best practice it identifies what each pupil will learn and work is well matched. However, this is not the case in all lessons and sometimes teachers only plan for all pupils to learn the same thing. The satisfactory curriculum is supported by good opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Care for pupils is also very good, as are the links with parents. Assessment and the monitoring of pupils' progress are satisfactory overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The headteacher continues to lead the school well and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Senior managers are very experienced and carry out their work well in relation to what they are expected to do. They support their teams well and leaders of key areas of the school's work are beginning to monitor and evaluate the work in their areas effectively. However, they do not have a full range of tasks as befits their level of responsibility. For instance, while teachers' planning is checked in many areas, not all staff examine pupils' work or the quality of teaching, or monitor the progress that pupils make in their subjects. Governors offer a wide range of experience and acumen to the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities (with the exception of the provision of the full National Curriculum for a very few pupils with complex needs in Years 7 to 9) and they promote pupils' inclusion very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils generally have very positive views of the school. There are very few criticisms of the school's work. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all accommodation meets pupils' needs and the demands of the curriculum.
- Plan and deliver a full and progressive programme of learning opportunities for pupils to make sufficient progress in ICT.
- Provide all leaders and managers with a full set of responsibilities in relation to their positions, and ensure there is a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of the school's work at all levels.
- Strengthen the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in the non-core subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that:

- all pupils are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good. They are good in the Foundation Stage, in Years 7 to 11 and in the Post-16 department. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievements are very good. Standards in all subjects are well below what they should be for the pupils' ages, although for a very few individual pupils across the school these are nearer to those expected for the pupils' ages. All pupils achieve equally as well as each other and there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls and those with different disabilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make good progress and achieve well in most subjects; they achieve very well in English, science and PSHCE.
- Staff understand the physical and communication needs of pupils well.
- The good use of signs and symbols significantly aids pupils' progress and access to learning is well supported through the use of ICT overall.
- Improved assessment is leading to more accurate target setting.

Commentary

1. The reasons for the good progress and achievement are:
 - good teaching overall and very good teaching in Years 1 and 2;
 - planning of relevant, interesting and exciting activities for pupils to maximise learning – this is best in Years 1 to 6;
 - a wide range of ways of helping pupils to communicate and to access learning although more use of these could be made for older pupils;
 - effective target setting to raise attainment.
2. The achievement of pupils has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in English and PSHCE has been strengthened and in science this improvement has been considerable. Although the overall provision is satisfactory in ICT because it includes the use of ICT to support pupils' communication and to access learning, the pupils' achievement in relation to the National Curriculum programme of study in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. It is not underpinned by a scheme of work which builds on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding. This means that pupils do not consistently build upon what they have learned previously. Teachers have to work out what to teach for themselves and as they do not have any guidance at present. As a result, parts of the curriculum are underemphasised. Achievement in ICT in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. The programme helps to adequately build pupils' skills. It is also satisfactory in the Post-16 department, although what the students learn and do is fairly narrow. They could achieve more if the curriculum was broader and underpinned by an award bearing course.
3. Pupils' significant achievement in English, science and PSHCE is supported by the expertise staff have in adapting work to meet the pupils' needs and the good way they use information about their learning to plan work. In many lessons, very good stimulating teaching and a wide range of learning experiences enable the pupils to achieve their best. In addition, the support for pupils' skills in these areas pervades the

whole of the school's work. It is embedded in everything that is done and is central to pupils' individual targets in their individual learning plans.

4. Overall, the knowledge that staff have of pupils' special educational needs, especially their physical and communication needs, is good. The result of this is that the pupils have good access to learning despite physical difficulties and are well supported in their communication skills and self-expression. Pupils' positioning and their moving and handling are tackled very well and are unobtrusive. Since the last inspection, the needs of pupils have become more complex and a small group of older pupils with PMLD has been established. The needs of these pupils are generally met well and their achievement is good. They could be even better met if there was more consistent use of signs, symbols and objects of reference. Pupils' needs are very well met in Years 1 and 2. The work is very well planned and matched to the pupils' needs and teachers have exceptionally high expectations. This is partly why pupils' achievement in these years is so good.
5. A strength is the way teachers use signs and symbols well throughout their lessons to support pupils' communication and understanding. Objects are used to aid communication for those with the most complex needs but this is not always consistent. Overall a good range of ways of using ICT for supporting communication and access learning exists, although approaches are less well matched to the needs of older pupils. This slows the pace of their learning. There is also scope, however, for better support to be provided for pupils' 'written' communication. Achievement in writing is good overall; it is very good in other parts of English. Pupils could achieve more in other aspects of writing if there was more use of ICT, and symbols to enable them to express their ideas through writing more independently.
6. Since the last inspection, the school has begun to collect data in English, mathematics and science on pupils' progress using differentiated performance criteria ('P' scales). This has aided the target-setting process. Meaningful target-setting procedures are developing and the information leads senior staff and governors to ask pertinent questions about the relative progress of pupils with different needs. This has resulted in an increase of self-critical appraisal and more awareness of how the school can challenge itself to do better for pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work and school are very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils really enjoy the experience of learning and all school activities.
- Pupils grow in confidence and their self-esteem improves as they move through the school.
- The school is a very happy and friendly community where relationships are very good.
- The very positive environment and ethos provide very good opportunities for most areas of personal development.

Commentary

7. Throughout the school pupils get on very well with their classmates and have very good relationships with teachers and all other adults who work with them. Pupils indicate they like and enjoy school very much and all the activities they are able to take part in. In discussions with the school council, they give the school a ‘thumbs up’ and state it is “a brilliant school”! Pictorial evidence confirms that all pupils, whatever their disability or need, equally enjoy and are involved in all aspects of school life.
8. Lessons and other school activities, both on and off the school site, are enjoyable and productive. Adults are caring, supportive and very patient with pupils. This means that pupils feel very secure in lessons; as a result, they try hard and take great pride in their work. There are examples of excellent attitudes, particularly in the primary department, where pupils respond extremely well to teaching that is interesting, challenging and very well matched to their needs and capabilities.
9. Pupils throughout the school show respect for all the adults who work with them and try very hard to please them. They show spontaneous pleasure in their own achievements and also that of others. This was particularly evident during the school sports day events, where all pupils’ achievements and those of the staff were celebrated. Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite and very friendly towards visitors. Pupils try very hard to behave well and succeed! No examples of disruptive behaviour were observed during the inspection and there have been no exclusions. Occasional minor restlessness and inattentiveness in lessons are a result of tasks that are not well enough matched to pupils’ abilities.
10. The school council and other pupils confirm that bullying is very rare and no instances of harassment or oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils are clear that they would tell an adult if they were unhappy, whom they confirm will help them. Pupils feel the school treats them fairly and, as a result of discussions by the school council, a ‘pupil charter’ has been drawn up. This promotes the values of honesty, truth, trust and respect. This is clearly translated into practice throughout the school where mutual respect is very evident. Pupils mix together very well, both in lessons and outside at lunchtime and during visits to the local colleges. However, the older pupils have no designated social area where they can further develop independence and social skills.
11. The school is very good at promoting and developing pupils’ understanding of cultural diversity appropriate to their age, disability and need. Pupils are very well prepared for life in a multicultural world because they experience a rich and varied range of opportunities. However, pupils’ spiritual knowledge is not as well promoted. Pupils are given very good opportunities for spiritual development during art activities in school and at local colleges, to which they respond very well. Good and sometimes very good spiritual awareness is fostered during religious education lessons. Although assemblies have a very good social and moral theme, they do not contribute as strongly to pupils’ spiritual development.
12. Attendance is above that found in most schools of a similar type. Pupils are usually only absent because they are unwell, a factor linked to their often complex medical needs. The school administration staff carefully monitor attendance. The features discussed in this section are similar to those seen in the last inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
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School data	8.77
National data	Not applicable*

School data	0.67
National data	Not applicable*

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

** Data is not available for latest reporting year*

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is good and the care is very good. The very good relationships with the parents and the excellent links with the community have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The curriculum is sound, although the opportunities outside lessons which enhance learning and personal development are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in the Foundation Stage, Years 7 to 11 and in the Post-16 department. The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is very good. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils enjoy their lessons very much; very good encouragement and interesting lessons help them take a full part in learning.
- Staff have good knowledge of pupils' wide-ranging needs and work hard to meet them.
- Staff expect a great deal for the pupils and challenge them to do their best; this is exceptionally good in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching assistants provide good support and very good care for pupils.
- While ICT is used well to promote and access to learning, it is less well used to support learning in subjects across the school.
- Occasionally, accommodation difficulties slow the pace of lessons in Years 7 to 11 and the Post-16 department. Assessment is effective in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but is under-developed in other subjects.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching overall has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching is good because of the good expertise of staff and their detailed knowledge of the pupils' needs. This commences in the Foundation Stage where staff take good account of the children's responses and record these regularly. They use the information to track the children's progress which helps them to build up a picture of their strengths and weaknesses. Teaching is strongest in the reception class where the teacher uses signs, symbols and simple communication aids well to help children understand.
14. In the Post-16 department the skills students have developed over their time in school are further expanded to prepare them well for later life. This relates not just to the pupils' academic needs but also to their communication and their personal skills. Signs, symbols and objects are used adequately to promote pupils' understanding and make clear what they are to do and learn. ICT is used well to help students record their work and to help them communicate. However, ICT is not always used consistently well to support learning in subjects or teaching. There is also room for the further use of the approaches to communication and especially objects to help students with the most complex needs understand.

15. In most lessons across the school the targets set for pupils in their individual learning plans are taken good account of. Pupils learn well because of this. The teachers also use their knowledge well of what pupils have learned previously when planning lessons.
16. Planning is very good in Years 1 to 6 because there is very close attention to planning for the needs of the individual and because staff are very clear about what they expect each individual pupil to achieve. As a result, work is matched very well. By contrast, planning is only satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and in Post-16. Work is matched soundly in these years because there is less attention to the detail of these aspects in the planning.
17. Overall, pupils enjoy school and learning. Pupils know they can succeed and their confidence and self-esteem are significantly boosted through the praise and rewards they receive. As a result of the very good encouragement they get in lessons, and the good, knowledgeable support by teaching assistants, the pupils try hard and respond well to their lessons. The very good level of care provides a secure and effective environment for learning. The school has developed the skills of support staff well in this respect and the approaches that staff, especially medical staff, take are unobtrusive and very sensitive. Sometimes, care routines do take up a lot of time and leave less time for learning. In addition, the manoeuvring of pupils when changing activities takes a long time in some rooms and slows the pace of lessons. This is particularly noticeable in the secondary and Post-16 department but occasionally affects other years. It is often because of the cramped accommodation in some classes, a lack of bathroom space and the numbers of staff available. The school recognises these difficulties and is considering how it can overcome them.
18. Teachers' expectations are good overall and exceptional in Years 1 and 2. The teaching here has the highest regard and every effort goes into ensuring that the pupils learn the most they can and achieve very well. Expectations are less good but satisfactory for the older pupils from Year 10 onward but this is linked to the planning issues raised above and the less wide range of methods the staff have to help pupils learn as much as they can.
19. Teachers' approaches generally motivate pupils; learning is generally exciting and captures pupils' imaginations and interests. Interesting ways of approaching topics are used, especially the use of the interactive whiteboard in Years 1 to 6. Pupils behave very well because they are very interested in what they do and have very good relationships with staff. Even where lessons are duller than usual, the pupils are keen and eager learners and try and do their very best. The staff know when to stand back and when to intervene, thus promoting as much independence as possible among pupils. Good use is generally made of communication aids, simple switches and software which helps pupils make choices. This is best in Years 1 to 6. However, overall there is a lack of use of ICT to support learning in the different subjects and occasionally teachers of older pupils do not always plan the most effective ways to help pupils access their work through the use of ICT.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 59 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (5%)	21 (36%)	25 (42%)	10 (17%)	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. The current arrangements for assessment and monitoring pupils' progress are just satisfactory and not as good as at the last inspection, when they were good. There have been many staff changes and pupils' needs are becoming much more complex. The senior leadership team are planning with other special schools in the area to introduce a small step assessment format to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs. Assessment procedures are effective in English, mathematics and science. This is because information about pupils' levels in these subjects is now in place and tracking systems are helping the school to make judgements about pupils' achievement and adapt work accordingly. However, information is not yet used to judge the school's performance in comparison to other similar schools. Assessment is not sufficiently used in other non-core subjects. Teachers rely on making end of year assessments for these subjects as part of the reports they write to parents. They have too few ways of recording ongoing progress, however. Although they have an intuitive knowledge of how pupils are progressing they are not able to easily identify trends and patterns in pupils' progress and adapt work to take account of these.
21. Work is generally marked adequately with relevant comments to show what pupils have achieved and to clearly show progress. Pupils are aware of what they have achieved and what they have to do to improve. However, this is not consistent as teachers have different methods and approaches and not all team leaders have an overview of their subject.
22. Subject target setting in English, mathematics and science is beginning to result in gains in pupils' achievement. Physiotherapy and speech and language assessments contribute positively to targets in pupils' individual learning plans, although these vary in consistency and targets are not always sharp. Pupils and parents are involved in reviews where they agree relevant targets each year.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and in Post-16. Opportunities to enrich pupils' learning are good, but accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are benefiting from the school's approach to using important features of the national strategies.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good and pupils benefit from opportunities to learn in addition to the formal curriculum.
- Not all pupils receive the curriculum to which they are entitled in Years 7 to 9 and planning for ICT is not in place for pupils in Years 7 to 11; this means pupils are not able to make the progress they could.
- Subject specific skills are not identified clearly enough in non-core subjects.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not meet the pupils' needs or allow all subjects to be taught effectively.

Commentary

23. The curriculum overall is broad and balanced and meets pupils' physical and learning needs adequately. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. The curriculum includes religious education, which is suitably planned in response to the locally agreed syllabus. The school's curriculum mostly meets statutory requirements except in Years 7 to 9. This is because a very small number of pupils are in a class alongside Post-16 students. As such, they are not taught a modern foreign language or humanities and are not able to make progress in these subjects. Years 10, 11 and Post-16 students have access to a reasonable range of accredited courses in school and through college links. Where appropriate there are opportunities to take Entry Level and GCSE courses. All pupils obtain in-school certificates for successful work and experiences.
24. Visits and visitors make an effective contribution to drama, dance and movement and provision for participation in the arts is very good. Lunchtime clubs are very well attended and activities such as pond-dipping during a science club activity are enjoyed immensely.
25. The use of national strategies for English and mathematics and planning for science is good throughout Years 1 to 11. Important features of the strategies, such as the development of subject specific vocabulary, are promoted well in the core subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily in all other subjects but the opportunities are not always clearly identified in planning.
26. Provision for sex education, drugs education and personal social and health education is very well planned. Opportunities for all these aspects pervade the school's work and support pupils' independence. This, rightly, is a very high priority for the school. There are very clear guidelines for pupils, and practical support and information by which to live their lives. PSHCE makes a very good contribution to the school's ethos. Curriculum planning is very good both for discrete PSHCE teaching and when integrated with other aspects and subjects of the curriculum.
27. The curriculum for pupils from nursery to Year 6 gives them good access to the whole range of subjects which are effectively planned and managed. The curriculum for secondary aged pupils and students in the Post-16 department, which is satisfactory overall, is limited by the continuing lack of specialist accommodation, especially in science, art and design, design and technology and food technology. The school works closely with other institutions to give pupils the best possible access they can but this means that pupils' chances to practise their skills are limited and that much time is lost going from school to school.
28. Whilst the school ensures that existing ICT is generally used well to give pupils access to subjects, the school's hardware and software are not up to date enough to give pupils good access to learning and information. Planning for ICT is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and is used to devise lesson plans. However, it is insufficiently detailed to help inexperienced staff to adapt work for pupils with complex learning difficulties. Planning for pupils in Years 7 to 9 has only just been written and has not been implemented as yet. It has the same weaknesses as that for younger pupils. Staff teaching pupils in Years 7 to 11 do not have any guidance about what they should be teaching in ICT and when. Teachers do their best but, without guidance, parts of the work, such as using ICT to collect, sort and analyse data, are under-emphasised.
29. The curriculum meets pupils' individual needs well overall and this is particularly good in Years 1 to 6 where teachers make the best use of technology to help pupils with

their learning. Individual learning plans are good because the planning for core subjects and PSHCE is good throughout Years 1 to 11. The curriculum for pupils with profound learning difficulties in the secondary department is also good and their needs are well supported. However, the school has not yet developed a uniform planning system for organising, identifying and emphasising subject-specific skills in non-core subjects. As a result, pupils' development of subject-specific skills is not a consistent part of their assessment or aims, and limits the progress they can make.

30. The school has addressed various weaknesses in the curriculum noted at the time of the previous inspection satisfactorily. This includes increasing taught time because there was a lack of time for learning. Improvement overall is satisfactory. The curriculum is now satisfactory where it was good last time. This is because it has not yet provided a unified approach to how work in subjects can be linked to provide a more efficient curriculum for the changing needs of the pupils it now admits.
31. The school is bright and welcoming and best use has been made of all available space. However, space is very limited, The school has extensive, attractive grounds with good access for wheelchair users, although all outside doors are secured which inhibits independent movement. The clearly marked car parks and set down spaces now ensure a very safe entrance. The school hall is very small and at lunchtime is crowded. Not all pupils can eat in the hall and students in Post-16 eat in their class spaces. This, too, is very crowded; it restricts the movement of students. There is no discrete accommodation for Post-16 students and they do not have access to a common room or social area. The nursery class is in a separate building in a vast room, which is cluttered with equipment and resources. There is no outside play area specifically for these young children. In the main school, some classrooms are far too small for the number of pupils, their equipment and staff to gain the full benefit from the learning environment. Some personal areas have been refurbished but still do not provide maximum privacy. The hydrotherapy pool itself is a very good resource and is very well maintained. However, its changing facilities and circulation space are very restricted. The issues from the last inspection regarding the lack of specialist accommodation have not been satisfactorily addressed. Over time, though, the school itself has financed many building improvements.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in and to influence the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide very good pastoral support and guidance for pupils, which enables them, as far as possible, to cope with many of their difficulties.
- Pupils' health, welfare, safety and therapy needs are exceptionally well catered for.
- Academic guidance is not always sufficiently targeted so that pupils clearly know what they must do to improve their learning.
- Pupils think very highly of the school and their views are listened to.

Commentary

32. The school has maintained its provision since the last inspection. Support for pupils starts at an early stage. For example, induction arrangements to the school are very

good, no matter what age a pupil is. These contribute very well to helping pupils adjust to the school's routines. The pre-admission visits are very effective in helping to address any concerns or questions that both pupils and their parents may have. They also ensure that from a very early stage a firm and effective partnership is established with parents and those adults who will care for their child. Pupils also receive good guidance, for instance from Connexions, to enable them and their parents to make well-informed choices about what will be the next steps for them when they leave the school.

33. All adults know the pupils very well. The teaching assistants play a very key role in establishing trusting relationships with pupils and also in their care and support. This well-targeted care means that adults have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. As a result, very effective support can be provided. Pupils' personal care, hygiene and well being are given a very high priority. Their dignity is respected but is occasionally compromised because the bathrooms have curtains and no doors. Pupils themselves have raised this as a concern.
34. The excellent arrangements to support pupils' medical needs are unobtrusive and lessons are not disrupted if pupils need to receive their medication. Equally, older pupils are encouraged, appropriate to their ability and need, to become more independent and responsible for their medication. A good range of therapists works in partnership with the staff so that well-targeted therapy programmes are used to support pupils. There is a dedicated member of staff who is responsible for ensuring all aspects of moving, positioning and handling pupils are safe. This is for both staff and pupils and there is very close liaison with the physiotherapy team so that advice and training are readily available. There are very well known and clear arrangements for child protection and for pupils who are in public or foster care. Health and safety procedures are very good. This ensures that everyone learns and works in a safe environment. The issues raised at the time of the previous inspection in relation to first aid and the arrival of transport have been addressed.
35. Through questionnaires and discussions, pupils indicate that they trust adults implicitly and all adults treat them with respect. Adults value the contributions pupils make in their lessons; they are tactful and nearly always encourage pupils to participate and contribute. This contributes very well to pupils' growing self-worth and self-esteem. The school council is well established and has made positive changes to school practice. However, this is not representative of all classes; for instance pupils in the primary phase have no representatives and not all classes in the senior school are represented.
36. There are very good systems to monitor pupils' personal development, for instance through records of achievement and the comprehensive files maintained for each pupil. As a result, the school is quick to seek additional help and guidance in order to support anyone experiencing difficulties. Pupils' achievements and successes are acknowledged and valued. Academic guidance, based on the use of assessment information, is satisfactory. However, it is not focused sufficiently on enabling pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Links with the community are excellent and liaison with schools and colleges is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The community is extremely well used to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and fully involved in the care of their children.
- Links with other schools and colleges are used to very good effect.

Commentary

37. Parents who expressed a view about the school before and during the inspection were very positive in their praise for its work. Very good relationships are established with parents from pupils' earliest days in the school. These relationships are maintained and strengthened during the time pupils are at the school because of the very good communication with parents. The school ensures that parents receive regular news about their children and how they are progressing, both socially and academically. This enables them to contribute as partners in their children's education. The home-school book is an invaluable means of communication for those parents whose children have difficulty with, or no, speech at all. The regular newsletter is very informative and keeps parents up to date with the many activities that are organised for both pupils and parents. Written termly progress reports are good overall but the quality varies between classes.
38. The school tries to encourage parents to take an active part in school life and the care of their children. A range of health clinics is organised at the school so that parents can gain ready access to useful information. Parents are fully involved in drawing up the care and health plans related to their children. The Friends of Freddie's Association raises significant sums of money that supports the school financially. Even though many parents live long distances from the school they give tremendous support to events, such as the sports day held during the week of the inspection. Parents' views about the work of the school and how improvements to its work might be made are regularly sought. The school is responsive to issues raised.
39. The emphasis on using the local community to promote educational attainment and personal development is of very high priority. It is especially important for the Post-16 students who have a very good range of opportunities. There is an extensive range of visits made into the local and wider community; this augments pupils' learning opportunities and also contributes very well to their social development. Visitors to the school also contribute well to pupils' personal, citizenship and academic development. The school benefits from very significant financial support from business and industry.
40. Very good working relationships have been established with local colleges in the area. As a result, the oldest pupils are able to take part in activities that have a positive impact on their social development and academic achievements. The use of college facilities near to the school means that senior pupils can use specialist science and design and technology facilities, which the school does not have. However, travelling time to and from colleges eats into the school day. There are productive links with local primary schools and both sets of pupils benefit socially from this.
41. The school has maintained this very good provision since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both good with some very good features. Leadership by the headteacher is good. He has very high aspirations and a very

clear vision for the school and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Governance is good overall and is an improving aspect of the school's work. Management is also good as is the leadership of key staff overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very clear view of how the school needs to improve and the steps needed to achieve this; a few features are little slow in being developed, however.
- Governors are very supportive of the work of the headteacher and staff; they know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and ensure that the school's finances are well monitored.
- Although the leadership provided by the senior leadership team is good – mainly because of the strength of the headteacher and deputy headteacher – the strategic roles and responsibilities of some members are underdeveloped and this means others have too much to do.
- Overall leadership of the curriculum is good; however, there are some variations in the quality of the leadership and management of the subjects.
- Target setting is an improving aspect of the school's work and it is challenging itself well in this respect.

Commentary

42. There has been satisfactory improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. The key issues from that inspection have been satisfactorily addressed and the school has drawn up a detailed and comprehensive school improvement plan, including action plans for all subjects. Although the plan is not fully costed, it reflects clearly the priorities of the school and there are good systems in place for reviewing progress against it.
43. The school's leadership is strongly self-reflective and is beginning to challenge itself well. It monitors carefully the achievements of pupils in core subjects to support this. However, it is only just putting into place whole-school assessment systems so that achievement in all subjects is tracked and monitored consistently. The planning in ICT for ensuring pupils make all the progress they can is slow to develop. The leadership, in its work in the outreach service and the school, has created a very strong climate for inclusion, equality and of valuing individuals. The senior leadership team is hugely respected by pupils, staff, parents and external colleagues alike.
44. Governors are fully committed to the school and almost all know its work very well. The governors are very well led by an experienced and knowledgeable chairperson, who has provided much valuable support to fellow governors and the headteacher. Governors delight in gaining a good knowledge of the quality of the provision from visiting the school and by meetings, listening to formal presentations by the headteacher and other staff. They comply with most statutory requirements, although a very small number of pupils in Years 7 to 9 with PMLD do not have access to all the subjects they should. Through their reflective discussions about all aspects of school's work they provide very good support and challenge the school where they feel secure. They have high aspirations for its pupils. They check up regularly on the implementation of the school improvement plan, although they could be more involved in devising it.
45. The headteacher and his 'tripod leadership team' lead the school and its associated outreach service well. This team, which also includes the bursar, has a very strong

vision for the school and is leading the school and its outreach service steadily towards this. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and oversees standards and monitors teaching. He works very effectively in keeping the school involved in a range of local education authority and other initiatives, so that its, and the outreach service profile, is rightly high. He is employed half-time to oversee the outreach service and half-time to oversee the school. However, current identified responsibilities in the school mean the deputy headteacher, in particular, has too much to do. He has responsibility for many aspects of the school's work and day-to-day management. Although he, the headteacher and the bursar work very well together and provide strong role models for the staff and pupils, a few things happen too slowly or are inconsistently implemented, because there is just not enough time for the deputy headteacher to follow through everything that he is left to do. The school leadership team needs strengthening in its roles and responsibilities, to support him with this. Although it plays an important part in the day-to-day running of the school and in the performance management of staff, the primary and secondary team leaders do not have a sufficient role in monitoring the teaching and provision within their departments.

46. The leadership and management of English, mathematics, science and PSHE are very good. Leadership of subjects has generally developed well. Almost all subject leaders monitor planning and have a clear view as to how their subject should now develop. Subjects are regularly audited and reported on to the tripod leadership team and performance management takes account of this. However, the leadership and management of ICT, though satisfactory, are more variable. They are strong in supporting pupils' use of ICT to access other subjects and to communicate; they are weaker in leading the specific subject and in ensuring that a coherent range of learning opportunities is in place that enables pupils to build progressively on their skills.
47. Although teaching and learning in almost all subjects have been monitored and evaluated well, this has until recently been the sole responsibility of the headteacher and means that not all subject leaders are aware of where the weaknesses are in their subject. Recently the English and mathematics co-ordinators have had a role in monitoring teaching, and roles for other subject leaders are planned. This is good practice. Staff meeting minutes reveal some very good feedback about issues arising and a very strong awareness by such leaders of how learning in their subjects can be strengthened even further.
48. Information gained from assessments and monitoring of standards is used satisfactorily for setting statutory targets. Until recently the information the school had to support such target setting had been limited, but the introduction of a new assessment approach and more consistent gathering of evidence of pupil work is strengthening target setting further. In addition, the school is working with other special schools so that it can moderate such information and challenge itself further.
49. An effective performance management system has been introduced and most staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The quality of the professional development, induction and training for teaching and learning support staff is also good and there is a culture of continuing improvement.
50. Financial controls and administration are very good. The school finances are well managed and expenditure is carefully monitored with spending closely linked to educational objectives identified in the school improvement plan. The systems for evaluating the effectiveness of provision are very good. Governors are clear about the

principles of best value. They are used well to ensure the school gets best value for its money in its purchases.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,722,768	Balance from previous year	81,643
Total expenditure	1,656,235	Balance carried forward to the next	148,176*
Expenditure per pupil	18,820.85		

*NB: *This Carry Forward includes £27,590.23 Standards Fund which does not have to be spent until 31.8.05. It therefore does not count as part of the schools balance. The actual figure used for calculations is £120,585.73.*

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

51. It was not possible to fully report on the provision for work-related learning as few opportunities were seen. The provision for work-related learning is planned satisfactorily. While there are clear arrangements for work-related learning as part of the curriculum including visits, visitors and work opportunities in the school bank, there has been only limited improvement in such opportunities since the previous inspection. The new national arrangements for providing work-related learning have only had a marginal effect on curriculum planning and innovation. As a result, while planning is satisfactory in theory, in practice it is not making a strong and purposeful contribution to pupils' education. However, the school has recently had considerable problems in finding suitable work-placements for pupils.

The Education Service for Physical Disability (ESPD)

Provision in ESPD is **good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- This is a highly professional service, staffed by personnel with high levels of expertise.
- The quality of support observed was very good with good practical guidance given.
- The service is very well thought of by its users.
- Evidence indicates pupils' good progress in relation to how well they are included in mainstream schools.
- Some aspects of efficiency could be improved.
- Systems for self-evaluation are under-developed.

Commentary

52. The service is based at the school and is led and managed effectively by the school's headteacher. The deputy headteacher, who has day-to-day responsibility, manages the service well and provides much valuable support for the headteacher. The service was created in the late 1980s and has grown in staff and the number of referrals. It started through the need for the school staff to support pupils transferring into mainstream schools and has developed since then. It continues to support Freddie's pupils on transfer.

53. It supports pupils with physical disability in mainstream schools spread across four local unitary authorities (Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire). These authorities jointly fund the service, although there is no service

level agreement. Currently, it has 1,400 pupils on its database, although its actual working caseload is much smaller than this. Its central aim is to maximise the potential of pupils with physical disability in mainstream school by ensuring that their inclusion in such schools is successful. This it fulfils well. It works closely with the education service for the visual and hearing impaired as well as having strong links with health agencies and, in particular, staff from speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy services.

54. The service is adequately staffed by considerably experienced senior teachers who are very knowledgeable and provide a high level of expertise to schools. The three teachers visit schools regularly across the region and the deputy headteacher and headteacher both have a relatively small caseload.
55. The support observed was professional and sensitive to the pupils' backgrounds and disability. At times though, some of the less important work, such as monitoring of pupils' improvement in writing skills, could be undertaken by the schools themselves. The service could then be provided with information upon which to make decisions about further intervention. Although the service has an appropriate schedule of timed responses in relation to the nature of the referrals it gets, its way of prioritising is not always sufficiently sharp, especially given the increased number of referrals. The service aims to work efficiently as possible and organise the timing of visits in relation to the location of schools in order to minimise travelling time. Occasionally, schools cancel visits due to unforeseen circumstances. Strategies to use time effectively when this occurs are in place, although activities tend to be more administrative rather than practical at these times. However, the annual service reports to LEAs show a huge and disproportionate amount of administrative time compared to 'hands-on' work. This is misleading, as the administration time recorded includes training, which is a significant part of the service's work. At times though, efficiencies could be made with staff writing notes of visits on site, rather than having all their activities written and typed up back at the base.
56. The base is effectively supported by a team of administrative staff. The two technical support staff also work directly with pupils and schools. Their role is extremely wide ranging and they make a significant contribution to the work of the service and to schools directly. It includes repair and maintenance of equipment. However, like the teachers, they also provide training, often linked to lifting and handling or the use of specialist equipment. They are invaluable members of the service team.
57. The scope of the service's work is wide ranging and includes:
 - Advice and support directly to pupils and school staff about communication, learning and building access;
 - Advice to the LEAs in relation to formal assessment and Statementing procedures;
 - Provision of specialist equipment such as stair climbers, ICT equipment and other educational access resources;
 - Training for teachers and support staff on aspects of disability;
 - Production of a good range of publications (nationally distributed) on managing disability in mainstream schools.
58. All these features are regarded highly by the mainstream schools. Many of the schools are very strong in their praise for the service. It is a measure of the value placed on the service that the LEAs are committed to buying into this service and that the number of referrals continues to rise. Pupils' case files show evidence of a good level of progress

in relation to their inclusion in mainstream schools as a result of the intervention of the service. Users of the service are very well satisfied. However, the service does not have ways which directly measure the impact of its work and pupils' progress. It regards its work to schools as 'advisory', and rather than setting specific measurable targets for pupils and schools to respond to, which are then supported and monitored, it provides advisory notes.

59. The service is reviewed through Hull LEA's monitoring procedures for provisions in non-standard settings. While this gives a helpful profile of the service's work, the service does not have a comprehensive and robust self-evaluation system, although evaluation of the service development plan and questionnaires to service users about support and training contribute to some extent.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Secure daily routines with familiar adults ensure children are comfortable and happy.
- Small group activities provide fun and learning in a social setting.
- Teamwork is strong and there are very close working relationships with the speech and language therapist, other therapists and parents to maximise learning.
- Every opportunity is provided for children to make choices and communicate in a variety of ways.
- Mathematical learning is planned well and encouraged throughout activities.
- Children are encouraged to explore their environment and there are many opportunities to learn through play.

Commentary

60. It was not possible to observe teaching and report fully on the areas of learning, but discussions with staff and examination of teachers' records and children's work support the judgements given below. The two teachers are new to the area of Foundation Stage teaching; the reception teacher has adapted particularly well to the challenge and both teachers have been given positive support. The needs of the children now admitted to the Foundation Stage have changed since the last report. Therefore, it is not possible to make a comparison.
61. Attainment on entry is very low. Although children will not attain the goals expected in each area of learning by the end of reception, overall achievement is good and for a few children it is very good. Achievement is particularly good in communication and physical skills. This is because the team of physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and teachers work closely together to assess and plan activities to meet and extend each child's needs. The close partnership with parents further promotes these skills. The sensitive introduction to school and the regular communication through home-school diaries, conversations and visits ensure very good relationships.
62. Teaching is good overall; activities are sensitive to children's individual needs. The teaching assistants are experienced and know the children well. The strong teamwork contributes positively to children's development and independence. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The Foundation Stage profile and 'P' levels are used to track children's development. There are good examples of daily recording during activities. Short-term plans show appropriate activities to cover areas of learning and daily lesson plans illustrate individual learning programmes. At present the primary department leader oversees the Foundation Stage but, as such, there is no specific leader to manage and monitor provision and ensure consistency. Staff in the Foundation Stage currently work and plan separately. The curriculum provides a good balance of experiences and activities which are clearly tied into areas of learning. There is sufficient emphasis on developing communication, independent movement and personal skills.

63. At present, the nursery accommodation is unsatisfactory. The room is too large and is extremely cluttered with no clear teaching areas and no outside play facilities. However, good use is made of the sensory room, soft-play room and the extensive and beautiful grounds. The reception class is a pleasant room, which opens on to an attractive external area. Here, children have the opportunity to experience water and play activities to increase their knowledge and understanding of counting and grasping objects. There is a clear view of how the provision could be improved, with suitable actions planned with new provision for a single assessment nursery from September. Plans include teaching by new but experienced staff, improved and designed accommodation, relevant resources and an outside play area to meet the needs of the children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

64. Routines support learning throughout the day and are successfully planned to encourage each child to achieve as much as they can. Achievement is good as is the quality of teaching. The good use of signs and symbols supports children's understanding and aids their listening and attending. Most children are beginning to anticipate what they are going to do next and how to respond appropriately. For example, reception children know how to pass an object, wait their turn and answer questions. However, the use of familiar objects, to indicate an activity by providing a visual and tactile rhythm to the day for children with more complex needs, is limited. This means that the children are not always clear on what they are going to do next.
65. The very close relationships between staff and children encourage children to communicate to make choices and decisions. They feel secure and relate to the adults well and reception children take a lot of notice of each other and are beginning to form friendships. The team of physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and nursing staff ensure children are comfortable and positioned well to access learning. Regular contact with parents and a sensitive induction programme supports the children's settling in time to school and a smooth transition to the next phase of education. Children thoroughly enjoy the routine songs, games and physical movements, which accompany the lessons and show by their interaction how happy they are and how much they have achieved in confidence and skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

66. Children's achievement is very good because assessment, planning and teaching are very focused to meet the very special individual needs of each child. Overall, teaching is very good. The individual and group approach to communication throughout the day encourages choice and preference through body language, eye pointing, signs, sounds and words. A few nursery children make definite choices in response to the question yes or no, while one child delights in responding with signs. Reception children are beginning to recognise symbols and express them in words. They listen to stories and love watching pictures and listening to the sounds well on the interactive whiteboard. They show great excitement when it is their turn to respond and make something happen. They can turn the pages of a book and most children know exactly what comes next. All children love songs and react with smiles as they join in and anticipate their favourite rhymes. A few reception children recognise their name. They attempt to write the letters of their name. One child can copy a sentence using the computer. A few children can use switches to make things happen on the screen; they enjoy listening to the sounds and pictures that different vehicles make when the switch is pressed.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

67. Achievement in mathematical development is good as teachers plan visual and tactile stories to involve children in tracking, matching and counting. Teaching is good. All staff support mathematical learning during the day such as sharing and sequencing in dressing skills. During the 'good morning' songs and routines children are beginning to anticipate their names and give good eye contact to recognise and match objects to events. Children in the reception class count and match objects and are beginning to recognise written numbers. Most children recognise numbers to five and one boy knows numbers to 10. Nursery children follow lights in the sensory room and reach and grasp small items. Every opportunity is used to count and recognise numbers in rhymes and stories which children greatly enjoy.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

68. Achievement in this area of learning is good and teaching is good as many opportunities are provided for children to have a variety of experiences. This is especially important for those children with more complex needs. Reception children enjoy an interactive seaside story on the whiteboard to explore sand and shells. They make sandwiches for the journey and pretend to travel to the beach. They fish for numbers and match words. The fascinating grounds provide an exciting range of opportunities to explore and recognise different areas such as the pond which they match to photographs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

69. Achievement and teaching of physical skills are very good. Walking, standing and movements are encouraged to ensure children are as independent and mobile as possible. Daily sitting programmes devised by the physiotherapists encourage children to sit correctly in order to be comfortable and attend to the story time. All children have a specialised chair and equipment where needed. The very good team approach by therapists and staff creates a fun learning environment where children are developing an awareness of their own bodies. Rhymes and songs give children opportunities to make choices and answer questions in context while they take part in movements. They can stretch their arms and legs, sit, stand and roll over with support. They love to splash and kick in the swimming pool and have all improved in their water skills and confidence.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

70. Little creative work was observed. However, bright pictures show children have chosen colours to illustrate topic work. A few can hold a brush and dab paint on to paper. A few attempt to cut with scissors and reception children enjoy identifying an animal and choosing materials to make it together. A few children can paint a house shape and name the doors and windows. Musical activities are a particularly good experience for reception children, which encourage their speaking and listening skills very well.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 4, AND IN POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well from their starting points, particularly in communicating, speaking and listening and in their reading.
- Staff are very skilled at supporting and developing further pupils' spoken communications.
- Symbols, signs and other resources are not always consistently used in all parts of the school, particularly to support writing.
- A very good range of learning opportunities is now in place in English, particularly in the primary department, although the range of accreditation is limited for more able pupils.
- Assessment procedures in English are good overall with some very good features.
- Resources have improved, although accommodation is cramped.
- English is very well led and managed by a leading literacy teacher who has monitored teaching and learning and is clear about what needs to be done now.

Commentary

71. Since the last inspection, the provision has improved well. This is because the relatively new co-ordinator has completely reviewed the curriculum and is ensuring that what is now in place is very strongly informed by national strategies and pupils' needs. In addition, the co-ordinator is now involved in monitoring teaching and learning and provides very strong leadership in this area. There is a good understanding of what needs to be done next to improve the subject.
72. Although achievement is very good overall, achievement in writing is good. However, achievement, though still good overall, is less consistent in the secondary and Post-16 department. This is because the teaching and learning opportunities are strongest in the primary school and teaching, planning and effective use of support staff and technological aids are less consistent in the secondary and Post-16 departments.
73. On entry to school, pupils' attainment in English is low because of their learning difficulties, although individual pupils do reach standards, particularly in communication and reading, closer to those of other children of their age. A few are at the very earliest stages of communication. Consistently very good teaching in the primary years means that pupils' achievements are very good in this department. Very strong support from the therapy teams means that almost all pupils are quickly provided with the technology support for self-expression and signs and symbols are on the whole used very well. Those pupils with less complex needs, in particular, move forward very well in their speaking and listening skills, in spoken language and in their use of switches and other technological aids, signs and symbols. Very good progress is also made in the primary classes in reading. Signs and symbols are used well to help those with more complex needs towards a small vocabulary of words and phrases that they read confidently. The more able pupils read fluently and well by Year 7. All have very strong attitudes and enthusiasm for books and stories. Teachers and support staff work highly effectively together in English and not a moment is wasted in lessons. Writing skills are also well supported, although sometimes pupils could be even more independent in this area if there was more technology used to support this.

74. In the secondary classes the pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in their self-expression and in their responsiveness to others' ideas. However, signs and symbols are less consistently used here and in Post-16. For those pupils with the most complex needs objects of reference are not used consistently enough, particularly to help them to understand what is about to happen or where they are to go. However, all pupils move on very well in their listening skills. They are keen to learn and share their work and take great pride in its presentation. By Year 11 most pupils communicate their ideas well using spoken language or their communication aids and know that to have their own views is important. Those with more complex needs make simple decisions in relation to their daily life, enjoy listening to discussions, anticipate routines and partake enthusiastically in sensory stories.
75. Teaching in the secondary classes and in Post-16 is good. However, occasionally, staff do not challenge the more able pupils enough or there has not been enough thought given as to how some pupils will be involved. Occasionally, in whole-class sessions, too few visual or sensory aids, or objects of reference or too little use of sign means individual pupils with complex needs are not fully involved. Reading is very well supported in these departments and almost all pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school. Achievement in writing is sound overall. Although pupils are provided with many opportunities for writing in English, too often these become word-processing activities rather than work in creative writing. Adults too readily scribe for pupils, writing down their ideas which are then copied into the computer by the child.
76. Teaching and learning are very strong overall and teachers work well with the speech and language therapy and physiotherapy support that are available. There is a strong team that has been created to strengthen even more the use of alternative and augmentative communication and they have rightly identified the need to ensure more staff expertise in the use of signs, symbols and objects of reference, as the needs of pupils within the school change.
77. Some staff keep very good files of pupils' work and the co-ordinator is tracking standards and targets very well. Good systems have been introduced to track reading standards including some standardised tests, although staff need further training about how best to use these results. There are, however, limited accredited courses, especially for the more able pupils, being followed in English and this is an area the co-ordinator and the school have rightly identified as needing further development.
78. Books and general resources for English have been improved. More resources appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils are available and the use of the library itself by pupils is being developed further. Occasionally, the cramped accommodation in some classrooms limits the range of activities that can be carried out, particularly for those pupils with complex needs and for older pupils in general.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

79. This is good. The school's strong emphasis on communication is carried over well into other subjects. Similarly, reading skills are well promoted. However, there could be more varied ways of helping pupils to write and to record what they have learned in all subjects. In the primary department symbols are used well to promote pupils' understanding of what they are thinking about and to support literacy in other subjects. In the secondary department, teachers systematically help pupils to apply their reading skills in subjects through books and through ICT research to find out about topics. Provision for writing across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, although there is

more scope to monitor this and to ensure that writing in particular goes beyond copying into the computer and word processing, and is more independent.

French

80. This subject cannot be reported in full as only one French lesson was seen during the inspection and only a small amount of pupils' work was available. Discussions with the subject leader and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupil records support the judgements that can be made. The curriculum provided is appropriate for pupils. The recommended LEA programme of work is used in Years 7 to 9, although currently there is a very small number of pupils of this age, in the class for pupils with the most complex needs, who do not have French lessons. The school recognises that it is not fulfilling its responsibilities and is now investigating how best to do this. Strengths lie in the enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator and the recognition of how the subject contributes to the self-esteem, listening skills and cultural education of the pupils. In the lesson observed the teaching was satisfactory. The pupils were strongly motivated to learn French, with almost all concentrating and listening very well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2 because of the very competent teaching in these years.
- The best teaching is planned very well and fires pupils' imaginations, which helps with their understanding of patterns and relationships and ensures they behave and concentrate.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- The subject leader is very experienced and has a very clear view of what needs to be done to improve the subject.
- Some accommodation is limited in size.

Commentary

81. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good overall. They are best in Years 1 and 2 because the quality of planning and the attention to the needs of the individual are very good in these years. In the Post-16 department, the students' achievements are satisfactory. This is because the emphasis is mainly on number and the use of skills in practical situations. Pupils in Year 2 achieve very well as they begin to recognise and order days of the week and begin to sequence events. Pupils in Years 3 learn to add coins up to the value of three, five and 20 pence, and to recognise number patterns up to 50 on a grid. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 analyse data and decide how to represent it in different diagrams. In Years 10 and 11 there is a wide ability range, from pupils who attain levels similar to pupils nationally to standards which are well below average for pupils of their age. All pupils are supported effectively and make good gains whatever their level of capability. One pupil is pursuing a GCSE course and the mathematics lessons are taught in a mainstream school. Pupils with PMLD in the school's specialist class in Years 7 to 14, and those with complex needs in the Post-16 provision, make satisfactory progress. There is often too much of a focus on number for the older pupils

and while the use of mathematics for daily living is important and well used, the wider aspects of mathematics need to be better emphasised.

82. Teaching is good with examples of very good teaching in Years 1 and 2. Planning is good overall because it is consistent, well based in pupils' previous learning and presents clear aims and targets. While teachers provide good opportunities to help pupils practise recently acquired knowledge and set work suitable for pupils of different levels of ability, they do not usually include a range of elements to stretch all pupils. In the best lessons this is done, and pupils share their discoveries and ideas with others. For example in Year 2, a pupil said he was "seeing groups of numbers" in his head, and another pupil added that that he was using his "imagination". Pupils were very excited about their learning in a lesson where staff had used the positioning of pupils' wheelchairs in order to represent days of the week; they had also used spoken language and reading very well to confirm and extend understanding. Throughout the school, pupils behave very well in mathematics lessons. They are keen to participate and they concentrate very well. This is because lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils have good access to the tasks set for them with effective support from all teachers and support staff. Teachers make learning fun and this encourages pupils and spurs them on to do their best. Teachers use their interactive whiteboards to demonstrate. In the best lessons, good use is made of the interactive function by staff, although mostly staff use the board just like an ordinary whiteboard to display text and number ideas. So far, the pupils are not making much use of the interactive features.
83. The National Strategy for Numeracy is used well to provide consistency in planning and good opportunities for assessment. Teachers' marking is good with clear guidance given on how pupils can improve. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Speaking, listening and reading are well planned and used in teaching to help pupils explain their thinking. Signs and symbols are also used for those with complex needs but there is scope for greater use of these. All aspects of mathematics are taught and statutory requirements are met. Accommodation is cramped in parts. Some classrooms are too small for pupils to move about in easily to use different sorts of equipment and the lack of space makes learning more difficult. Resources, while satisfactory for the delivery of the curriculum overall, are limited in range and quantity, so there is limited equipment for teachers and pupils to use.
84. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader provides a very good role model for teaching, has high levels of expertise and has effective subject knowledge on how to adapt activities for pupils with physical and learning difficulties. Suitable areas for development have been identified with the school's senior leadership team and are being addressed through the school's strategic planning. A subject audit has been carried out and this, combined with consistent monitoring, means that there is good evidence to show how to take the subject forward. Lesson monitoring is evaluative and effective in improving practice. Arrangements for assessment and its use are good and there are plans to refine and improve it further. The school has maintained the good quality of its provision for mathematics since the last inspection and has successfully addressed the minor weaknesses identified.

Mathematics across the curriculum

85. The use of mathematics to support learning in other subjects and to reinforce pupils' mathematical skills is satisfactory overall, but is not always planned consistently. This

is because subject-specific skills are not emphasised enough in curriculum planning and so opportunities to use mathematics consistently in other subjects are reduced.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy science and are very interested because lessons are exciting.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good and teachers present activities that are challenging, relevant and well matched to pupils' learning needs.
- Achievement is very good because staff are very clear about what pupils know and what else they need to learn.
- The school overcomes the drawbacks in specialist accommodation by visiting a nearby high school for regular lessons.
- The subject is very well led and managed and has made very good improvements since the previous inspection.

Commentary

86. Primary aged pupils are taught on the school's premises while all secondary pupils have their science lessons at a local high school. This is to compensate for the school's lack of facilities, a weakness identified in the last inspection. The drawback to this is that time is lost in travelling to the school but this is somewhat compensated for by the very good facilities provided.
87. Practical investigations are the foundation of pupils' learning and are carried out very well. Pupils in Year 2 explore plants and seeds and how they grow. They identify what they need, such as light and water, and carry out practical experiments to prove their hypotheses. Sometimes, pupils' emotional understanding gets in the way of learning; one pupil was upset because one of his seeds was to receive water while the other was not. He thought it was unfair because the seed without water might die! By Year 5, pupils show very good understanding of solids, liquids and gases. They conducted a practical experiment to investigate changing states of matter and 'solids' and how air gets into gaps in particles. They use the Intel microscope (computer microscope) competently and use correct scientific language well, such as 'magnification' when evaluating the experiment.
88. By Years 9 and 10, pupils use the science laboratory at a local high school. This is very well equipped and has 'rise and fall' furniture to enable pupils to sit at the benches in their wheelchairs more comfortably. Pupils conduct practical experiments, predict, record and evaluate their work. As a result of this work, pupils achieve very well. Post-16 students with more complex learning difficulties carry out more practical and sensory activities to learn about body parts. They too achieve very well. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection.
89. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with clear learning objectives. Most (but not all) lessons throughout the school are taught by the school's specialist science teacher/co-ordinator and expert subject knowledge and ways of planning activities to meet the pupils' needs significantly enhance learning and achievement.
90. Planning, support and resources take full account of the diverse needs of pupils so that every pupil is fully involved. Pupils with the PMLD are fully engaged, involved and aware of the experiences they are having and gain in knowledge and understanding.

91. Through effective questioning, teachers and support staff successfully encourage pupils to recall previous learning to show how much they know. More able pupils in Year 11 have completed their AQA Entry Level award in science. These are the first pupils to complete this accreditation and the course meets their needs very well. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the work produced. Teachers and support staff always have the highest expectations of pupils. Consequently, pupils rise to the expectations, and increase their achievements. Literacy and numeracy skills are regularly reinforced in science lessons. ICT is used regularly and effectively in science lessons. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are interested because lessons are exciting. Relationships in lessons are excellent and pupils respond very positively by working hard to complete their work. Teaching assistants have clear roles in lessons and are used effectively to assess and record pupils' achievements. Science achievement is enhanced by pupils attending a weekly science club. They go 'pond dipping' and can identify creatures by using the computer microscope to magnify the image many times. This is good practice and pupils show great excitement, enjoyment and satisfaction from their work.
92. The co-ordinator leads the subject very enthusiastically and is keen to ensure the quality of provision is as high as it can be. This has resulted in science becoming a strength of the school. The co-ordinator assesses and records pupils' progress well; this enables her to track and measure progress over time. This is good practice. Provision is now very good due to improvements in teaching and learning, the development of links with a local high school, increased resources, good planning and increased subject knowledge. There are good links with parents, and they appreciate the termly science reports which tell them how their child is achieving. The reports say what the pupils know, can do and understand in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a high commitment to using ICT to support pupils' communication and access to learning.
- Teachers in the primary department work hard to devise interesting and relevant activities based on the school's planned programme of work which help pupils develop skills.
- A lack of clear systematic planning to build pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in Years 7 to 11 is the main reason why their achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Resources, both hardware and software, are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

93. Provision is satisfactory overall, when the use of ICT to support pupils' communication and pupils' access to learning is taken into account, as well as the learning skills in the National Curriculum subject. The two former aspects are the strongest areas of the school's work in ICT. However, these are also areas that the school has identified for improvement, because of the need, even within these uses of ICT, for greater consistency. This is partly because new staff have joined the school in the past few years and also because the technology is changing and staff need to update their knowledge and skills in relation to its use. A group within the school is appropriately steering development of alternative and augmentative communication systems and this

group is a good driving force which is aiding improvement. However, often the use of ICT in the school has been equated with 'access solutions' for pupils (ways of providing them with ICT technology to help with their learning) and it is only recently that attention has been given to the development of ICT as a subject itself. The pace of subject development has improved lately, with greater attention to providing documentation to help teachers plan their work and pupils to build upon their skills.

94. The school is strong at supporting pupils' communication through technology and a small number of pupils use sophisticated communication aids which they have mastered well. This often gives the more able pupils a 'voice'. Pupils' passports/profiles provide useful information about how pupils communicate and the technology and processes used. Many pupils use a range of other low to medium technological aids to make their needs known. Occasionally, teachers bypass the use of these by asking a teaching assistant to explain a pupil's possible response to a question or to talk on their behalf. Sometimes, this is entirely appropriate, especially if the pupil has already explained their message to the support assistant. However, at other times it means that, although the pupil response would have been slower, it is a missed opportunity for the pupil to directly contribute to a conversation. There is less use of 'low tech' solutions to aid pupils' communication.
95. Overall, pupils' access to learning via a wide variety of different software methods is satisfactory but sometimes not enough thought is given to the best approaches for pupils. The school works hard to provide pupils with ways which mean they can learn effectively, despite their physical limitations. Many pupils are unable to write with their hands but can use switches or a modified mouse. Many methods used are successful for pupils but a few teachers rely too heavily on standard software products with little or no modification. They sometimes do not use the full range of devices that is available or sometimes do not use simple modifications. For instance, a Year 10 pupil struggled to see a pointer because it was not easily visible on the desktop, yet no brightly coloured or enlarged pointer was provided. Some pupils, because of their particular physical difficulties, struggle with the laborious process of typing words letter by letter, when they could use predictive typing methods or word bank selection. In one Year 10 and 11 English lesson, the approach taken resulted in pupils' English skills being too slowly developed, because of all the effort being taken up with basic typing. Some of this was just copying of words, with pupils too heavily reliant on the teacher for the next step.
96. Pupils' achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding in ICT in Years 1 to 6. Teachers are now planning their lessons from a programme of work which outlines topics to be taught. There are weaknesses in that the plan is devised for single age groups when there are mixed age groups in each class. In addition, it is largely down to each individual teacher to decide when a topic is taught. The planning, by and large, aids pupils' progress in the subject, but the hardware and software have limitations. The greatest range of software is on the school's one networked computer in each class. Staff use this computer in conjunction with the interactive whiteboard. They are limited in their use of other ICT equipment, because the software on the rest of the computers in the class is often limited in range, many of the PCs are old and some are unreliable. Resources overall for ICT as a subject and to support learning in other subjects are limited and unsatisfactory.
97. In the secondary department, there is no planned programme of work in operation. One for Year 7 to 9 has just been completed, but like the programmes in use for Years

1 to 6, there is insufficient detail to help staff inexperienced in teaching ICT plan for pupils with the most complex needs. There is no programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Staff there do their best to provide a broad and balanced programme, although some elements, such as collection and use of data, are underemphasised. The lack of a programme means that the pupils' experiences do not always build on each other. Although pupils do have lots of opportunities to use ICT in one way or another, the planning is not systematic enough to help them make all the progress they could. As a result, pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 11 are unsatisfactory. There are no award-bearing courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11, yet there are pupils who could benefit from these. Students in Post-16 largely use ICT for desktop publishing and word processing; other opportunities such as using spreadsheets for enterprise activities are missed. Within what they do, they achieve soundly, but would achieve much more with a broader curriculum.

98. Little teaching was seen, although that which was seen was satisfactory. This was usually in the form of individual support and helped pupils to follow instructions and reinforce pupils' skills. Some teachers make the most of pupils' use of ICT to help them develop new learning. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to successfully construct and complete simple tables to insert their data.
99. ICT as whole is adequately led and managed, although until recently there has been less emphasis on ICT as a subject than there should have been. There is a clear development plan, although this is mostly about resources and it says little about the much needed improvement in ICT infrastructure. With only one computer networked in each class there is little opportunity for individuals to use the Internet, communicate through email or use software available on the network. There is no assessment system in place to identify pupils' skills and measure their progress. This is unsatisfactory. The development of ICT for access and communication has developed adequately since the last inspection. Overall, there has not been enough improvement in ICT as a subject since the last inspection and some areas, such as assessment, which were clearly in place then, are now under-developed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

100. For access to learning generally and supporting pupils' communication, this is good overall. For using ICT to supporting learning in other subjects, the use of ICT is limited. Teachers use the school's network software to demonstrate specific features in other subjects and ICT is well used in science. However, not all leaders recognise their responsibility in developing software resources and so in subjects other than English, mathematics and science there are limited resources. Occasionally, pupils do not use ICT often enough to develop their creative writing skills; it is used more for basic word-processing instead.

HUMANITIES

101. No **history** or **geography** lessons were seen during the week of the inspection. Therefore, there is insufficient evidence to comment on them in full. However, in discussion with the subject leader and from examination of pupils' work, teachers' planning and display it is clear that the programme of work covers a good range of topics. The subject leader monitors the work that teachers plan for their pupils but does not monitor teaching. Good use is made of artefacts from the school loans museum to give good visual and tactile experiences. The subjects are brought to life by visits to local museums, visiting speakers and use of the local community and countryside.

There are good references to study of other countries such as the tropical rainforest and research about volcanoes.

102. Pupils' work shows that they achieve a good understanding over time of historical and geographical facts. For example, young pupils sequence their family tree and seek information on the Internet to find out what life was like for Greek sailors. Pupils in Year 5 wrote simple sentences about life in India after watching a day in the life of an Indian girl on video. Year 10 pupils visit a local village on the estuary to complete worksheets to show the different uses of space such as industrial and residential use. They record using digital images and discuss their results, which contributes well to the accredited course. Post-16 students complete accredited modules of work on European awareness.
103. Special school events promote learning well with activities such as a Tudor feast and World War II experiences. Pupils and staff practise songs to celebrate a simulated street party to commemorate VE day. A World Health Day event looked at the poverty of various countries, and a theatre company involved pupils in Victorian plays and songs. Assessment is under-developed.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Local visits are enjoyed by all and make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of religion.
- Lessons are well planned to grab pupils' interest; teaching is good.
- Assessment is under-developed.

Commentary

104. The provision for religious education is similar to that seen at the time of the last inspection. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. There is a clear view on how the subject needs to develop. The subject leader follows the agreed syllabus and co-ordinates with staff to ensure topics are well planned and taught. There is no system for assessing and tracking of pupils' skills and levels but individual units of work are assessed by staff. The achievement of pupils is good over time and teaching approaches are imaginative. Pupils with complex needs follow a suitable spiritual, sensory approach.
105. Pupils study Christianity with an increasing knowledge of major religions as they progress through school. There is a small range of artefacts and books and the subject is brought to life by visiting local places of worship, such as churches and a mosque. Events are celebrated in the local church such as 'Christingle' and Harvest Festival and visitors to school have included a Buddhist and a nun. Visits make an important contribution, especially to learning about religions and ways of life which relate the religious traditions. In a recent visit to a mosque, pupils knew they had to take their shoes and socks off and wash their hands. They were rather overawed when they saw

the inside of it, met the priest and saw his robes. They had a good understanding of Islam and asked relevant questions.

106. A small number of lessons were observed with younger pupils. Lessons are well planned to provide lots of practical work, usually after watching a video or listening to stories. This helps develop their imagination. The headteacher enthralled one class with an account of journeys to Lourdes as part of their study of pilgrimages. They listen intently and make very relevant observations. Together they celebrate their success in learning and rise to the occasion when they get praise for their efforts. They sing hymns during lessons and are quiet at times of prayer and reflection. There is a great spiritual feeling of togetherness at these times. Although teachers have good subject knowledge, occasionally, for some pupils, learning is planned in too big leaps; a small steps approach would ensure all pupils gain a full understanding of what is taught. In one lesson, the classroom was very small for the amount of wheelchairs and not all pupils with complex needs were fully involved. Post-16 students take part in religious study as part of their accredited coursework.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn a wide range of techniques and learn well from the work of famous artists.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good; they work hard despite the limitations of the accommodation.
- Assessment opportunities are limited.
- There is no one leading art development, at present.

Commentary

107. Pupils achieve well in art. Pupils learn a wide range of skills and knowledge in all year groups. They build up their knowledge of colour, shape and pattern and how different techniques make different effects. The school uses the work of great artists to very good effect through display and study of particular works of art in lessons. Post-16 students produce high quality examples of work in oil pastels and water colours and take part in creating sculptures at a local collage. They are very proud of their work.

108. Pupils' enthusiasm and motivation are supported by the effective way they are taught. Some teaching is very well planned to involve different areas of the curriculum, whilst other lessons, while well planned, rely more on flair and intuition. Pupils work extremely hard to produce art work but the small size of some rooms they have to learn in limits their capacity to move about easily. Despite this, pupils are good-tempered and patient, not least because of the very good example set to them by teaching assistants and teachers and the very good relationships that exist between them. Pupils concentrate well and use their imagination to envisage the pictures they create in response to lively and thought-provoking teaching which evokes images and ideas – for example, the different effects of light on calm water. Pupils get very excited about their work.

109. The quality of teaching is good. The curriculum gives a good range of opportunities for teachers to teach and pupils to learn. Units of work build up steadily and develop pupils' subject-specific skills such as the use of colour. Subject-specific skills, while taught as an integral part of the curriculum, are not emphasised and analysed clearly enough to be used for any formal assessment, or to challenge more able pupils and recognise problems encountered by less capable pupils. Assessment, while broadly satisfactory, is informal and has not been developed since the previous inspection. Links with other curriculum areas are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in some classes because of cramped conditions and there is no specialist area for pupils to work in, for display and for storage. While resources are satisfactory, the range of computer software is limited and so reduces pupils' range of choices.
110. The school has no member of staff appointed as subject leader at present, and the deputy headteacher oversees the subject. No particular emphasis has been laid on developing art in the curriculum. The deputy headteacher monitors planning, and has a good knowledge of standards achieved in the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has maintained its standards in art since the previous inspection, largely because of the good quality of teaching.

Design and technology

111. As very little teaching was seen in design and technology, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision or on teaching and learning. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, but accommodation and resources for resistant materials and food technology are unsatisfactory.
112. Planning is based on units of work which cover an adequate range of the aspects of the design and technology programme of study. The use of ICT and attention to design is under-developed. Subject-specific skills, although taught through various units of work are not identified in planning and are not sufficiently part of the assessment process. These skills are taught incidentally rather than being built up systematically through different work and experiences. Planning shows opportunities for the use of literacy and numeracy but subject-specific language is not promoted enough.
113. The accommodation for design and technology is unsatisfactory because rooms are too small and there are no specialist work areas. The school no longer owns the house where food technology was taught at the time of the previous inspection. Year 10 pupils visit a neighbouring school with better resources for some of its work. Resources for food technology are unsatisfactory and limit pupils' opportunities on the school site.
114. Design and technology has not been an area for development but the school's improvement plan has identified the need to improve accommodation and resources. The subject leader has not observed any teaching and learning, but monitors teachers' planning and work coverage. Recent training has resulted in the subject leader realising that there is much to do to improve achievement and to give pupils better opportunities to learn.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are fully included in lessons and there is good emphasis on developing communication skills through music.
- Teaching promotes pupils' personal and social development.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Co-ordination of music is good.

Commentary

115. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' progress was satisfactory. Achievement is now good. Teachers are skilled at including all pupils fully in lessons. This is because of good planning and good teamwork in classes. Staff ensure there is support for those pupils identified as being in greatest need in lessons. They encourage pupils to make choices, some verbally, some by body language or pointing and some by use of communication aids. They identify and name instruments and say what sound they make. They play a range of instruments and say, for instance, whether they are playing loud, soft, fast or slow. When they sing action songs they show great enjoyment and satisfaction. They listen well and follow instructions carefully.

116. Teaching is good because teachers and support staff work well together. They know the pupils very well and understand their needs. The lessons are well planned within the capabilities of the pupils and they respond well to them. There is a consistency and a well-structured approach that produces a secure environment in which pupils learn well according to their capabilities. Pupils learn to share resources and wait turns patiently. They learn to value themselves and each other. Those that can sing, sing well and show great confidence when asked to sing individually or as part of a group. Lessons build pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem as well as building musical knowledge and skills. Staff set high expectations of pupils. The pupils apply themselves well and show keen interest and sustain concentration for long periods. They show a desire to improve their work and pride in their completed work. Pupils enhance their musical skills and knowledge by attending a weekly music club where they sing and join in action songs.

117. The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator. He has recently introduced a new music scheme and is advising and supporting staff on its implementation across the school. This is appreciated by staff and is good practice. Assessment in music is under-developed.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physiotherapy supports access to learning well and swimming gives pupils a good opportunity to develop skills they would not otherwise have out of water.
- Lessons are interesting and activities challenge pupils well.
- The subject is led effectively but the subject leader does not have responsibility for all aspects of physical education.
- There is no separate indoor provision for physical activities.

Commentary

118. The subject is led and managed well with a clear view of subject development. The subject leader has worked very hard to provide a very broad and rich range of sporting activities. The subject leader teaches games to most of the secondary groups and organises many sporting events such as basketball, tennis and bowling. The active partnership training with other schools is enabling the subject leader to share resources and venues, such as a lunchtime tennis club. Photographs show how much pleasure pupils have with dance workshops, while residential opportunities include skiing and canal boat adventures. However, the subject leader does not have a sufficient oversight of all aspects of the subject. There is no overview, at present, of the swimming programme and the physiotherapy input, even though these make a significant contribution to the subject. This means it is difficult gain a full view of pupils' achievement and record all aspects of their physical achievement. Certificates and badges support achievement and pupils readily celebrate each other's success. Each pupil receives additional physiotherapy in order to maximise learning opportunities.
119. Overall, teaching and learning are good. The physiotherapists, the swimming teacher and individual teachers plan effectively and have high expectations of pupils' involvement and achievement. Activities take account of each pupil's very different individual needs with appropriate resources where needed. Support staff are vital to enable pupils to take part and effectively support pupils; however, there are not always sufficient people deployed to do this. Pupils try extremely hard and show an eagerness and enjoyment in lessons. The very well planned relaxing and stretching activities ensure pupils have time out of their wheelchairs to develop more freedom of movement. This is carried out with humour and fun and contributes well to personal and social education.
120. Overall, the pupils' achievement is good. Young pupils improve well in the development of water skills. They are encouraged to reach and stretch and grasp items as they sing songs and move their limbs in the water. Their achievement in water confidence and skills is good. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 enthusiastically take part in the well thought out games. They can throw a beanbag or roll a ball at a target and compete in team games. They develop their skills well. The good teamwork ensures staff make suggestions so that pupils understand what they have to do to build on their skills. Post-16 students follow individual water skills programmes which help them to relax and move as much as possible. During college activities students enjoy a keep fit programme as part of their accredited course and have supported individual time in the gym. The excellent planning of a trampoline session provided students with complex needs the opportunity to relax and react to the movements. All pupils and students took part in the school sports day; it was a great social occasion supported well by friends and parents.
121. There is a good improvement since the last inspection, when activities were mainly confined to the hydrotherapy pool. However, the accommodation is still very restricted as the small hall is far too small and is also used for dining, assemblies and school events. The changing facilities in the pool area are also unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The way the subject pervades all aspects of school life significantly contributes to pupils' achievement; the curriculum is planned very well.
- Very well defined routines help pupils to know what is expected in relation to personal care and to anticipate what to do next; support for independence is strong in Post-16.
- Teachers listen with sensitivity to pupils' contributions and promote pupils' opportunity to make choices very well.
- Pupils are taught about ways of communicating messages, especially the importance of non-verbal communication.

Commentary

122. PSHCE is taught consistently well throughout the school. The routines of personal care are used with sensitivity and concern by staff. Pupils are used to routines and standards expected from them and this helps them to co-operate well and to feel supported as they learn. This helps to underpin the very good relationships which exist between adults and pupils. Teaching ensures that the very well planned activities are integrated with other subjects and activities. They are relevant to pupils' lives and make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, for example in developing conversation in social settings in small groups such as at snack time. As a result of all of this, the pupils achieve very well.
123. Teachers take every opportunity to help pupils to become aware of their own feelings and those of others, and to encourage them to listen to different ideas and opinions. Teachers go to great lengths to ensure that pupils' spoken contributions are heard and recognised. Pupils learn to make choices in organising their work and planning what they will do next. Teachers and other staff explain well what pupils are to expect and the order of events which will follow. The programme of work encourages pupils to think independently. For example, in a Year 10 lesson on drugs awareness, after discussion on different types of drugs, the session went on to consider where drugs might be bought and how a drug dealer might be your friend or someone you trust. The teacher demonstrated how the use of eye contact, gesture and voice could be used to indicate refusal, and carefully taught pupils to be aware of what they were doing and the message their actions can convey. Pupils then took part in role-play in his absence when a learning support assistant, as a trusted adult posed as a drug dealer. This lesson was relevant and useful to pupils' lives and gave them the chance to make choices and to become more self-aware and independent.
124. Post-16 pupils receive good provision. They are confident that their views will be heard and persist with explanations and increasing expectation of being able to share ideas and to know what kinds of behaviour are acceptable or unacceptable. Support for pupils' independence and preparation for future life are major areas of the successful work in this subject.
125. Curriculum planning is has been very carefully thought out, both for discrete PSHCE teaching and when integrated with other aspects and subjects of the curriculum. Programmes for sex education and drugs education are very well planned. Aspects of citizenship are planned within other lessons as well as pupils having separate opportunities. Circle time is time-tabled every week throughout Years 1 to 11 and in the Post-16 classes. The school council is well planned and managed. Students have the opportunity, through their representatives, to present ideas and discuss initiatives important to them.

126. Subject leadership is very good. Curriculum planning is very clear and teachers' planning is carefully monitored and followed up to make sure that the subject is taught regularly and in sufficient depth. The subject leader has not had the opportunity to monitor discrete teaching for specific outcomes in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the provision. This is an area for development.

127. The school has maintained the quality of its provision since the previous inspection. It has responded positively to the inclusion of citizenship and developed adequately what was in place previously. Assessment is well developed for pupils' personal development, especially for pupils' independence. However, for the subject of PSHCE itself, assessment of all aspects of the work is under-developed.

POST-16

Provision for students in the Post-16 department is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good; consequently students' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Personal support and guidance for students is very good.
- Links with colleges and high schools are good.
- Teaching is good; it is never less than satisfactory and at times very good and because of this students achieve well.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

128. The Post-16 department is well established in the school. This year six students have entered the department from another school. This has led to three classes being established, two whose students have most profound physical and complex learning difficulties and one whose students have higher ability. There is a 'collegiate' approach to leadership of the department. The three teachers work well together but there is no one Post-16 leader who retains a departmental overview. There are six teaching assistants to complement teachers in the department. Staff are enthusiastic and well qualified. All staff have completed first aid training and moving and handling courses. The latter is very important and exemplifies itself in physical education lessons where students with profound physical difficulties are moved and handled in a most professional manner.

129. Because relationships are very good and staff know students so well, students respond to staff's high expectations by working hard and behaving well. Attendance at Post-16 is very good. There is virtually no unauthorised absence (0.1 per cent) and nearly all authorised absences are due to medical problems. Support for personal care and guidance is very good. Students who require therapies, such as physiotherapy or hydrotherapy, receive these in school. Those who benefit from hydrotherapy receive this in the school's hydrotherapy pool. Students link with a personal adviser from Connexions during their time in the department. This is good practice and students and parents appreciate this. All students are invited to attend reviews for at least part of the meeting. This enables them to put forward their views where possible and shows that they are valued. There are three students on the school council. One has a specific

task of representing the most profound students and ensuring their views are taken to the council and meetings are reported back to them.

130. The Post-16 department links with two further education colleges and two local high schools as well as a respite house in the town. These links support students' education programme as well as their personal, social, health and citizenship education which permeates their programme. They have opportunities to mix with the public and other students from schools and colleges. Students use these opportunities to queue up, buy snacks and drinks and pay themselves, working out the correct money and change.
131. Teaching is effective because staff are well prepared, know the students very well and are skilled and knowledgeable about their needs. Lessons are well planned to meet these needs and well matched to individual students. Teaching and learning in physical education, such as sport and fitness taught at a local secondary school, are very good, particularly the work done on an individual basis in the 'techno gym'. This is very well supported by physical education in school taught in the 'sensory room' to the students with most profound difficulties, and in the hydro pool where to get students into the water and gain water confidence is a challenge which is well overcome by staff. Trampoline, rebound therapy, with a group of students with the most complex learning difficulties, was an example of outstanding teaching, and gave students an opportunity to achieve very well. Art, music and food technology are very well taught in Post-16. These are subjects in which students show very good achievement and great enjoyment, pride and satisfaction. All students have opportunities to achieve nationally recognised accreditation before they leave school. This includes literacy and numeracy skills as well as 'Life and Living Skills' accreditation. Students' achievements are recorded and presented in a Record of Achievement, which parents and pupils appreciate.
132. Post-16 accommodation is comprised of three classrooms. This is not separate accommodation but is a discrete wing of the school. However, at lunch time, most students go into one classroom for their lunch. This is a teaching room and is unsatisfactory accommodation for lunch. Too many students and adults are crowded into this room; it does not afford student dignity, is not an adequate social time and is a health and safety hazard. Three students eat in the sensory room, to give them a 'quiet environment' but this is still unsatisfactory use of accommodation. There is no 'social' area for students to go to play their music, read magazines, chat, socialise or make snacks.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

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