

INSPECTION REPORT

KELFORD SCHOOL

Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106968

Headteacher: Richard Fraser

Lead inspector: George Derby

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st April 2005

Inspection number: 268584

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: | 107 |
| School address: | Oakdale Road Kimberworth Rotherham |
| Postcode: | S61 2NU |
| Telephone number: | 01709 512088 |
| Fax number: | 01709 512091 |
| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Lorraine Wainwright |
| Date of previous inspection: | May 1999 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kelford is a large special school catering for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and a small number with autism. It caters for the full age range and has a relatively large Post-16 department, which includes pupils and students from Year 11 to Year 14, taught in mixed age classes. Many other classes also have mixed age groups. A small number of children of nursery and reception age are taught in the school's first class alongside some of the pupils who are in Year 1.

The school draws its pupils mainly from the Rotherham area. Pupils mostly come from white (British) backgrounds, although 12 per cent come from Pakistani heritages and are learning English as an additional language. A small number come from other ethnic groups. The pupils' main barrier to their communication, however, is their severe learning difficulties. A large percentage of pupils take free school meals; this is above average for this type of school. Most pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment because of their severe or profound learning difficulties.

In 2003, following an enquiry into the school's procedures for managing pupils with challenging behaviour, the local education authority (LEA) identified that the school was giving cause for concern. It has supported the school since then in relation to the specific issues identified for improvement by the enquiry.

A new headteacher is now in place (54 days from the start of the inspection). An acting headteacher supported the school for over 12 months following the absence and subsequent resignation of the previous headteacher. At the time of the enquiry, many staff

took sick leave and the school engaged a large number of temporary staff. Some permanent staff have been absent since this time. All heads of departments are currently in temporary positions and the current senior management team was formed in September 2004.

The LEA has reviewed all special school provision and, as a result, Kelford is to reduce the number of pupils it admits to 80 in September 2007.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| 25349 | George Derby | Lead inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 9348 | Mary Le Mage | Lay inspector | |
| 25439 | Kath Halifax | Team inspector | Science Geography History Religious education |
| 20165 | Alan Lemon | Team inspector | English Personal, social and health education Special educational needs English as an additional language |
| 10099 | Sue Lewis | Team inspector | Foundation Stage Modern foreign language Music |
| 28197 | John Novak | Team inspector | Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Post -16 |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Kelford fails to provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils and its effectiveness is **poor**. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory, as is the quality of teaching. The personal care that pupils receive is good, especially for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). However, there are a significant number of health and safety issues. The leadership by the new headteacher is good and he has a very clear vision of what needs to be done. Overall though, leadership and management are poor because there are too many weaknesses in leadership and management at other levels. The school provides poor value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher is very experienced and knows precisely how to improve things.
- Poor leadership and management and very poor financial management and governance have severely hindered the school's development.
- The achievement of pupils in mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign language, religious education is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory and the use of teaching assistants to support learning is poor.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (the school's 'nursery') is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and their lessons and relationships between pupils are very good.
- Despite limited facilities, pupils' achievement in physical education is good.
- There is too little knowledge about the pupils' progress and too few ways of determining this.
- The understanding of pupils' additional needs, especially autism, is weak.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory; accommodation is poor and does not aid the resolution of the health and safety problems.

Improvement since the school was inspected in 1999 has been poor. Some improvement was beginning to be made following the last inspection, although the enquiry into the management of challenging behaviour has knocked the school completely off course. A few of the areas identified at the time of the last inspection have been effectively addressed but the quality of education and standards in the school have deteriorated considerably.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Pupils' achievement at the end of: | in relation to individual targets in: | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | subjects of the curriculum | personal and social education |
| Year 2 | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Year 6 | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Year 9 | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Year 11 | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Year 13 | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |

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

Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. These are, however, good for pupils in the Foundation Stage (the 'nursery'). Achievement is limited in the rest of the school; this includes pupils with additional needs and those learning English as an additional language. The support for pupils' communication skills is satisfactory overall and they make reasonable progress in English. However, achievement in many other subjects is unsatisfactory. This is related to a lack of time for learning and programmes of work which do not build systematically on what pupils have learned previously. This is largely, but not entirely, due to the way class groups were re-organised last September without the school taking account of the alterations in the planning that were needed.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils' interest in their lessons and their behaviour is good despite some teaching being dull. A few pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour which some inexperienced staff find difficult to manage. Attendance is satisfactory; punctuality to school is also satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is unsatisfactory; the quality of teaching across the school is unsatisfactory overall. Across the school, there are individual classes where pupils are taught well and very well but these are too few. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage because of staff's knowledge of the children's needs. In the rest of the school it is far too variable and ranges from poor to excellent. Too little support has been provided for inexperienced teachers and, although they show good potential, they often find it difficult to manage the pupils' behaviour and to deploy the very large number of support staff in lessons effectively. Although pupils with PMLD are taught and supported well, the teaching of pupils with autism is poor. This is due to staff's lack of knowledge of how to teach such pupils. Work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs or is uninteresting. Little use is made of ICT, for either teaching or learning. The work of teaching assistants is poor and the large numbers of staff sometimes get in the way of the pupils' learning. Many are not adequately trained. There are some good examples of individual teachers beginning to work very well with specialists, such as the speech and language therapists and the school's communication team, to support pupils' communication. However, the unsatisfactory curriculum is supported by too few other opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. This, the unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and a lack of well-targeted support, also limit pupils' progress. Partnership with parents, the community and schools is satisfactory. Although child protection is good, due to the weaknesses already mentioned, care, welfare and support for pupils are unsatisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both the leadership and management of the school are poor and the work of the governing body is very poor. Senior managers are considerably inexperienced, although very willing, and heads of departments do not fulfil their roles adequately. These weaknesses mean that key staff's work to support the good efforts of the new headteacher is poor. The headteacher is determined to address the school's shortcomings and has already produced a good outline plan to address major issues; his vision for the school is very clear. Governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have allowed finances to get to a state where the school is grossly overspent.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils generally have positive views of the school. They agree that the headteacher is already making good improvements. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve the leadership and management throughout the school especially governance and financial management.
- Improve pupils' achievement in the subjects where this is unsatisfactory; this includes pupils with additional needs and particularly those with autism.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning (including staff expertise), and the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress.
- Ensure that the curriculum is fully taught, meets the needs of all pupils, has enough time for learning and that programmes build effectively on what pupils have learned previously.
- Improve the quality of the accommodation and rigorously manage health and safety matters.

and, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that:

- the National Curriculum is fully taught;
- the school complies with health and safety procedures;
- performance management is fully in place;
- the governors' annual report is published and contains all the information it should;
- meaningful whole-school targets to raise achievement are set.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall. Pupils' attainment is very low when they enter the school and most are unable to reach the standards expected for their age. This is due to their severe or profound learning difficulties. However, many are not reaching standards of which they are capable in many areas of learning. Pupils with additional special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make the same limited progress as the other pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make good progress and achieve well in physical education.
- Although teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and some pupils and groups achieve well, the teaching across the school is too inconsistent for all to make satisfactory or better progress.
- The progress of pupils with additional needs, and particularly those with autism and visual impairment, is unsatisfactory overall.
- Progress in most subjects is unsatisfactory and in some subjects pupils are unable to make the progress they could because the subject or part of the subject is not taught.
- Some pupils achieve well and very well in communication skills, although progress in English overall is satisfactory.
- The school does not set whole-school targets to raise achievement.

Commentary

1. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. This is because the 'nursery' staff understand the children's needs well. They generally plan a range of activities which meet children's needs well, although not all the activities that staff plan link adequately to the areas of learning. Assessment is used soundly to track children's skills. Achievement in personal, social and emotional development is very good. It is good for pupils' communication and mathematical skills and satisfactory in all other areas of learning.
2. In some individual classes across the school, the pupils achieve well and sometimes very well. This is because of the good or better teaching and well-planned opportunities which take good account of the pupils' needs. However, the teaching is too variable and in some classes means that pupils do not achieve what they are capable of. Students in the Post-16 department made unsatisfactory progress. Weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum mean that their skills are not sufficiently extended and the opportunities for many are too narrow.
3. Pupils' achievement in physical education was a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection and this continues to be the case. This is despite a lack of facilities. However, given the expertise of staff and the effectively planned activities which meet the needs of pupils well, with reasonable facilities and accommodation the pupils could do even better. The subject is taught well and it is well led and managed. All parts of the subject are taught (including swimming) and there is a good match of activity to

pupils' needs and good account taken of any physical disability. Work builds well on what pupils have done and learned previously.

4. Pupils with complex needs, such as those with sensory disability or autism, often do not make the progress they could. There are particular weaknesses in ensuring the needs of visually impaired pupils are catered for when they are taught alongside pupils with a wide range of needs. As a result, their progress is limited. This is because many inexperienced teachers and support staff have been recruited but have received little in the way of support for dealing with pupils' wide-ranging needs, managing challenging behaviour and deploying the large number of teaching assistants. These keen and enthusiastic staff lack the knowledge of the pupils' specific needs but show great willingness to learn. The teaching of pupils with PMLD and sensory needs who are placed in separate classes to meet their needs make good progress. Staff in these classes know the pupils well and work hard to match the work to their needs. By contrast, the pupils with autism in the separate class make poor progress. This is because staff lack the skills and knowledge to plan activities which meet their needs.
5. The development of pupils' communication skills underpins all of the school's work and most teachers provide sound support for this. This includes pupils who are learning English as an additional language who are also adequately supported by the school's bilingual support worker. In some classes where sign, symbols and objects of reference are used well, pupils make good and sometimes exceptional progress. Not all staff, however, have skills in the communication approach identified for the children they support. Generally pupils with the most profound learning needs (PMLD pupils) are supported well, although more use could be made of objects of reference around the school to support these pupils' progress. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is also used with a few pupils, particularly in the youngest classes where it is generally used well. However, the use of this and of symbols by adults across the school is not consistent. Communication support workers provide strong individual support for pupils and work effectively with the speech and language therapist to address pupils' communicative needs. This aids their progress well. The link of such support to teachers' planning and teaching generally is not always clear, although some very good examples of joint working, for example in the Foundation Stage class, were seen.
6. The decline in pupils' achievement in most subjects (mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and a modern foreign language) is because of a number of key factors which have affected the school's work. These principally include:
 - weak teaching overall and poor teaching for pupils with autism, including a lack of expertise in relation to the pupils' special educational needs generally;
 - a curriculum which does not meet pupils' needs, which does not enable pupils to make progress and where not all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught (for example a modern foreign language);
 - limited assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and no target-setting system to raise attainment;
 - a lack of development of subjects and under-developed subject leadership.
7. This has been in line with the general decline in the leadership and management of the school, and although aspects of the school are beginning to improve, there is much work still to be done.

8. The school does not set targets to raise pupils' attainment. This does not meet statutory requirements and does not help the school to focus on what needs to be done to help pupils improve. However, the headteacher has good plans to improve assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress and to link the setting of targets to these.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Throughout the school pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, which makes a good contribution to learning. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships contribute to positive attitudes and good behaviour throughout the school.
- Pupils are eager to learn.
- Pupils spontaneously demonstrate good awareness of distinguishing right from wrong; they care for each other and demonstrate good social behaviour as they mature.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to show initiative or take responsibility in the school.

Commentary

9. All through the school there are clear indications of very good relationships between pupils and adults. Adults are patient, kind and supportive which means pupils feel secure and willing to contribute in lessons. This has a positive effect on pupils' feelings of self-worth, and their attitudes to their learning and to school life in general.
10. Pupils of all abilities show that they can be confident learners with very good attitudes to their work, but this is very dependent on the activity set for them being at an appropriate level of challenge and interest. When it is, pupils are very interested, work hard and behave very well. However, when the task set is not well matched to pupils' ability, pupils become inattentive and occasionally disruptive. There are occasions when the behaviour of some pupils can be very disruptive to their classmates. The staff usually deal with these situations skilfully so as to minimise the disruption, although less experienced staff often have problems. In most cases, pupils continue to concentrate on their work to the best of their ability. Pupils show respect for all the adults they associate with and try their best to comply with the wishes of these adults. Pupils show pleasure in the achievements of others in their class and in some groups they spontaneously applaud these achievements. Throughout the inspection, levels of politeness to visitors were exemplary and spontaneous.
11. In the senior department, pupils discuss and develop a clear set of values and principles for themselves or for their class, creating codes of conduct that promote the values of honesty, justice and care. All ethnic groups in the school work and play well together. Pupils respect and understand that everyone is different and have opportunities to learn formally about different faiths and cultures through religious education lessons and assemblies. However, the real learning happens all through the day as pupils mix together happily. This is a harmonious school, enabling all pupils to focus their efforts on their learning.
12. When there are opportunities to show initiative, pupils respond well. An example of this is the enthusiasm and interest pupils are bringing to the development of the school council. In discussions with members of the council, pupils demonstrated an eagerness to be involved, and named a number of topics they would like to consider in future meetings. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative or take responsibility for aspects of school life or their learning. Opportunities for older pupils are very restricted in the areas of work-related learning and work experience. In addition, limitations in the accommodation restrict their ability to have their own social area where they could develop independence skills appropriate to their age and abilities.
13. Attendance is fairly typical of a school of this type. One pupil has been absent for nearly two years and despite the school and LEA's best efforts cannot get the family to send the pupil to school. One pupil was excluded last year. None has been excluded this year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 107 | 1 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| School data | 8.6 | School data | 0.8 |
| National data | Not applicable* | 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 unsatisfactory. This is because of significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, the poorly constructed programme of work in some subjects and weaknesses in health and safety. These limitations mean that pupils do not achieve as much as they could, although personal care is strong. Sound relationships with parents and the community also have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The school is now making good use of external resources, such as speech and language therapy, something which was discouraged previously.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall and the quality has declined significantly since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be good. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of nursery and reception children is good.
- New staff have not been supported sufficiently in developing their teaching skills.
- There are many fundamental weaknesses in the unsatisfactory teaching.
- Teaching is too variable across the school; pupils with additional needs do not have these sufficiently met in lessons.
- The work of teaching assistants is under-developed and the support they provide in lessons is poor.
- Assessment and the monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 77 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 3(4%) | 11 (14%) | 33 (43%) | 17 (22%) | 10 (13%) | 3 (4%) | 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.

Teaching and learning

14. Although there is too much unsatisfactory or poor teaching, staff are caring and work hard to meet the personal needs of pupils. From the table above nearly two thirds of the teaching was actually good or better and in three lessons it was excellent. However, at a nearly a fifth, too much teaching is unsatisfactory or poor.
15. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (in the first class) is good. Staff here understand the very wide needs of children well and plan adequately for these. They provide work which challenges the children and interesting activities spur them on to work hard. Children are given considerable encouragement to learn and make progress. Teaching assistants are used well and flexibly; they know the children's needs well and make a positive contribution to lessons and children's learning.
16. In the rest of the school, including in Post-16, the teaching is too variable and too much is weak. Newer/inexperienced staff find managing the pupils and the larger number of support staff difficult. This is because they lack knowledge of the pupils' needs and what they need to learn next. There is no opportunity for these staff to observe or learn from staff who have high levels of expertise. The following are fundamental weaknesses in teaching across the school which need to be addressed:
 - unsatisfactory planning to meet pupils' wide-ranging needs;
 - a limited range of ways of helping pupils learn with little or no use of ICT and a narrow range of resources used;
 - low expectations of what pupils can achieve;
 - poor use of the very large numbers of support staff – often in whole-class parts of lessons they have no specific role and do little;
 - although pupil management is satisfactory overall, inexperienced staff often have problems in dealing with difficult behaviour.
 - not all pupils having the same opportunities to learn in lessons; this is unsatisfactory and linked to the wide mix of ages across the classes;
 - narrow opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively or independently;
 - sign, symbols and objects, to aid understanding, used inconsistently.

17. The teaching of pupils with additional needs is unsatisfactory. The teaching of pupils with autism in the separate class is often poor because staff have little understanding of their needs or knowledge of how to plan interesting activities which involve them in learning. By contrast, the teaching of PMLD pupils and those with sensory needs in the specific classes is good. There are still weaknesses in the support for PMLD pupils and those with sensory disabilities in classes which contain a wide range of needs, however, and particularly for pupils with visual impairment. This is largely because staff do not know how to plan for their needs. In one Post-16 lesson in ICT, highly expert teaching ensured that the activities were made highly relevant for the PMLD students' age and stage of development. At times, across the school, work is provided for pupils which does not match the pupils' age, such as Post-16 students reading texts which are meant for nursery children.
18. While there are these significant weaknesses in teaching, over 60 per cent of the teaching is good or better. Characteristics of the good, very good or excellent teaching are:
- planning which meets the needs of pupils' and which identifies what each individual is expected to learn;
 - work in lessons is matched precisely to pupils' abilities and challenges them using interesting approaches and activities to move to the next step in their learning;
 - computers are used well to support learning and communication (although there is little use to support teaching and the school's three interactive whiteboards are hardly used at all);
 - ways of helping pupils communicate are widespread and include sign, symbols and objects to aid understanding (although too little use is made of ICT for writing);
 - support staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and actively support pupils in all aspects of lessons (although they have little time to plan or review pupils' learning outside lessons);
 - emphasis on pupils working together, reviewing their learning and identifying what they can do better – helping them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Assessment

19. The current arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Although the school has collected evidence as to pupils' levels in literacy and mathematics, and more recently in science and personal development, this has not been used in any meaningful way to analyse either the school's performance or teachers' planning. In the Foundation Stage assessment and monitoring is good because the systems used build well on mainstream and specialist assessment practices, and good daily records of children's experiences and responses are kept. Lessons are planned with targets for individuals in mind. In most other subjects, assessment and monitoring arrangements are poor. Subject leaders have little information as to what standards look like within their subjects and often there is little indication in teachers' planning as to how they will meet children's different needs.
20. Teachers' use of the information gained from assessment has been limited. Although some teachers and support staff have good informal knowledge of pupils, many are new and the information that the school has on pupils has not until recently been kept

in a form that makes it clear what the pupils need to learn next. Recent changes in the individual education plan and Annual Review systems are an improvement, however, and a pupil evidence folder is now kept well by some but not all teachers.

21. Where specialist assessments and advice have been available, for example from the speech and language therapists or educational psychologist, these are generally used well by the more experienced teachers. However, sometimes the implications for planning and teaching are not seen or too little support is available, so that some pupils' needs, such as those with visual impairment or autism, are not catered for effectively in some classes.
22. The assessment co-ordinator is clear about what now needs to be done but the school's difficulties have meant that there has been little checking to see that teachers keep the records that they should and that assessment information is used to inform target setting for individuals and groups. As a result, the pupils are largely unaware of what they need to do to improve. Improvement since the last inspection in this area has been unsatisfactory.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. The opportunities to enrich pupils' learning are unsatisfactory. While resources for the curriculum are satisfactory, the accommodation is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum lacks breadth and balance and some legal requirements are not met.
- Curriculum opportunities vary for pupils of the same age who are in different groups, which affects their levels of learning and achievement.
- The present curriculum is not designed to meet the many and variable needs of the mixed age groups.
- Autistic pupils and others with additional needs are not provided for effectively; in some classes pupils with specific needs such as visual impairment are not fully included.
- The extent to which the curriculum is enriched with extra-curricular activities is too limited.
- While the number of staff is extremely generous, many are not suitably trained and this affects pupils' learning.
- The accommodation is poor and unfit for pupils with severe, complex and profound needs

Commentary

The range of learning opportunities

23. Most subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and meet statutory requirements. Religious education is also taught, as required. However, the legal requirements in relation to teaching a modern foreign language in Years 7 to 9, citizenship in Years 7 to 11 and work-related learning in Years 10 and 11 are not currently met. A modern foreign language is not taught and the proper procedures for the disapplication of pupils from studying a foreign language have not been followed. A curriculum for citizenship has not been developed in sufficient detail with the result that many areas of required learning are not yet addressed. The school had a well-established and effective programme of careers education and guidance as well as work experience in place which ensured very good provision for work-related learning. However, recent difficulties experienced in the school's leadership and management have caused crucial links with the community supporting these aspects to lapse and these have not been fully re-established. This has adversely affected pupils' opportunities to learn about work and through work. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) promotes pupils' personal development adequately. However, PSHE topics such as healthy living, sex and relationships, social and cultural issues are not planned in enough detail. As a result, the taught PSHE curriculum lacks coherence and pupils do not achieve as well in these aspects.
24. Turbulence in leadership and management has resulted in a loss of clear direction for the curriculum and, compared with the situation at the time of the last inspection, they have deteriorated. The re-organisation of classes in September 2004 according to pupils' special educational needs created several groups of pupils of widely different age. However, the curriculum was not altered to reflect the new circumstances. Some Year 9 pupils pursue the accredited vocational course for pupils in Years 10 and 11 because they are grouped together, whereas other Year 9 pupils follow a different curriculum. Similarly, one Year 11 pupil who ought to be entered for the vocational

course is not because of being grouped with Year 8 and 9 pupils. Some Post-16 students are placed with pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 and not with other Post-16 students. As a result, the distinct curriculum provision appropriate for students is, for them, not available.

25. Pupils' severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties are catered for at least satisfactorily by the adaptation of what is taught to match their different capabilities. The emphasis on communication through signs and symbols and sensory approaches to learning are well developed and provide access to all the curricular opportunities for the majority. This includes pupils whose first language is not English. They have been identified and, if necessary, they are supported by a bi-lingual classroom assistant. In classes with a significant number of these pupils there is a list of key phrases in Urdu, which assists effective communications. However, there is less attention paid to some of the additional needs that pupils have. Approaches catering for the specific learning needs of pupils with autism are not sufficiently developed, particularly for those in Years 2 to 4 grouped together for the purpose of being taught using recognised methods. Well-defined routines and expectations that autistic pupils rely on are not securely established. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is in place but is not used consistently to aid autistic pupils' communication. Occasionally, visually impaired pupils' needs are not taken fully into consideration when planning learning opportunities and they are marginalised in classroom activities.
26. In previous years there were more opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and achieve more widely outside of the classroom, but this has seen some decline. While there are sound opportunities for pupils to learn in the long lunchtime, such as improving eating skills and managing small responsibilities, clubs in which they can pursue or discover an interest are under-developed. Satisfactory opportunities for pupils to participate in the arts exist. Visits to the theatre, musicals and visits to the school by various artists all contribute. However, participation in sports is very limited. The English curriculum is broadened through its links with the local library, and science stages a number of events such as science week and competitions that enliven learning.

Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning

27. The ratio of adults to pupils is extremely high. Following the enquiry into the management of pupils with challenging behaviour the number of support staff doubled. Where support staff are suitably trained and experienced, they make a good contribution to pupils' learning and achievement, for example in supporting communication and in managing challenging behaviour. However, many of the support staff have no qualifications and little experience. Though willing, because they work the same hours as the pupils, they are not involved in planning with teachers and so are unsure of their role.
28. Similarly, the number of teachers is generous. Very little specialist teaching takes place in Years 7 to 13. However, where teachers are used as subject specialists, this contributes to pupils' achievements, for example in physical education. While the number of teachers is high for a school of this type, because of illness and difficulties with recruitment and retention, the school is operating with a large number of new staff and temporary staff who have not received suitable training in the special educational needs of the pupils. This is reflected in unsatisfactory teaching and learning.

29. A large amount of money has been spent on new build since the last inspection. However, despite consultation with staff, the accommodation continues to be unsuitable. Though the new building has provided good-sized classrooms and very good facilities for personal care, specialist accommodation for science and physical education is poor. The ceiling in the hall is far too low for many sports. The science room is accessed through other classrooms. Among its numerous faults, it is too small and has no external door. Furthermore, it is too narrow to accommodate more than one pupil in a wheelchair. As a result, the room and the facilities, such as the interactive whiteboard, within it are rarely used. The designated leavers' unit has been built without any social area for students to relax and chat. Furthermore, the kitchen and laundry facilities are 'industrial' and unlike those that students are likely to find at home. Instead of matching their needs, these facilities often make their learning more complicated.
30. Numerous problems remain in the older part of school. Among these, corridors are too narrow for wheelchair users, the floor is uneven and a lack of suitable storage means corridors present hazards. Three of the personal care areas are totally unsuitable because they lack privacy and dignity. The hall is very small and limits the physical education programme. Following the last inspection, the play area for children in the Foundation Stage has been upgraded, but this and the dedicated classroom are too small for children with such complex needs.
31. As at the time of the last inspection, resources are overall satisfactory. The library has been improved in terms of books available but it is part of a store room where access is problematic. While there has been an increase in the number of computers, the equipment (hardware and software) to support teaching and learning in ICT is unsatisfactory and is affecting pupils' achievements. Three very expensive interactive whiteboards have been purchased but are hardly used. Outside, while the grounds are spacious, the gradient of some ramps is too steep for wheelchair users and many of the ramps have no side guards. None of the outdoor area has been developed specifically as a play area for wheelchair users. In addition, fences are splintered and locks on some gates broken. Plans are well advanced for refurbishment and further building but these will still not fully meet the needs of the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

32. This is unsatisfactory overall but is good for children in the Foundation Stage. The personal care for pupils, especially those with PMLD, is very good. Although pupils' views are taken into account and this is satisfactory, there are considerable weaknesses in health and safety procedures and many outstanding issues. Overall, care, welfare and health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory. Support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of the pupils' achievements and personal development, are also unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is insufficiently rigorous in ensuring that risks to pupils are minimised.
- The high quality of personal care in the school maximises the learning opportunities for pupils.
- The quality of relationships between pupils and adults is good, adding to the pupils' self-confidence and trust in staff.
- Pupils' access to support and advice about their learning is inconsistent.
- There is insufficient focus on careers or work experience for older pupils.

- Home-school diaries are well used to promote a full knowledge of pupils and ensure a consistent approach to their development.

Commentary

33. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all adults working in the school are fully aware of them. All incidents and accidents are recorded thoroughly and parents are fully informed. However, a very recent health and safety audit carried out by the local education authority at the school shows that there are many areas of risk which are still to be addressed by the school. The school has drawn up an action plan to address the concerns raised, but during the inspection additional areas of concern were noted. The school has been informed of these. The inadequacy of the accommodation means that the privacy and dignity of pupils are compromised in some areas and the facilities for the nursing and physiotherapy staff are inappropriate.
34. The school has a good range of initiatives to maximise the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered by ensuring that their personal care and welfare are given a very high priority. This is particularly developed well for PMLD pupils. A range of therapists visit the school on a regular basis. The relationship between school and these staff has improved and they now seen as integral to the school's provision. Speech and language, and occupational therapists work directly with pupils and also train staff to support the therapy programmes. In addition, the school has physiotherapy and nursing services based in the school. This ensures that a health professional is always available to provide essential services to children, train staff in programmes of support and therapy, and advise teachers on pupils' health matters or positioning. School meals also make a significant contribution to pupils' welfare and health. They are of a high standard, are cooked on the premises and contain little processed food.
35. Throughout the school there are clear indications of good relationships between pupils and adults. Teachers show great skill in taking pupils' contributions, and even when they are not the expected ones they find some way of taking their answer and building on it to make the contribution valid. This contributes to pupils feeling valued and special and ensures that they continue to contribute in the classroom. Adults who give additional support in the classrooms have a tactful, sympathetic approach to pupils which adds to pupils' sense of well-being.
36. The advice and guidance pupils receive about how to make progress with their work are inconsistent. This is because targeting of work to the needs of individual pupils is inconsistent. Planning is inconsistent, learning objectives are not clear and so assessment is not secure and does not inform subsequent planning and targets for individual pupils' learning.
37. Advice and support for the next stage in their lives are not sufficiently comprehensive for pupils after the age of 14. Although elements of careers advice and work-related learning are built into the curriculum for some pupils, they are not fully developed and there are no opportunities for pupils to have work experience at present. This greatly limits pupils' ability to make informed choices about their future.
38. The good use of the home/school diary of each pupil is an aid to inform parents and carers of the pupil's time at school and any strategies used to overcome difficulties. It also ensures school is kept informed, on a regular basis, of how pupils are coping at home. This makes a good contribution to supporting pupils' behaviour.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established satisfactory links with parents, other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school supports and seeks the views of its parents well and tries hard to involve them in their children's education.
- The school has very good, and developing, links with the local community library and the schools library service.
- Formal reporting to parents about their children's progress is too vague and is unsatisfactory; governors do not produce an annual report for parents.

Commentary

39. All parents who expressed a view during the inspection process are positive about the work of the school. The school values the views of parents and actively works to discover them. To date, parental views have influenced the school to replace parents' evenings by open days, for example.
40. Because the school serves a very wide geographic area, there is very little opportunity for parents to have casual, informal contact with the school. To address this, the school will always meet a parent's request to come in for any reason affecting their child's progress or well-being, or for more general support. Members of the school staff visit parents in their homes to provide information and support. Parents will always be seen and their concerns listened to. On a daily basis, the dialogue between home and school via the pupils' diaries is a very good means of keeping both home and school fully informed. This tends to focus on pupils' health and behaviour but is important as events at school or home may well impact significantly on the pupils.
41. The school has set up a 'Care and Share' group which covers all areas of concern to parents, dealing with social as well as educational issues. This is very supportive of the needs of parents and carers, by listening to and addressing their needs. However, it is a relatively new initiative with limited impact to date. A good range of therapy support is available in the school and there is almost always a member of the school nursing or physiotherapy service available to talk to parents. Overall the school offers good support to the parents of its pupils.
42. Another recent initiative is the Meadows Community Partnership, whereby the school and the local residents are beginning to work together to the benefit of all. It is the intention of the group that school resources will be available for community use and developments in the community will address the needs of the pupils at the school as well as the residents. This is largely in the 'set-up phase' of this initiative and so the impact so far has been largely limited to increasing the awareness of the needs and difficulties of the partners. The links with the library mean that visitors regularly come to the school to take part in literacy-based activities and the community library now displays Makaton signs to make its books more accessible to pupils from Kelford School. At present, the school has no meaningful links with the business community.
43. The annual reports about pupil progress produced for parents are unsatisfactory and do not contain sufficient information about the progress the pupil has made. Sometimes reports include what pupils can do, but often they merely state what experiences pupils

are offered. In some classes, reports are so based on listing experiences that they are almost identical for every pupil in the class. The information available to parents is therefore variable and often too vague to enable them to contribute as partners in the education of their children. Throughout the school year there is no specific information available to parents giving guidance and ideas on how their children's learning can be supported. Teachers give this detailed information to parents who request it, but it is not generally available. However, parents are encouraged and supported to acquire skills in Makaton signing and the use of PECS, in order to support the growing communication skills of their children. Formal information provided for parents in the prospectus is frequently expressed in educational jargon, making it inaccessible to parents, and currently the governing body does not fulfil its statutory duty of producing a governors' annual report for parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school, overall, are poor. The leadership by the new headteacher is good and he has a very clear vision for improvement. However, he has much to do and is supported by senior staff who are very inexperienced. As a result, leadership by key staff is poor. Governance and management are very poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection has been poor and has left the school in a very weak state.
- The new headteacher has raised the morale of staff; he is taking decisive action to enable improvement to take place and has a very clear view on what needs to be done.
- The work of the middle managers (heads of department) is unsatisfactory; staff are not clear as to their roles, do not demonstrate a sufficiently clear sense of purpose or have sufficiently high aspirations for teaching and learning.
- Subject leaders do not fulfil their leadership and management roles.
- Planning for school development has been weak but the headteacher, in a very short time, has produced a good outline plan for improvement.
- Performance management is not in place.
- Governors have not been trained in the necessary skills to govern the school and their monitoring of finance is very poor.

Commentary

44. The headteacher has taken over the school at a crucial time. Little has improved since the last inspection and some aspects of the school's work have regressed. Although recognising from the outset of his appointment that much work needed to be done to improve the school, he was not made aware of the enormity of the task. However, within a few weeks he has made a start in analysing teaching and learning, put essential management structures in place, sought help over the school's dire financial situation and has started to improve governance.
45. The leadership he provides is good. He has already raised staff morale and has started to address long-standing weaknesses. He has gained the confidence of parents. There is a good and improving sense of teamwork among teachers and the will to make things better. He is very experienced, is well respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils and has a very clear vision of the quality of education he wants the school to provide. He provides a good role model for staff.

46. The leadership and management of other staff in senior positions have been poor. The lack of substantive senior and middle managers over the last two years has significantly slowed developments across the school. This has meant that senior staff have reacted to situations that have arisen rather than having planned in a thoughtful and strategic way to make improvements. The new senior management team is too new yet for their decisions to have impacted on the work of the school and on its leadership and management. The senior staff are inexperienced but willing and are being led effectively by the headteacher and are beginning to support and guide colleagues.
47. Teachers who were given, or volunteered for, the temporary middle management roles (heads of department) at the beginning of the school year are unclear as to the extent of their responsibilities for school improvement and raising standards. They view their role as predominantly one of supporting colleagues and resolving difficulties of organisation or resources. Opportunities to evaluate performance in their area of responsibility (through observing teaching, examining pupils' work and checking on teachers' planning) and raise standards have not been taken. The statutory requirement of annually monitoring teachers' performance has not been fulfilled for two years.
48. Senior managers have determined the school's areas for development by observation and discussion rather than through ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that accumulate during the course of the year, into a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The absence of such routine monitoring and evaluation means that the least effective teaching and learning have not been identified, and curriculum shortcomings have not been recognised or addressed.
49. Subject leaders check teachers' planning to see that what is planned is taught and some have examined the pupils' work. However, there is insufficient monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching by observing lessons taught by others. As a result, leaders do not have a clear picture of the effectiveness of provision in their subject. They are unable to identify and share good practice. Equally, they are unaware of practice that is weak and, therefore, do not provide appropriate support and advice to less effective colleagues. Subject leaders have a general understanding of what resource developments are needed in their subjects and each subject has an action plan for the year. However, these are generally weak plans. The lack of rigorous monitoring and evaluation means that subject action plans are not based on a thorough audit of provision.
50. The school is developing a detailed strategic plan for the next three years, built on self-generated and external evaluative information. An outline plan is already in place. This work is being led effectively by the headteacher. The school's previous 'interim' plan did not get sufficiently get at the heart of what needed to be done and was not adequately prioritised. However, the lack of clarity or direction regarding a proposed reduction in pupil numbers by the LEA, or on the role of the school in future special educational needs provision, means that the school's planning may not match the authority's aspirations sufficiently well. The school's commitment to promoting inclusion has been lacking and it has, therefore, developed very few links with other educational establishments to develop this area. Opportunities for pupils to work with mainstream peers are minimal.
51. Governors are committed to the school and have tried hard to support it in the best way they know. The new headteacher is providing them with good guidance and

information. However, they are not yet in a position to challenge decisions and, therefore, to act as a critical friend to the school. Minutes of meetings are poor and show little involvement in the most important aspects of the school's work. Overall, governors are inadequately skilled to carry out their work and have little understanding about their roles and responsibilities. However, the headteacher, in conjunction with the LEA, is discussing training opportunities for them.

52. The governors' work in monitoring the school and holding it to account for what it does is very poor. There are many areas which governors are responsible for which do not meet statutory requirements. These include provision of the National Curriculum and religious education, aspects of health and safety, performance management and school target setting. The school does not set whole-school targets for improvement and no annual report (for parents) was produced last year.
53. Governors recognised some of their own weaknesses in financial monitoring a year ago and asked the local education authority for help. However, unknown to governors the budget was already spiralling out of control and governors had put their trust in too many other people to know what was happening. Spending on new staff, for instance, went unchecked. The school is around £250,000 over spent. The headteacher is constructing plans to repay this over three years, but in order to achieve this, severe cuts in provision will need to be made. The headteacher is carefully balancing the plans with health and safety requirements so that the latter are not compromised. The current picture is very gloomy and it is looking increasingly unlikely that financial retrieval can be achieved within the three years. However, despite all this, and although the school has been left in a very weak state, the new headteacher has all the qualities necessary to turn the school around.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 1,388,747 | Balance from previous year | 113,773 |
| Total expenditure | 1,757,098 | Balance carried forward to the next | -254,578* |
| Expenditure per pupil | 16,421 | | |

**since the inspection took place, the deficit has been reduced by the LEA to £98,000*

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for work-related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and Post-16 students are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

54. The school's main sources of opportunities for pupils to learn about work and through work have not operated for at least a year. This is because the career co-ordinator took on another staff role at short notice, so the links and contacts with employers and

organisations were temporarily lost. This means that, presently, the leadership and management of work-related learning are unsatisfactory. The evidence from past provision shows clearly that pupils and students had good opportunities for work experience and careers education supported by many links with the community. Planning and co-ordination of provision are presently not complete and as a consequence, work-related learning does not meet statutory requirements.

55. At present, opportunities are largely restricted in what pupils and students can learn for work and about work, and their achievement, overall, is unsatisfactory as a result. This affects higher attaining pupils and students most as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties do achieve well in developing their awareness and responses. Opportunities for work-related learning are confined mainly to school but include some contact with colleges and excursions into the locality, for example going shopping or to visit people's places of work. This assists in securing some fundamental qualities in preparing for employment for higher attaining pupils and students, as does the provision for their personal development. However, these are not built upon sufficiently by developing key skills such as ICT, problem solving and working with others. Too few lessons were observed to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. In the few observed where there was a direct focus on work-related learning in lessons, teaching was not effectively adapted to pupils' needs and capabilities. Enterprise and work-related experiences were unchallenging.

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**.

56. Children aged five years and under are educated in the school's 'nursery' alongside pupils from Year 1. At the time of the inspection five children with PMLD, severe learning difficulties and autism were attending school. It was not possible to observe teaching and report fully on all areas of learning, but discussions with staff, and examination of teachers' records and children's work support the judgements given.
57. Children's attainment on entry is often very low. Although the children will not attain the goals expected in each area of learning by the end of reception, overall the children's achievement is good. Induction arrangements are good. A good system of parental home visits, coffee mornings, home/school notebooks and family visits to the school are in place and a strong partnership with parents is formed. Children quickly feel safe and get off to a flying start.
58. Teaching is good; activities are very well matched to children's needs. There is very strong team work and support staff make a strong contribution to the teaching and care of the children. Teachers and support staff know the children well and build up very positive relationships with them. This enables those children who find change threatening to become more responsive and flexible. Lessons are very motivating for children and staff give children great encouragement to learn. Staff generally manage any challenging behaviour very well. Some staff, however, are less confident in managing the behaviour of children with autism. Assessment is sound overall. The Foundation Stage profile and P levels are used to track children's developments and pupil profiles have been introduced. There are good examples of observational assessments being used to record children's day-to-day progress. Staff are very quick to notice any indicators of children's progress and note these down.
59. Overall the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and takes good account of children's special educational needs as well as the range of experiences that they should be provided with. The days are structured in a mixture of routine, new and free play activities which challenge and support children. However, not all activities timetabled are clearly tied into areas of learning and this means that sometimes opportunities for reinforcement of ideas are lost. Leadership and management are good and there has been a good improvement in provision since the last inspection. There is also a clear view as to how the provision could now improve even more with suitable actions planned. Current accommodation is unsatisfactory, although new accommodation is planned. The staff have organised the learning environment as well as possible and with the needs of the children in mind. However, the accommodation is shabby and difficult for the numbers of children and the curriculum that needs to be delivered. It is unsuitable for some children's needs. The outside area has been improved, but still does not have sufficient large play apparatus suitable for children with a range of sensory and physical needs. This means that some children do not have the play opportunities that they should.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The routines and atmosphere give children a sense of security and help them become more adventurous.
- Very strong relationships with adults and good opportunities for shared play support children's social awareness and skills.
- Independence and self-help skills are very well supported.
- Children with autism are not always managed consistently.

Commentary

60. Children achieve very well in their personal development. This is because of the very good teaching and because support for children's personal development underpins everything that is done in the Foundation Stage. Most children enter the school with very limited awareness of others; some are very challenging and others very passive in their responses. Consistent expectations and reinforcement, including lots of praise, mean that most children quickly become familiar with routines. Very good use of sign and symbols supports children's understanding of what they are to do and what will happen next. Children's self-awareness and confidence are developed very well as they are encouraged to make choices at break time and lunchtime and in the various activities during the day. Self-help skills are supported very well through dressing, toileting and feeding routines and all children, including those with the most complex needs, make small but very significant steps in this area. As children progress they become more tolerant of others, and watch and listen to others' contributions in groups with more interest. Lesson activities are very well planned and used to support this so that children move gradually from simply tolerating other children sharing activities to more joint activity and shared interest or pleasure in each other's successes. The very good relationships staff build with children, as they gain their confidence and co-operation, support their learning in all areas and set them off well for later learning, whatever their special educational needs. However, individual children with autism are not always consistently managed. Although these children make progress in their personal skills and awareness they do not make enough in their social skills and co-operation because their behaviour management plans and targets are not clear enough.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know children very well and are sensitive to their smallest communications, generally using sign, symbols and objects of reference well.
- Communication support workers make a strong contribution to children's interest in others' communications.
- ICT, especially for those with more complex needs, is not used sufficiently to enhance children's learning.

Commentary

61. All adults support children's communication effectively and their achievement in this area is good and sometimes exceptional. Teaching is good because of staff's expertise and knowledge of how to build up children's repertoire of signs, symbols and spoken language. Although there are set sessions such as 'story time' where books are shared and sign and symbols used, the approach to communication pervades all activities and helps children understand, make sense of the world and exchange ideas with others. New vocabulary is regularly introduced and children's understanding checked. Some children show a great interest in looking at books and in listening to stories. These are usually enhanced by exciting presentations using sensory materials, although the books and materials are not always big enough for all to see. Some children match letters and are beginning to make marks on paper. All children are taught to become more communicative and aware. Good use is made of sign and symbols to help children to make choices, and to help their awareness of the activities for the day. However, during the inspection there was insufficient use of ICT to support communication. Some single switches, such as voice recordable switches, were used but in limited ways and children did not benefit from a wide enough range of communication aids and other ways of communicating. However, there were some very good examples of use of PECS and of objects of reference to support children's understanding and self-expression. The school's communication support workers are very good at extending children's involvement and communication. They work very well with nursery staff to get children off to a flying start in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and develop good awareness of shape, size, and number.
- Singing and rhymes support mathematical learning well.

Commentary

62. Children's achievement in mathematical development is good from their starting points. Teaching is good. A good range of activities matches the children's needs and supports them in acquiring basic mathematical skills. Some sort shapes by their size and colour and can count readily, identifying big and little teddies. Others explore number and other aspects of shape and size with support. Singing and rhymes and strong individual support from teaching assistants reinforce learning and mathematical language well; these help children to remember the numbers and make the learning enjoyable. Many activities throughout the day support mathematical learning such as the sharing of the morning and afternoon timetable and the counting of children, places, biscuits and so on. When children play in the sand they learn about ideas such as 'full' and 'empty'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged in many activities to look closely at the world around them.
- Teaching and support for ICT are good.

- The programme for knowledge and understanding is insufficiently planned to ensure all aspects are consistently and progressively taught.

Commentary

63. Achievement in this area of learning is satisfactory overall and the teaching is sound. Staff take every opportunity to draw children's attention to happenings and things of interest in their world. In the outside area they watch birds, insects and worms and then go on to make worms with play dough. They are encouraged to try different tastes and explore different textures in their practical work. The teaching of ICT is good and the software well chosen to meet the children's needs. Children learn to control a mouse and to use simple paint and matching programs. They enjoy such experiences and staff support them well to maximise independence in these activities. However, the curriculum is not clearly defined in short-term and other planning. This means that links to National Curriculum subjects for the older children and skill tracking for all children are not systematically identified to provide new targets for learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music making, singing and art are used well to support children's communication and creativity.
- Children have many opportunities to use different media and to create and build models.
- Although the outside play environment has improved, there are few large toys and other equipment suitable for children with complex needs and physical difficulties.

Commentary

64. Achievement in creative development is satisfactory overall and the teaching is good. Children are provided with many opportunities that support their creativity. Paint, play dough, large and small constructional toys are provided daily and good support from teachers and support staff enables children to extend their creativity and skills with these. They become more flexible in their use of materials and create patterns and pictures freely. Children with the most complex needs enjoy the different colours and textures as they do so. Singing and music making are used particularly well to support involvement and initiative. Children enjoy using a range of simple percussion equipment and listening to guitar music as they sing. This supports their speaking and listening very well, as well as their awareness of melody and rhythm. Large building blocks and other constructional toys are used to support children's building and role-play skills. The outside play and toys provided have improved. However, children in wheelchairs and others with complex needs have little to play with and externally there is no covered area for wet or cold weather. This limits these children's play opportunities, achievement and involvement.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

65. It is not possible to report on children's physical development in full, as no lessons were observed. However, children's records and observation in other lessons confirm their

achievement in physical development to be satisfactory. For those children with physical difficulties, limitations in the outside and inside environment and in equipment available restrict the opportunities children have for more independent movement.

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

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is good and makes an effective contribution to improving provision in English.
- While most teaching and learning is effective, the way the classes are structured limits pupils' achievement.
- Effective methods for teaching literacy are embedded in the majority of classrooms and are often well adapted to pupils' needs; however, the support for autistic pupils' communication in the separate class is unsatisfactory.
- Most lessons are planned well for pupils to be engaged and enjoy learning.
- Pupils make good progress in handwriting but achievement in writing is hindered by the limited use of ICT.
- Some staff lack the skills to support pupils' communication and the role of the large number of teaching assistants is not always clear, resulting in a lack of focus and support for pupils.

Commentary

66. The relatively new subject leader for English is very well qualified and is bringing considerable expertise to the role. Progress in English slowed following the last inspection because of crises in leadership and management but the current leader is working hard to make up the lost ground. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. There has been an improvement in the subject leader's scope to monitor English provision across the school. As a leading literacy teacher, she effectively evaluates and supports the work of colleagues. A positive impact is seen in updating and expanding provision for reading across the school. Initiatives include new reading schemes and other book resources that are carefully matched to pupils by their age and interests. This is boosted with new and very good links with local community library resources. One is a partnership with the local library. The librarian is collaborating in literacy work in school and, at the library, providing story-reading events. The local library is being made into a familiar and interesting place for pupils. Their needs are being understood and catered for, for example, in placing Makaton symbols on bookshelves, helping pupils search independently for the topics that interest them. In addition, interested parents have been trained in the special techniques of reading stories at home with their children.
67. Teaching and learning are good, overall, and range from excellent to unsatisfactory. Achievement in speaking and listening, reading and writing is satisfactory. The progress seen in lessons is often good but good achievement is hindered by the complicated grouping of pupils and Post-16 students. As a result of the wide age range in many classes, many pupils and students are not gaining access to the curriculum

and courses planned for them. This is because the curriculum is not planned in a way which takes account of the needs and the different age groups in the same class. This affects adversely the scope of what they can achieve. Similarly, autistic pupils grouped together are not taught in a suitable environment which meets their needs, and their achievement is unsatisfactory.

68. The support for pupils' communication is satisfactory overall and pupils make sound progress in developing these skills. This includes pupils learning English as an additional language. They learn in the same way as others, using a range of methods to communicate. Where symbols and signs are used they are usually effective as methods of communication. However, their use is not consistent across the school and not all staff have skills in the communication approach identified for the children they support. Generally PMLD pupils are supported well, although not enough use is made of objects of reference around the school to support these pupils' progress. PECS is also used with a few pupils, particularly in the youngest classes where it is generally used well. However, support for pupils with autism in the separate class is unsatisfactory. While many pupils indicate using a single symbol or a sign, a number of higher attaining pupils link several signs into phrases and short conversations, for example one in Year 8 describing the weather with signs for clouds, wind, sun and rain. In another instance, a Year 10 pupil confidently communicated to another using signing. However, a lesson for Post-16 students on learning to use the telephone was badly planned and organised and there were missed opportunities for using a wide variety of methods to communicate.
69. Most teachers are very good at enthusing pupils and interesting them in lesson topics by positioning them well, explaining their work clearly and managing effectively any challenging behaviour. Stories are read to pupils with much expression, bringing events and characters to life, and pupils enter into the spirit of a story's drama, often very well. To this end, the considerable lengths some teachers go to in preparing sensory resources support very effectively pupils' awareness, involvement and understanding of the stories. In an excellent lesson, this meant pupils grasped the plot of *Macbeth* and some remembered the names of the leading characters, which was a considerable achievement. More generally the good emphasis on reading means pupils learn to recognise many symbols, letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Many pupils read their names and some key words and higher attaining pupils read books independently. Occasionally, teachers give insufficient thought to involving sensory resources to enhance learning to read. In these few instances, pupils with a visual impairment or PMLD were not as well included as others. Similarly, teaching assistants, particularly when there is a large number and their role is not clear, are not an effective team with the result their support for pupils is not sharply focused. When their role is planned well they make a considerable contribution to learning. For instance, they guided and questioned pupils in Years 10 and 11 on their course, which involved borrowing non-fiction books from the local library and exploring these for information.
70. Many opportunities for pupils and students to write mean they make good progress in letter formation aided by accomplished control of pen or pencil. Expectations across the school are high regarding pupils producing neat legible handwriting, and pupils respond well with great care towards achieving clear script on straight lines. The use of ICT and programs to support writing is very limited and act as a barrier to higher achievement. Pupils do not have adequate technological resources to move beyond their physical limitations and begin composing phrases and sentences independently.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. Language and literacy are developed satisfactorily throughout the curriculum. Communication is a priority in teaching, generally leading to the skilled use of signing and symbols. However, the PECS system introduced for autistic pupils is not used regularly and effectively and the use of communication aids for pupils who would benefit from this technology has not been developed. Writing receives good attention in many subjects with the result that pupils' handwriting skills develop well. While higher attaining pupils compose sentences verbally, these are often written out by an adult for pupils to copy.

Modern foreign language

72. There is no provision for teaching a modern foreign language. This is poor. The school does not teach a modern foreign language to its pupils, although not all pupils have been disapplied from such provision. This means that the school does not fulfil its statutory responsibilities in this area. The new headteacher has plans to resolve this situation in September.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too much weak teaching means that pupils do not learn enough and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Good teaching in some classes is overshadowed by a lack of planning to meet pupils' needs in others.
- Teaching assistants are not used sufficiently to support learning or pupils' needs and there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils.
- Assessment information is limited.
- Planning for improvement is not based on thorough monitoring and evaluation.
- Teachers do not plan to support pupils' numeracy skills in other lessons.

Commentary

73. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress in mathematics is far too variable across the school. In the best lessons, pupils take part enthusiastically and try hard to achieve good results. Pupils in Year 4 are able to use ICT to learn about direction and programming. Pupils with complex needs are able to differentiate shape and match one to one. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are developing strategies for estimating number. These older pupils regularly evaluate their own work and the work of others in the class and demonstrate a sense of achievement in the subject. In some classes not enough time is planned for the teaching of mathematics and in others there is too much focus on number, to the detriment of other areas.
74. Overall, teaching in mathematics is unsatisfactory. The school has embraced the national strategies and lessons are usually planned according to the recommended three-part structure. While some lessons observed were good or very good, a significant number failed to engage pupils in a meaningful way and they learned little. In these lessons it was not clear what the pupils were to learn and the planning did not have specific learning objectives. Assessment was used little to ensure that the tasks

matched the pupils' needs. Teachers, particularly, underestimate the needs of the higher attaining pupils and fail to provide them with work that challenges them sufficiently. Teachers and classroom support staff generally work well as a team; however, support staff are given insufficient guidance by the teachers as to their role. Often, support staff's understanding of mathematical development is insufficient to enable them to effectively support or reinforce pupils' learning. Inadequate management of pupils' behaviour and unsuitable plans for pupils with challenging behaviour mean that such pupils often fail to make any progress in lessons.

75. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Management is under-developed and, therefore, unsatisfactory. The subject leader is enthusiastic about the subject and provides a very good role model for teaching. She has firm plans for improving the subject and raising standards across the school. However, monitoring and evaluation are inadequate and do not provide the information needed to implement improvement plans. Pupil assessment is weak. There is little ongoing assessment and there is little information collected which can reliably inform how pupils are doing by the end of the year. The leader's lack of awareness of the quality of teaching across the school means that the support and challenge she provides are insufficiently focused.
76. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The subject leader acknowledges that the unsettled management over the past few years has adversely affected curriculum co-ordination. In the last report the quality of teaching was never judged to be less than satisfactory. This is no longer the case.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. This is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to apply and reinforce numeracy skills in lessons in other subjects are inadequate. The development of pupils' numeracy is not featured in the plans and lessons of all subjects and there are few examples where numeracy is promoted.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor leadership and management have resulted in a decline in standards.
- While achievement is unsatisfactory overall there are pockets of good practice.
- Pupils do not have an equal opportunity to learn and this affects their achievement.
- Though newly built since the last inspection, the science room is very poor; it is not suited to pupils' needs and is under-used.
- Activities in the annual science week capture pupils' imagination and contribute to achievement.

Commentary

78. Weaknesses in leadership and management at all levels have led to unsatisfactory teaching, learning and achievement. Teachers new to the school, including those from mainstream schools, newly qualified teachers, and those who are temporarily covering for the absence of others, have been given little support and guidance in the teaching of science to Kelford pupils. Though they are hard working and conscientiously plan their work, senior managers have not provided adequate training on special educational

needs. As a consequence, some staff are at a loss when managing complex and challenging behaviours; others are uncertain how to fully include, for example, pupils with visual impairment in their lessons, and little guidance has been given in providing pupils' with sensory experiences to make learning meaningful. Furthermore, staff who cover for teachers have not been helped to use symbols and signs to aid communication with pupils with language difficulties. The co-ordinator has not been in a position to monitor classroom practice so is not aware of how variable the teaching in this subject is. There are no systems in place to support and develop his role.

79. In classes where there are established teachers, pupils make suitable progress and in some cases achieve very well. For example, in one class for pupils in Years 2 to 4, very good planning for pupils of differing capabilities, very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and responses, and fascinating activities enabled all to make very good gains in their understanding of the needs of pets. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, taught in the 'middle' department of the school, achieve well. They have acquired a good awareness of living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. Higher attaining pupils were positively animated as they recounted, for example, how they completed a circuit to make a red nose flash, and how they made balloon rockets, and described how the heart and lungs are used to pump blood and enable breathing.
80. Two terms ago, class groupings were altered with the result that most classes have a mixture of age groups. A significant number of pupils are working out of age group. This is particularly so for four Year 9 pupils who are working in the transition classes with much older pupils. External national awards govern the curriculum for these pupils so the Year 9 pupils do not study all the topics they should. As a consequence, they do not achieve as well as they could and there are gaps in their learning.
81. Following the criticism of the last inspection, a specialist science room has been created. However, though senior staff were consulted, this room is not fit for purpose, either as a subject room or as a classroom. The room has to be accessed through other classrooms; it is extremely small and has no external door for emergency evacuation. There are no adjustable work surfaces for disabled pupils and the room is too narrow to accommodate more than one pupil in a wheelchair. This has resulted in teachers preferring to use their own classrooms and not using the room or the interactive whiteboard which is fixed in that room. This is a waste of resources.
82. Each year, pupils in all classes take part in a science week. During this time they experience many scientific activities which contribute to their achievement. The most recent focus was 'Flight'. Visiting speakers from Sheffield University and from the parks department increased pupils' knowledge as they handled and learned about Japanese hornets and owls. Pupils increased their awareness of forces as they made rockets and helicopters and investigated bubbles. In addition, those with more profound and complex needs experienced a sensory flight in the school's interactive 'white room'. Through a well-established link with the librarian, pupils visited the local library to research, for example bees and flying machines, and were entranced as the librarian read the story 'Hoot'.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' opportunities to learn a wide range of skills in ICT are poor.
- Overall, teachers do not adequately plan to use ICT; as a result, pupils learn and achieve very little.
- Resources are inadequate and do not fully meet pupils' needs.
- Except in a few classes, there is little use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- There is no leadership of, or direction for, the subject.

Commentary

83. Pupils' achievements are poor. Very little teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection. That which was seen was good or very good but overall it is unsatisfactory as teachers plan insufficiently to use it in lessons. Pupils occasionally used computers to support learning but, overall, this was a rare occurrence. The use of ICT to support pupils with PMLD and those with sensory needs in the specific classes is good. Here ICT is planned well and in one Post 16 lesson, staff were very knowledgeable about how ICT could support students' needs, and it was very well taught. It is used well to support these students' communication and learning.
84. Many other pupils across the school use simple voice recordable switches to express choice or greetings during the day but their use of ICT goes little beyond this. The pupils' progress reports also show that few pupils proceed beyond this skill, although they are capable of doing so given the opportunity. A few staff do incorporate ICT into activities in other lessons. For instance, in mathematics work with Year 2 pupils, under the very skilful guidance of a teaching assistant, two more able pupils learned to program a *Roamer* so that they could move it accurately forward, backwards, left and right. However, the school's planning for ICT is poor and does not help pupils build on their skills, knowledge and understanding and the guidance for teachers is just a list of ideas. These do not go far enough given the range of needs in the school and the relatively 'high' levels of attainment some pupils may achieve. In some classes teachers have virtually no planning for ICT yet it is meant to be taught in the context of other subjects.
85. Resources, as seen during the inspection, are inadequate, although the school has purchased up-to-date equipment that has not yet been installed. Virtually no use is made of the school's three interactive whiteboards and one is kept out of classes and is in a store room. The co-ordinator has been absent due to illness for a year and the subject has not moved forward. It is in a worse position than at the time of the last inspection. Assessment is poor; there are no systems used consistently to measure progress. Improvement since the last inspection is poor as are leadership and management of the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. This is poor. There are a few examples of good use in other subjects but this is down to whether the individual teacher wishes to, or is confident to, use it. There are also missed opportunities to support communication, using alternative and augmented devices which go beyond the use of single switches. Some pupils use computers to write with, although in some examples the adults did this instead of the pupils.

HUMANITIES

History

87. Only one lesson could be observed so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision overall. Teachers' planning and records, pupils' work and wall displays indicate that pupils have access to a suitable programme which is supported by visits out of school, for example to Sheffield Millennium Galleries and the local church. These activities alongside topics such as 'traditional games' and the history of the school contribute well to pupils' awareness of their cultural heritage. In the lesson seen for pupils in Year 5 to 8, the teaching and learning were good and teaching assistants were generally well deployed to support pupils with mostly sensory disabilities. Good 'sensory' ways were used to help pupils understand ideas from Egyptian life during the period of Tutankhamen. Some were dressed in bandages to depict mummification while others explored shapes which represented the pyramids.

Geography

88. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement on provision, but in the two lessons seen (one for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and one for pupils in Years 7 to 9), pupils learned well as a result of good teaching. In both lessons, the teachers had planned activities to interest pupils. In both lessons, 'Big Books' were used well to promote literacy in higher attaining pupils and both teachers used signs and symbols well to include pupils with complex needs and those with communication difficulties. Pupils' imaginations were fired by the group activities such as planning land use on a farm or matching animals to their 'homes'. Pupils achieved well in both lessons because activities were carefully matched to individual needs. Visits and visitors are used well to make learning relevant, for example to family farms, country parks and in the local community. Good links have been made to the science curriculum and in developing an awareness of environmental issues through educating for sustainability.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many of the pupils in classes where there is a wide range of abilities and those with additional special educational needs do not achieve as well as they should.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent; poor signing and use of symbols have led to a lack of progress and teaching assistants do not have a clear role in lessons.
- Teachers provide gainful opportunities for higher attaining pupils to improve their reading and writing; the regrouping of pupils has led to lack of continuity in learning and a general decline in standards.
- Visits, visitors and real objects are used well to make learning meaningful, although there is a lack of visits to reinforce the understanding of different faiths and religions.

Commentary

89. The way classes have been grouped since September has meant a significant number of pupils are working with pupils older than themselves. This is particularly so for Year 9 pupils working in the transition classes where the ADSAN Transition Award governs what is taught. Though pupils study a number of units, these do not always reflect the Rotherham Locally Agreed Syllabus. In this and other classes, the alteration of groups does not provide for continuity in pupils' learning. This has resulted in a decline in standards in many classes since the last inspection. While the subject leader is willing

and works hard to support her colleagues, she has not had the support of senior managers, either to develop the subject or to monitor the impact of teaching on learning.

90. During the inspection, though some good teaching and learning was observed, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in most age groups, making the quality of teaching and learning unsatisfactory overall. This is reflected in pupils' achievements. In the classes where teaching and learning are good, teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, use support staff well and ensure pupils with complex needs are managed well. While many adults use signs and symbols to ensure pupils with communication difficulties can make themselves understood and take a full part in the lesson, this is not so in all classes. Some teachers and support staff sign routinely. Others sign only to selected pupils or not at all. Similarly, the use of symbols to support less able readers and those pupils who need symbolic support to help with their writing is also inconsistent from class to class. This reduces the rate of progress for these pupils and limits their achievement.
91. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, support staff are unsure of their role. The activities provided for pupils with autism are unsatisfactory, as is classroom management for these pupils. The activities did not engage the pupils. However, where teaching is good, in addition to providing challenging activities and managing pupils well, staff provide useful opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy. Key vocabulary is highlighted and reinforced through the written and spoken word and through symbols. Pupils who are able are encouraged to discuss and explain their work. In addition, teachers provide simple texts and worksheets for higher attaining pupils to improve their understanding of reading; pupils are expected to record their thoughts either as symbols, by overwriting or by writing independently.
92. Pupils of all ages and capabilities increase their awareness of the beliefs and traditions of the major world faiths through taking part, for example, in Eid and Diwali celebrations which have been led by members of these faiths. The use of the 'white room' to re-enact the Christian nativity and the Hindu story of Rama and Sita gave a deeper meaning to learning, especially for pupils with more severe and profound needs. Useful links have been forged with the local churches for pupils to visit to experience, for example, standing in the pulpit and gathering around the font. While pupils have visited a number of Christian churches, visits to places of worship of other faiths are limited. Since the last inspection, the range of resources has improved. These are used well in many classes to gain pupils' interest. For example, pupils with profound needs increased their awareness of the traditions of Hindus as they focused on a candle and handled diva lamps prior to making their own out of clay. Similarly, higher attaining pupils know that Buddhist monks wear special robes and that they have limited possessions. They made good gains in their understanding because, in addition to dressing in robes, they begged for food, reverently holding their small metal bowls.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

93. It is not possible to make an overall judgment on provision for art and design, as insufficient teaching was seen during the inspection. Improvement since the last inspection is, however, unsatisfactory.

94. There is no specialist accommodation, despite new building taking place. Consequently, there are few places to store pupils' work in progress and this means that the choice of tasks that the older pupils undertake is limited. Pupils do not benefit from suitable workspace and furniture to work with clay for example. However, the artwork on display around the school shows that pupils have experience of working in a range of media and techniques. Pupils in Year 9 make drawings in the style of Clarice Cliff, collages of monsters and patterns from coloured circles. Students in the leavers' group copy pictures by Monet and Van Gogh. Pupils have also used pastels, completed line drawings, and worked with textiles, inks and paint to create pictures. The school has worked with local artists to enhance the curriculum. A local sculptor has worked with the leavers' group to produce a very impressive set of wood sculptures which now adorn the garden area.
95. The curriculum provides pupils with a reasonable range of experiences overall. However, there is insufficient monitoring of skill development to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress. Year 10 and 11 pupils who volunteered for a design option were far too directed by the teacher in what to do. This made the focus of the lesson one of manual dexterity rather than of artistic or design interpretation.
96. Leadership and management of the subject across the school are poor. Monitoring is informal and is mainly focused on the resource needs of teachers. Assessment is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient focus on monitoring and supporting learning and teaching to ensure that skills are progressively developed.

Design and technology

97. As no lessons were seen in design and technology, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning. However, from scrutiny of planning and resources a number of aspects of the subject are unsatisfactory.
98. Planning is based on units of work which cover food, some textiles work and resistant materials technology. In the lower school pupils experience making bread, working with textiles and puppet making. In the middle school they devise snacks, decorate biscuits and make buns and drinks while in resistant materials they make musical instruments, containers, boats, pop-up cards and junk models. Year 10 and 11 pupils use the ASDAN scheme to evaluate their work on developing logos and design symbols and work in basic resistant materials such as wood and card. The use of ICT, especially in the design aspect of the subject, is not developed. Policy documents and planning do not identify where design and technology could support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
99. The accommodation for design and technology is poor. There is no specialist accommodation for either food or resistant materials technology. The room used for food technology is currently closed on health and safety grounds and has been so for some time. The food preparation area in the leavers' block is inappropriate for teaching purposes as it is too small and not adequately designed for the purpose. The lack of satisfactory accommodation significantly restricts the curriculum and makes it impossible to provide a full range of learning opportunities. For example, secondary aged pupils do not have opportunities to use power tools or machinery. Neither do they experience working in a context matched to their needs, such as a functioning kitchen or workshop.

100. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The newly appointed curriculum leader for resistant materials has insufficient impact on the teaching of the subject across the school. There is no structured system for providing monitoring, support and guidance to non-specialist teachers, and systems for evaluating and recording pupils' developing skills and design awareness are not consistent.
101. An area identified in the last inspection was the improvement in the support given to teachers who were not subject specialists. Little has been done in this respect and this aspect of subject leadership and management is still weak.

Music

102. Music was not inspected fully, but evidence provided showed the provision to have both strengths and weaknesses. Singing and percussion plays an important part in the life of the school and is generally used well to support communication and listening. The teaching in music lessons was, however, variable. In those lessons observed, the teaching by the specialist music teacher was very good and provided very well for early musical awareness and the specific needs of pupils. In another lesson, though the teaching was enthusiastic, lack of experience with pupils with such complex educational needs and too much ineffectual adult support meant the lesson was unsatisfactory. The music co-ordinator has a very strong commitment to extending the range of musical experiences of the children further, but, currently, has limited time to monitor or lead the subject further. In some classes, particularly those including pupils with autism, the planned musical experiences are far too narrow.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well because of the knowledgeable teaching which meets the needs of pupils well; teaching assistants support staff well.
- The subject is well led by a qualified specialist who provides an enthusiastic role model for both pupils and staff; she expects the pupils to perform well and, as a result, they rise to the challenges set.
- The accommodation on the school site is unsatisfactory and significantly restricts the range and quality of the experiences available to the pupils.

Commentary

103. Teachers plan well and have high expectations of pupils' involvement and achievement and lessons are structured to take account of pupils' differing individual needs. Support staff are well managed and are used very effectively to support pupils' engagement and participation in lessons. They make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and ensure that high levels of motivation are maintained. Pupils demonstrate eagerness and enjoyment in lessons and challenge themselves to improve. This contributes significantly to the standards they achieve in their lessons. Pupils learn to co-operate and are competitive in small game activities. They are increasingly aware of rules and are able to apply them consistently and appropriately. Pupils dress appropriately, and understand the importance of warming up and the effects of exercising their bodies.

104. The subject leader is well qualified and teaches 80 per cent of all lessons. Teaching is good and the knowledgeable specialist teacher engenders enthusiasm in pupils which spurs them on to try harder. She also supports other teachers, who teach the subject effectively. An audit of provision has been undertaken and a suitable action plan developed. The leader makes good use of the school sports co-ordinator programme, available through the local secondary school.
105. The accommodation is poor. There are no outside play or games areas. However, staff make the best of what they have and this is why the pupils achieve well despite this serious lack of facilities. During the inspection, the oldest pupils in Post 16 had an option to play cricket. However, they had to contend with obstacles such as flower beds, kerbs and external garden furniture! The hall (used for physical education for the younger pupils) is very small. It is potentially dangerous for classes of pupils with varying co-ordination difficulties, to engage in running activities. The changing facilities are inadequate, with showering only available in the hydrotherapy pool. This does not support the development of personal care and hygiene. The new hall in the leavers' block has a very low ceiling, making it unusable for any activity requiring height. The acoustics of the hall are very poor, making lessons very noisy and, therefore, impacting on individual performance, especially pupils with autism. It is unfortunate that an agreement with a local school to use some of their outdoor games facilities has not yet been taken up and, therefore, opportunities for the pupils remain limited.
106. The provision remains similar to that in the last inspection. Improvement since then is satisfactory. Teaching was judged to be good in the last inspection report, and it remains so. However, the concerns expressed over the shortcomings in the accommodation have not been addressed as expected through the building programme cited in the last report. This is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) including citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills in PSHE and citizenship are promoted well in other lessons and daily routines in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactorily in Years 7 to 11 and for Post-16 students; as a result, pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
- The planning of the specific PSHE and citizenship programme in Years 7 to 11, in Post -16 and for autistic pupils in the separate class is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

107. In Years 1 to 6, the majority of pupils are well supported in their interactions with adults and each other. As a result, they form good relationships with each other and very good relationships with adults, whom they trust implicitly. This contributes well to pupils' personal development and their sense of citizenship and they achieve well. Pupils understand and follow clearly defined daily routines and are always keen to take on small responsibilities helping out in their classroom. Many well-planned activities provide pupils with a clear sense of who they are and the appropriate ways of relating to each other.

108. Teaching and learning of PSHE permeates the whole curriculum in these years and is good. At the beginning of each day and after lunch pupils take part in greetings as a group. This promotes effectively their sense of self and it associates positive feelings of self-regard and respect for others. At the end of the school day and in weekly assemblies, they receive and welcome praise for their achievements. Pupils are ready to accept other's differences knowing, for example, how to deal constructively with other pupils' challenging behaviour. Here, staff coach pupils in knowing when to say 'no' and positive ways for doing so, often by signing correctly. In this respect, they also provide pupils with good role models and encourage pupils effectively to exercise as much personal control as possible. Many pupils organise their own books and equipment for lessons and most have learnt to choose, collect and eat their lunch using cutlery and exercising good social skills. However, in a discrete PSHE lesson, the expectations placed on the group of autistic pupils in Years 2 to 4 to recognise edible and hazardous substances was planned unsatisfactorily in relation to their learning difficulties and capabilities.
109. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 and Post-16 students continue to make satisfactory progress in developing autonomy and the skills of personal care as these objectives are consistently promoted in other lessons and everyday routines. Teaching and learning of these aspects of PSHE and citizenship are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and in Post-16. The first lesson of the day, where relationships and communication are reinforced, often provides well-planned opportunities for pupils to rehearse daily expectations concerning routines and choices for the lunchtime meal. In the teaching of many subjects, there are opportunities, led by the teacher or teaching assistant, for pupils and students to discuss topics and this consolidates the good relationships formed earlier. Only occasionally, however, are pupils and students encouraged to communicate directly with one another, rather than with or through an adult.
110. The leadership of PSHE and citizenship is unsatisfactory, overall, and there has been unsatisfactory improvement in the good provision seen at the time of the last inspection. The plan of what is taught in the separate PSHE and citizenship lessons identifies a broad range of topics but each topic has not been developed in enough detail to provide teachers with a consistent set of objectives for what pupils and students might learn over time. Equally, planning gives insufficient guidance on the resources to support teaching each topic. Therefore, the challenge faced by pupils and students is often insufficient. As a result, PSHE lessons, especially in Years 7 to 11 and Post 16, do not link together adequately and build on skills previously developed. Achievement in lessons in Years 7 to 11 and Post16 is unsatisfactory overall. Where teaching draws effectively on PSHE and citizenship-related topics from the ASDAN course, the resultant achievement is very good. In one lesson, clear objectives meant pupils and students evaluated work in their files and from this gained an understanding of how their achievements prepared them for future options.
111. A separate curriculum for citizenship has not been fully developed and is only cursorily acknowledged where it overlaps with PSHE topics. This does not meet the statutory requirements for citizenship in Years 7 to 11. Provision for PSHE and citizenship in Years 7 to 11 and in Post-16 has also suffered from the lapsed programme for careers education and work experience. These are not currently provided, although existing plans from the recent past cover very effectively much of what is currently lacking in PSHE and citizenship.

POST-16

The provision for students in Post-16 is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not meet the full range of students' needs.
- Teaching is not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of students of different abilities and does not adequately challenge more able students.
- Students engage enthusiastically in and contribute well to lessons.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of a broad curriculum.
- Standards have declined and there has been insufficient planning and development of the Post-16 provision.

Commentary

112. Provision for students has significantly declined over the past few years. The programme of study does not sufficiently distinguish the needs of the Post-16 cohort from the rest of the school. The school's organisation means that not all pupils eligible for Post-16 provision are in that provision and, in addition, some younger pupils are taught alongside Post-16 students.

113. The school has developed a three-year curriculum programme built around key skills. Students' achievements are acknowledged and accredited through the AQA and ASDAN modular schemes. These unit awards are effective at providing small steps of accreditation for students, but do not sufficiently challenge the more able students. There are sound links overall with the wider community, particularly the local college and day centre. For example, students have attended courses such as cake decoration and a group of students served in the restaurant of the Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. However, the school does not always make sufficient use of the wider partnerships to extend the experiences of the students. Termly visits to the theatre are arranged, the latest being to a Westlife concert.

114. Students make some progress and are able to demonstrate an expanding vocabulary and their understanding of social communication when supported by an adult. They use signing effectively to support their communication. They are keen and willing to participate in work and take care over its presentation. The work planned for students with PMLD is well matched to their needs and helps them to achieve well. It is carefully thought out by staff who have a good understanding of how to make activities meaningful for such students. However, by contrast, the progress of more able students is unsatisfactory. The lack of effective planning and weak classroom organisation mean that students are not working at their own level but on generic tasks using common skills designed for all pupils. For example, in an activity developing geographical skills, all students were directed by the teacher to paste ready-prepared and cut symbols into their books, irrespective of any challenge in learning.

115. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory. A number of lessons observed were poorly planned with imprecise learning outcomes to be achieved in the lesson. Often, the work was not well matched to pupils' different abilities and all students were meant to learn the same things. There is significant evidence of uninspiring, mundane teaching providing little challenge for students, particularly those that are more able. The students are compliant and respond well to questions. However, their thinking is not often extended by asking them to explain their answers. Lessons are dominated by the teacher talking and giving students direction, with little opportunity for independent work. Although the leavers' group has appropriate ICT facilities, little use is made of these. Few

opportunities are taken for the development of literacy and numeracy skills within other lessons, for example by highlighting key words or relating numbers to common symbols.

116. Although the accommodation for the Post-16 students is new and purpose built, it fails to meet the needs of the students. The hall has a very low ceiling and very poor acoustics, making indoor physical activities potentially dangerous – there is a mirror globe suspended from the ceiling that is within easy reach of the taller students. There are no changing or shower areas, so students change for games activities in the toilets and do not shower afterwards. This fails to consolidate learning undertaken in their health and personal hygiene lessons. Opportunities for learning life skills are significantly limited by the lack of accommodation and resources. The layout and resources in the kitchen and laundry area support neither the effective teaching of food preparation and cooking, nor the life skills of kitchen management and laundry. There is no area where students can socialise informally. The library area is cramped and uninviting and storage facilities are poor with a number of resources kept in boxes in the corridor.
117. The leadership and management of the Post-16 provision are poor. Over the last year significant changes in the management of the school as a whole have impacted negatively on this area. The absence of effective monitoring has resulted in a decline in provision and standards.
118. Improvement since the last inspection is poor. Post -16 provision was considered good overall, but this is no longer the case.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

| | |
|--|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 6 |
| How inclusive the school is | 5 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 6 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 6 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 5 |
| Pupils' achievement | 5 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos) | 4 |
| Attendance | 4 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 4 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of education provided by the school | 5 |
| The quality of teaching | 5 |
| How well pupils learn | 5 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs | 5 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 5 |
| Accommodation and resources | 6 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 5 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 5 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 4 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 4 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | 6 |
| The governance of the school | 7 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 6 |
| The effectiveness of management | 6 |

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.*