

INSPECTION REPORT

KENNEL LANE SCHOOL

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 110190

Headteacher: Miss Andrea de Bunsen

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th January 2005

Inspection number: 268585

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 179

School address: Kennel Lane
Bracknell
Berkshire

Postcode: RG42 2EX

Telephone number: 01344 483872

Fax number: 01344 304224

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of Mrs Anne Shilcock
governors:

Date of previous 17th – 20th May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kennel Lane is the only special school within the local education authority and, as such, it admits pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational need. In the vast majority of cases this is for moderate or severe learning difficulties or autism, although a smaller number of pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Because of the pupils' learning difficulties, their development, especially their attainment on entry to the school, is significantly delayed compared with others of a similar age. The school is large and there are almost twice as many boys as girls.

The school is organised into three departments, which are in separate buildings on a single site. The primary department has a single class for Nursery and Reception children and eight classes for pupils in Years 1 to 6. There are four classes for post-16 students; two groups of students are on college preparation courses and two, with more complex needs, follow a foundation curriculum. The structure in the secondary department is more complex. The pupils in two classes, of mixed age, have complex learning difficulties that require them to be taught, generally, as separate classes. Other secondary age pupils are taught in ability sets for English, mathematics, science and humanities, and mixed ability groups for physical education and arts subjects. Pupils are taught all other subjects as registration and tutor groups.

One group of 12 pupils, ranging from Year 3 to 6, spends four days each week at a local primary school and one day at Kennel Lane. During their inclusion days, a Kennel Lane teacher teaches them as a separate class for some lessons, and they are included in mainstream classes for others.

The school has a broad socio-economic mix, in keeping with its intake from a wide geographical area. The vast majority of pupils have a white British background, and only three do not have English as their first language, although this is not their main barrier to learning.

The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1310 1	Mike Kell	<i>Lead inspector</i>	French
1228 9	Sue Burgess	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Team inspector</i>	English Design and technology Special educational needs
2512	Brian Emery	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science Personal, social and health education and citizenship
3024 3	Anne Heakin	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design Music Foundation Stage
2217 8	Kate Robertson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education
3055	Clive Tombs	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography History Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Kennel Lane is an effective school with some very good and excellent features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very ably supported by other key staff. Very good management systems are evident throughout the school. Good teaching promotes pupils' learning well, and they make good progress. The very positive ethos means that pupils achieve very well in their personal development. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and other senior managers have shown very clear vision in leading the school forward with a very clear sense of direction.
- Very good teamwork at all levels enhances pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is a significant strength of the school.
- The very strong commitment to inclusion ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils within school and enables many to benefit from mainstream provision too.
- The school's very positive ethos extends to all areas of its work and encourages the development of pupils' communication skills, confidence, self-esteem and awareness of others.
- Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school.
- Provision for discrete lessons in personal, social and health education (PSHE) in Years 1 to 6 is insufficient.
- Procedures to measure and record pupils' achievements require further refinement.
- Some aspects of the accommodation are restricting pupils' achievements in some subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good because the quality of provision in many aspects of the school's work has improved, or at least been maintained, even though significantly more pupils have been admitted and the nature of their special educational needs (SEN) is much more complex and challenging. The previous key issue to improve provision in the post-16 department has been addressed very effectively. Improved provision for music has been partially addressed but further progress has been restricted by factors outside the school's control. Other development areas, relating to pupils' cultural experiences, resources in the humanities, and curriculum monitoring have all been resolved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, **pupils achieve well**. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily because of a combination of pupils' increasingly

complex range of special needs and less experienced teachers. Across the school, pupils' achievements in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, music, physical education and PSHE and citizenship are good. Pupils and students in Years 10 to 13 also achieve well in work-related learning (WRL). It was not possible to judge achievement in design and technology, geography, history, French, Spanish and religious education because too few lessons were observed.

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Their moral and social development is fostered extremely well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. More specifically, children in the Foundation Stage are taught very well and pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn satisfactorily. Teachers generally use very effective teaching methods and are supported very well by teaching assistants. Adults use praise well and appropriately to encourage pupils. The use of specialist teachers in Years 7 to 11 has been a very effective development.

The curriculum is good and there are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall, but some aspects of the accommodation limit learning. Pupils and students benefit from a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that prepares them well for the next stages of their education. The curriculum is very well led and managed by senior staff, although monitoring by subject leaders is not yet fully developed. The provision for meeting pupils' additional needs is good; the school is fully inclusive and provides very good opportunities for many pupils to extend their curriculum in mainstream schools and colleges.

There are very good arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Provision for supporting, advising and guiding pupils is good. Pupils are involved very well in the life and work of the school.

The school enjoys a very good and supportive partnership with parents. There are very good links with other schools and colleges, and good links with the wider community. The school is at an early stage of providing outreach services and support to other schools, and current provision is satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Leadership of the school by the headteacher is excellent, and other senior staff provide very good support. The senior team's leadership has been instrumental in what the school has achieved since the last inspection. Management procedures are very good. The governance of the school is good, and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very positive. They praise the way in which the school challenges pupils and express their appreciation of the progress their children make. Pupils are very satisfied and enjoy everything the school has to offer.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to benefit fully from the very good, comprehensive and progressive PSHE curriculum.
- Implement consistent systems to measure and record pupils' achievements.
- Continue to work with the local education authority (LEA) to improve those aspects of the accommodation that currently restrict pupils' achievements in some subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well, and pupils with additional learning needs achieve as well as others. The achievements of children in the Foundation Stage are very good. The attainment of pupils in Reception and Years 1 to 6, and of post-16 students, is well below the level expected of pupils of similar ages because of the increasing complexity of their learning difficulties. The attainment of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is below the level expected of pupils of similar ages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in all areas of learning.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve less well than those in other year groups.
- Pupils and students are successful in the good range of accredited courses that are available to those in Years 10 and 11 and the post-16 age group.
- Many pupils' achievements are extended well through the school's very good links with other schools and colleges.
- All subjects of the curriculum contribute well to developing pupils' achievements in literacy and ICT; numeracy skills are promoted satisfactorily.
- Unsatisfactory aspects of the accommodation limit the achievements pupils make in some subjects.

Commentary

1. There is a difference in the achievements of pupils in different age groups. Children's very good achievements in the Foundation Stage result from teaching that is consistently very good, very effective ongoing assessment of children's responses, extremely good teamwork, and a stimulating and appropriate curriculum.

2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because teachers in these classes understand the range of pupils' special educational needs (SEN) and provide them with activities that meet their individual capabilities. There are high expectations and effective teaching methods employed. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 benefit greatly from the arrangement that enables them to be taught as ability groups for English, mathematics, science and humanities. Specialist teachers extend all pupils' learning well. Post-16 students are well taught and follow a clearly identified, well-managed and diverse curriculum. This prepares them well for the next stage of adult life.

3. Pupils' satisfactory achievements in Years 3 to 6 are caused by two related factors. Pupils with increasingly complex and challenging needs are now being admitted, but at the same time the school has had problems with retaining and recruiting staff to work with these year groups. Consequently, their teachers are not so knowledgeable or experienced in managing pupils' behaviour and using teaching methods that meet their diverse needs. As a result, time is not always used productively. Senior staff have recognised the need to support the staff involved and have implemented a training programme.

4. Pupils and students achieve well in all aspects of literacy and English; speaking and listening (communication); reading and writing. The most capable pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve particularly well in writing because the teacher has high expectations, pupils are encouraged to write for a very wide range of purposes, and teaching assistants provide good quality support.

Pupils' overall good achievements are enhanced by the input of speech and language therapists, and the fact that all pupils have a suitable means of communicating. These systems include Makaton signing, symbols and visual timetables to support pupils' understanding of changes that occur during the school day.

5. Pupils' good achievements in mathematics result from teachers' very good management of their pupils. This is based on the quality of relationships, encouragement and trust that feature in all lessons. Lessons are well structured, using the three-part lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers use discussions well, and questions are carefully worded to challenge individuals and extend the detail of the answers provided. Lessons in the secondary and post-16 departments prepare pupils well for examinations and give them the skills they will require for life after school.

6. Throughout the school, pupils receive good teaching, enabling them to achieve well in a wide range of science activities. Investigations are used well to provide pupils with first-hand experience of basic scientific principles. Pupils show enjoyment in learning and are confident to answer questions and make suggestions and predictions, even when they are uncertain. Pupils and students achieve well in ICT because they are taught well how to use an effective range of resources and programs. Teaching is characterised by teachers' very good subject knowledge, good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, and motivational activities that pupils thoroughly enjoy.

7. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils achieve well in art and design, music, physical education and PSHE and citizenship. Pupils and students in Years 10 to 13 also achieve well in work-related learning (WRL). It was not possible to judge achievement in design and technology, geography, history, French, Spanish and religious education as too few lessons were observed.

8. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, and post-16 students, achieve well in the good range of externally accredited courses that the school provides to help them prepare for further education or employment. Courses include those for the Certificate of Educational Achievement (Entry Level), the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Transition Challenge, Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL), and the National Skills Profile, in which they gain key and vocational skills. Students' achievements are also enhanced through links with colleges in Bracknell, Reading and Maidenhead, and the Open Learning Centre, where they follow an eight-week module in a range of vocational and life skill courses. Many primary age pupils' achievements are also developed well through links with mainstream schools.

9. Pupils' achievements in developing literacy skills are promoted well in subjects other than English. There are many opportunities for pupils to speak and listen; key words and symbols are taught carefully and displayed so that they become familiar to pupils; there are good opportunities for pupils to find information from books. Pupils also write for a good range of purposes. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in the teaching and learning of other subjects, such as using word-processing to improve the presentation of work; good use is made of symbol programs wherever necessary. Overall, pupils' numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum but pupils are not always given structured and planned opportunities to improve their achievements by consolidating, using and applying their mathematical skills in other subjects.

10. The shared facility in the secondary department for teaching science, art and design, and design and technology limits pupils' achievements. In addition, the Foundation Stage classroom provides a thoroughfare for pupils from other classes to get to the playground.

This results in lost time, as the class waits for the other pupils to walk through and this detracts from the children's learning and achievements. Currently, the accommodation for music is also restricting what pupils can achieve, but this problem is to be rectified shortly.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour improve as they progress through the school and are, overall, very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes to it are generally very positive.
- Staff are successful in promoting very good relationships.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- The attendance rate has decreased since the last inspection.

Commentary

11. Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like coming to school, and this was evident during inspection week. In general, pupils are very interested in their work and most try hard to finish what they have been asked to do. They enjoy practical tasks and, with suitable support, sustain their concentration during lessons. Their positive attitudes were particularly evident in most of the lessons observed. For instance, pupils greatly enjoyed creating their own sculptures from natural objects they had found; pupils of all abilities delighted in trying hard to improve their swimming technique and younger pupils co-operated very successfully in a science lesson to investigate pushing and pulling. Post-16 students are eager to increase their social skills, through activities such as shopping, cooking and using public transport.

12. Behaviour in class, on the playgrounds, at lunchtime and around the school is generally very good. In general, pupils get on well together and are tolerant of each other's difficulties, although a few have extreme behavioural problems. A significant minority of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that they did not know whether their child was bullied or harassed at school. Inspectors agree with the school that this uncertainty reflects the initial results of the recent LEA survey, from which it became evident that the behavioural problems of one or two pupils had upset others in their class. The school is following up this issue with the pupils involved and their parents, although no instances of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection.

13. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and help to promote effective learning. Although some pupils have limited communication skills, they respond positively to their teachers and teaching assistants. Staff know their pupils very well and are, therefore, able to bring out the best in them. There were no exclusions last year and there have been none since the present headteacher has been in post. This represents a significant decrease since the last inspection.

14. Attendance is good, but it is not as good as at the last inspection. This is largely due to factors beyond the school's control. The changed nature of the school's intake has meant there are more pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties, which results in more frequent authorised absence for medical reasons. Punctuality is generally good and the arranged transport gets pupils to school in good time for the start of the day, except when there are local traffic problems.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.6
National data (all special schools)	1.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
National data	8.7

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

15. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils consider others less fortunate than themselves by raising money for charities such as *Comic Relief* and *Jeans for Genes*. There are opportunities at the end of the day for each class to celebrate achievements, consider any problems that might have arisen and, for secondary pupils, to reflect on a chosen thought of the day or week. Pupils are encouraged to develop a growing awareness of their self-image and their ability to make choices as a means of achieving greater confidence and independence.

16. The school's very positive ethos extends to all areas of its work and encourages pupils' confidence, self-esteem and awareness of others. Pupils are encouraged, particularly at post-16, to be accepting, tolerant and supportive of the needs of others in school. Their experience of the wider world is enhanced by preparation for college courses and by a varied range of work experience placements.

17. Visitors to the school, such as an actor playing the role of a Roman centurion, theatre companies and a woodwind ensemble, enhance the cultural experiences provided for the pupils. A varied range of educational trips to places such as the Imperial War Museum, Hampton Court, the Planetarium and the National Portrait Gallery also contribute greatly to pupils' social and cultural development. Post-16 students benefit from a residential visit to Douai Abbey. Pupils also study other cultures, festivals and traditions through subjects such as English, religious education, music and art. For example, some were celebrating Chinese New Year during inspection week and others were exploring aspects of Maori culture.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good, as is the quality of the curriculum. Pupils' learning is supported by very good links with parents and other schools, and good links with the community. The developing outreach service to other schools is satisfactory. The school looks after its pupils very well.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall across the school. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but require further development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage are taught very well.
- Teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- The use of specialist teachers in Years 7 to 11 has been a very effective development.
- Pupils' personal development is encouraged well in lessons.

- Teachers' insecure knowledge of pupils' needs and uncertain behaviour management often reduce the learning of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in one or two classes.
- Teachers generally use very effective teaching methods.
- Adults use praise well and appropriately to encourage pupils.

Commentary

18. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching and learning. At that time, less than one lesson in ten was judged as very good or better, and learning was considered unsatisfactory in almost one in ten. The current situation is now much better, but although teaching and learning are good overall there are differences across the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	20 (30%)	31 (46%)	15 (23%)	1 (1%)	0	0

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

19. Lessons in all year groups share some good and very good features. In particular, all adults support pupils and students well through their use of praise and encouragement. Very effective teaching assistants are particularly important in this respect. They are well briefed, know the pupils and their needs and are skilled at balancing the level of the support they provide with expectations of independent work. Teaching assistants' input into managing pupils' behaviour is also influential in maintaining their learning. Pupils generally accept this support willingly; they have very good attitudes towards their learning and behave very well. Lesson planning is good. Teachers are adept at timing different activities so that lessons generally follow the three-part format of an introduction, main teaching activity and a final plenary session. Planning identifies what it is anticipated that pupils will learn, and plenary sessions are used well to evaluate the progress they have made. Lessons also identify the resources that are to be provided, and teachers use these effectively to develop learning.

20. Consistently very good teaching results in children in the Foundation Stage learning very well and making very good progress in all six areas of learning. Adults' expectations that children will conform to expected codes of behaviour are excellent; physical and verbal prompts are given and all children conform. The consistency of the way in which behaviour management strategies are employed, combined with meaningful praise, create a happy, nurturing learning environment.

21. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 7 to 13 are challenged well by the tasks provided. Teachers use effective methods to build on pupils' prior learning so that all pupils, including those with additional learning needs, are included. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. A particularly impressive feature of lessons in Years 7 to 13 is teachers' subject knowledge. Subject specialists have high expectations and, therefore, extend pupils especially well.

22. While pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught satisfactorily, and sometimes well, on a number of occasions in one or two classes their learning is reduced. This stems from the many staffing changes that have taken place so that, currently, some teachers are insecure with managing pupils' behaviour and uncertain about some pupils' learning difficulties. Consequently, teachers do not always give pupils activities that are matched to their needs and, when pupils become increasingly restless and disaffected, they do not have the skills to manage their behaviour quickly and smoothly. As a result, excessive time may be spent dealing with these situations. Senior managers are aware of the need to maintain the mechanisms that they have already implemented for supporting staff.

23. Teachers provide many opportunities in lessons for pupils' personal development. With the youngest children, this may be restricted to involving them in group activities and sharing experiences; for example holding hands as they re-enacted the story of *The Bear Hunt*, or at snack time. Older pupils are required to work collaboratively with a partner, in small groups or in teams in subjects such as physical education. They learn to cooperate in subjects like drama when, for example, a group of Year 11 pupils re-enacted a scene from *Ernie's Incredible Illucinations*.

24. Assessment procedures are very good in the Foundation Stage, but satisfactory in the school overall. Over the last two years, the school has produced a record of pupil progress and attainment for each pupil, but this format is being redesigned. However, the recording systems that teachers use, in order to keep ongoing information that feeds into these records, are inconsistent across the school. The school acknowledged the need to develop these procedures in its development plan and it has gone some way towards bringing about improvement. The way in which this was approached reflects the very good leadership and management in the school. An assessment team was set up, and this has now produced an action plan with very clear objectives.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been developed well since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management of the curriculum are very good.
- The school is fully inclusive; all pupils are involved.
- The school prepares pupils well for the later stages of education and employment.
- The provision for meeting pupils' additional educational needs is good.
- Provision in PSHE and citizenship education is good.
- The monitoring of teaching by subject leaders is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

25. After the previous inspection the new management team undertook a full review of the curriculum. The deputy headteacher took on this responsibility and implemented a very well thought-out strategy to involve staff in considering the existing curriculum and matching the planning to the whole-school beliefs and vision. This has been a very successful development. Staff members are now working constructively to ensure all subjects are reviewed in the light of national developments, and policy and practice reflect the school provision. The monitoring of teaching by subject leaders is the next stage of development in the cycle of planning and review of the curriculum. Governors are kept fully informed about developments. Members of the governing body have subject responsibilities and link directly with the appropriate subject leaders; subject leaders are expected to report to the governors and keep them fully up to date about their work. A very good working relationship exists between the governors and the senior management team; this has resulted in the good improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection.

26. The school has addressed the key issue in the previous report regarding post-16 students and it now provides them with a clearly identified curriculum. Its organisation ensures that students aged 16 years and over benefit from a well-managed and diverse curriculum that prepares them well for the next stage of adult life. Through the National Skills Profile, students gain accreditation in key and vocational skills prior to moving on to employment or further education.

27. Effective leadership has resulted in the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11 being totally reviewed and it has improved significantly as a result. Secondary age pupils, other than those with additional learning needs, are taught in ability sets for English,

mathematics, science and humanities, and in mixed ability groups for physical education and arts subjects. Pupils are taught all other subjects as registration and tutor groups. The decision to use specialist subject teachers for this age-range is proving to be particularly successful. Teachers are confident with their chosen specialism and this impacts well on the standard of teaching, which is consistently good in this department. In Years 10 and 11, teachers are introducing accreditation at Entry Levels as well as ASDAN's Transition Challenge, and so pupils of all capabilities are motivated to achieve well and gain certification that reflects their skills. The good links with the Connexions service continue, and the 'Life After School' event, which links with colleges and social services, provides practical information for pupils and parents in deciding the next stage of education as well as information about training opportunities, day care and modern apprenticeships.

28. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good. It continues to be broad and balanced, reflecting a primary curriculum adapted to the individual learning needs of the pupils. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is based on the Early Learning Goals; the combination of staff expertise and very well chosen learning activities result in very good curriculum provision for these children.

29. A very comprehensive PSHE curriculum plan is in place, which addresses a wide range of issues, and all staff use every opportunity throughout the school day to promote pupils' personal development. Teaching and learning in discrete PSHE and citizenship lessons are good and, as a result, pupils achieve well. However, in Years 1 to 6, insufficient discrete time is dedicated to the subject.

30. Teachers and support staff throughout the school work very much as teams, and it is clearly evident that pupils' well-being is of the highest priority. They engage pupils in a wide range of experiences and are alert to pupils' responses. They support pupils well and help them to have full access to the curriculum. The school's commitment to including all pupils is a significant feature of its work. The curricular needs of pupils with additional learning needs are kept under review well, and their needs, as defined on their Statements of Special Educational Need, are met well. These are reviewed annually as required, and pupils' priority needs are addressed through the setting of targets in individual education plans (IEPs). Pupils and parents contribute to these annual reviews, and the school has developed a range of different sheets to enable pupils to have their say. For instance, some use symbols and others text. Specific programmes, such as language group sessions run by speech and language therapists, are provided, and therapists also prepare banks of good quality resources for staff to use in their classrooms. These pupils' needs are further well provided for through ongoing training for staff in the use of particular strategies, such as PECS and Makaton signing to support the learning of pupils with communication difficulties, and Team TEACH to assist in the management of pupils with challenging behaviour. Many pupils and students benefit greatly from the school's very good links with other schools and colleges. These links enable them to extend their curriculum experiences.

31. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The number of lunchtime and after-school clubs is limited, as the restrictions of transport arrangements impact on the viability of these activities. Teachers arrange curriculum-related visits and visitors into school, focusing well on art, music and drama to add a further dimension to the taught curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but some aspects are very good while others are unsatisfactory. For instance, the swimming pool is a valuable and well-used resource and the recently developed multi-sensory curriculum resource room is a very impressive feature. However, the shared facility in the secondary department for science, art and design, and design and technology limits pupils' learning. The Foundation Stage

classroom also serves as a thoroughfare for pupils from other classes to get to the playground; this has an impact on time as the class waits for the other pupils to walk through and this detracts from the usual calm atmosphere in the room.

Care, guidance and support

There are very good arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Provision for supporting, advising and guiding pupils is good. Pupils are involved very well in the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for child protection and the general welfare of pupils.
- The pastoral system is very effective.
- There are good and trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- Staff respect the personal dignity of pupils very well and actively seek, value and act on their views.

Commentary

32. The school takes very good care of its pupils and has effective support systems in place. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good. Similarly, secondary age pupils and students are very well prepared for leaving school through careers education, work experience and college links.

33. The school very effectively encourages an ethos of mutual respect, and this is evident in the way pupils respond to those who teach and care for them. Staff know their pupils extremely well, and work very effectively as teams so that pupils can get the most out of what the school has to offer. There is good liaison with therapists and visiting specialists, such as those from the Teaching and Support Service (Sensory Consortium); established systems ensure that all adults work effectively together for the benefit of the pupils. Teaching assistants play a vital part in the delivery of planned therapies and, where necessary, in behaviour management.

34. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place. Training for all staff is updated regularly, with child protection an integral part of the induction process for new staff. Health and safety issues are given a high priority at all times and are well organised. There is a very good level of supervision throughout the day, and staff, helped by volunteers, are extremely vigilant during swimming lessons to ensure maximum safety. Almost all staff have now completed a course in the positive handling of pupils. Another strong feature of welfare provision is the meticulous analysis of any incident that has caused concern. In this way, the school seeks to make any necessary improvements and maximise safety.

35. Pupils are helped to have a clear understanding of how they are progressing by the display in primary classes of the stars and stickers earned, and in secondary department classrooms of personal targets. These targets are discussed and reviewed regularly, and achievement is celebrated every Friday in a whole-school assembly. Where necessary, pupils have personal strategy plans. These seek to identify and address the causes of unacceptable behaviour so that, by means of very detailed positive support strategies, pupils can be helped to modify their reactions to what is going on around them. Staff are

sensitive to the needs of individual pupils; for instance, one pupil may benefit from time in the 'quiet room' and another from the opportunity to work independently elsewhere.

36. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow as a result of the respect that staff and pupils show for one another. Many pupils have acute communication difficulties but all are given opportunities to express their views during the school day. The school council successfully gives pupils a more formal opportunity to influence what the school provides, such as benches and tables to create an outdoor seating area and improved toilets in the secondary building.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys a very good and supportive partnership with parents. There are very good links with other schools and colleges, and good links with the wider community. The school is at an early stage of providing services and support to other schools, and current provision is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard and are very supportive of its work.
- The information provided for parents is very good.
- Very good links with other schools meet individual pupils' learning needs and provide very good social experiences.
- A number of local organisations support the school very well.

Commentary

37. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents interviewed during the inspection praised the way in which the school challenges pupils and expressed their appreciation of the progress their children make. One described the school as 'a lifeline'. Almost all of those who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching is good, that their child is encouraged to become mature and independent, and that staff treat their child fairly. However, a significant minority said they did not feel they were kept well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors do not support this view. They judge that parents are in fact very well informed about all aspects of their children's education and the support provided. Reports submitted for pupils' Annual Review of their Statement Of Special Educational Need give a clear description of attainment and achievement, and offer informed comments on personal development. Parents are consulted before new targets are agreed, and there are opportunities each term to visit the school, see children's work and meet the teachers. Much information is exchanged through daily comments and questions in home/school books and folders. These contain advance curriculum information for the term, the IEP, a timetable and the latest home/school liaison sheet. As well as termly school newsletters, the primary and secondary managers send out their own letters to parents to keep them informed of events. In addition, staff make and receive frequent phone calls and, in view of the fact that so many families live at some distance from the school, the school works hard to maintain a flourishing partnership with parents. The colour-illustrated governors' annual report to parents is a very high quality document, and the school's attractive website is professionally produced and updated.

38. Most parents make every effort to attend events at school, and several volunteer practical help on a regular basis. The very active Friends Association organises a range of social and fund-raising activities. Last year, over £7000 was raised for school funds. Money raised goes towards items such as a sound system and lighting, a new climbing

frame and football kit. All these links make a positive contribution to pupils' learning through the opportunities to share advice, information and ideas.

39. Links with a wide variety of local companies enrich the curriculum and help to improve the school's accommodation and resources. For instance, a local church organisation provided funds to refurbish a classroom as a curriculum resource room. This provides staff with access to a wide variety of stimulating effects, including lights, sound effects and even 'smoke'. In turn, the school makes its minibuses available to the church during the school holidays. Businesses in the area provide work experience placements for older pupils, and a local charitable group has purchased bicycles for younger pupils. Workers from a local company have helped to maintain the school's sensory garden, and the school has hosted an industry day. A dance company has run a course at the school, and a local community arts group is working with the post-16 department to enable students to take part in a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

40. The school is at an early stage of providing services and support to other schools. Activities are mainly undertaken by the headteacher, and these include professional development sessions in mainstream schools, joint training with local primary schools and help with the induction of newly qualified teachers in mainstream schools. Although these activities are of high quality, the range is currently narrow, and formal, planned routine opportunities are limited. This is because the school does not have the staffing capacity to develop this area of its work, although planning with the LEA is well advanced to give it a much higher profile.

41. In keeping with the commitment to be an inclusive establishment, links with other schools and colleges have developed very well since the last inspection. Overall, nearly 100 pupils and students benefit from the opportunity to have some of their work in neighbouring schools or colleges. In the very best example, 12 pupils are permanently and successfully based in a local primary school for four days each week. They dress in the same uniform as the mainstream school pupils and join age appropriate groups for art, physical education, music and design and technology. In turn, a few pupils from the primary school join them for literacy and numeracy lessons. So well are pupils integrated into this particular school, that one pupil has been nominated to be a 'Buddy' and another to represent Kennel Lane pupils on the highly regarded school council. In addition, all pupils attend lunchtime clubs, are included in the school's 'Merit Mark' system, and join in all school trips and performances. These very good links have a positive effect, not only on the development of pupils' social skills and language but also on their confidence and self-esteem.

42. In another inclusion initiative, six Foundation Stage children, accompanied by a teacher and teaching assistant, attend another primary school's Nursery department for one morning each week. The pupils are immediately assimilated into a warm and supportive environment. They play happily alongside their mainstream peers, imitating what they are doing and learning from them. The opportunities for role-play and imaginative play, indoors and out, help the pupils from Kennel Lane to develop their communication skills very well. They also help them to generalise other skills, such as choice making, in a different setting and with a different range of materials and equipment. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also benefit from a similar inclusion opportunity when they attend a mainstream school for one afternoon each week.

43. There are also very good opportunities for students to join their mainstream peers in Bracknell, Reading and Maidenhead Colleges and the Open Learning Centre, where they follow an eight-week module afternoon session in a range of vocational and life skill

courses. Importantly, very good links with a range of after-school providers ensure a smooth and suitable transition when the time comes for students to leave.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school by the headteacher is excellent, and other senior staff provide very good support. Management procedures are very good. The governance of the school is good, and all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher and other senior staff has been instrumental in what the school has achieved since the last inspection.
- The school's senior management team shows an exceptionally clear sense of purpose.
- Key staff have extremely high aspirations and provide excellent role models.
- Very effective school self-review systems provide senior staff with very detailed information of the school's status and of features that require further development.
- Very good teamwork at all levels enhances pupils' academic progress and personal development.
- Many features of management are very good; induction procedures, performance management and staff training opportunities all contribute to improving the school's effectiveness.

Commentary

44. Although there have been a number of changes on the governing body since the last inspection, governors have maintained a vigilant overview of the school's work. Governor induction training, tailored in-house training and a well-organised sub-committee structure have combined to give new governors a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the direction in which the school is moving and an appreciation of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors have worked very well with the current headteacher and senior staff and have supported an open working relationship, while maintaining a high level of challenge.

45. The leadership of the headteacher has been excellent. Upon taking up post, she embarked upon a planned programme of radically overhauling many aspects of the school. In particular, this meant working with all staff to re-establish, and where necessary redefine, the school's vision and statements of belief. Other members of the newly formed senior management team were fully involved in this process; they quickly established a culture of high expectation and challenge underpinned by robust, routine and systematic management systems that could identify the school's developmental needs. They have been hugely successful; a highly effective strategic improvement plan is fully understood by all staff; it is displayed prominently around the school in diagrammatic form and a school improvement plan progress board keeps all staff up-to-date.

46. The leadership provided by senior staff is evident in other ways too, such as in the creation of highly effective teams at all levels within the school. The primary, secondary and post-16 departments run very smoothly as independent units, with very clear communication systems and an agreed sense of purpose that all staff endorse, but each also works in tune with the others. There are equally effective teams within each class and there is strong teamwork with groups that work across the school. These include speech

and language therapists, and LEA visiting professionals like peripatetic teachers who support pupils with sensory difficulties.

47. The curriculum has also benefited from the leadership shown by key staff. Innovative decisions taken by senior managers to change the structure of the secondary department, including the introduction of specialist teachers and teaching pupils in ability groups for key subjects, have proved very successful in raising pupils' achievements. Subject leaders have also demonstrated strong leadership in developing their subject areas; there is excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage.

48. Very thorough management procedures maintain the school's effectiveness and they are now being used increasingly to move the school forward. An excellent induction package and programme introduce newly appointed staff, and very good performance management systems and professional development opportunities are used to bring about improvement. The school is very effective at examining aspects of its own performance so that areas for development can be identified and an appropriate response made. For instance, it was recognised that assessment procedures required further development and that the assessment data that was being collected was not being analysed to compare the relative performances of different groups of pupils. This is now being addressed. Similarly, senior managers were aware that there was some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and have implemented measures to support teachers who are still coming to terms with the learning and personal needs of the more challenging pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,648,238.00	Balance from previous year	79,500.00
Total expenditure	1,694,760.00	Balance carried forward to the next	32,978.00
Expenditure per pupil	9,467.00		

49. The school employs a good approach to its financial management in order that priorities can be budgeted for, and it applies the principles of best value very well to ensure value for money in all its work.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work-related learning is managed well, with a full range of activities being included.
- Students achieve well in WRL activities because they are taught well.
- Careers education is effective.
- Few subjects include WRL opportunities in their planning.

Commentary

50. The programme for WRL is in its infancy but the range of activities already available to pupils and students is good. Teaching is good and the subject is well led and managed. It

makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and preparation for life after school. Pupils and students are well motivated to learn about the world of work. The school's programme is carefully planned, in accordance with national guidance, and pupils and students benefit from the wide range of experiences available to them. However, nearly all WLR experiences arise from discrete lessons; few subjects other than PSHE, citizenship and English identify in their long-term planning how they can contribute to aspects of WLR.

51. Pupils and students have good opportunities to understand and operate business enterprises. They identify key roles in a company, learn to conduct a business meeting properly and consider financial implications, including share holding and opening bank accounts. Good lessons were observed in which students studied aspects of establishing and running a business. One group of students are well into the production stage and have produced jewellery items to a good standard, which they believe will sell well.

52. Pupils have good career guidance, which begins when they are in Year 7 and includes interviews with members of the Connexions service. They are guided well about post-16 opportunities and careers. The programme includes well-planned work experience. A good range of employers has been identified and placement is assured for all those students for whom the school considers work experience to be appropriate. Preparation and debriefing arrangements are good and all pupils and students are carefully monitored and supported during their time at work. Lower attaining pupils and students for whom externally based work experience may not be appropriate benefit from visits with their teachers to local businesses and work experience on the school site.

53. Good links are maintained with local colleges and the Open Learning Centre, and pupils and students benefit from attendance at these institutions. They also benefit greatly from visitors to the school. In recent months, these have included representatives from locally based national and multi-national companies, and students receive regular support from a representative from the local education and business partnership. These visits have enabled pupils and students at the school to undertake activities that give them a real taste of the world of work.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently very good and leads to very good achievement.
- Very good ongoing assessment of children's responses ensures staff know children's achievements very well and are able to meet their individual needs.
- Excellent leadership and management result in very good teamwork and a stimulating and appropriate curriculum.
- Weaknesses in accommodation inhibit teaching and classroom management.

Commentary

54. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and the very good provision continues to be a strength of the school. Consistently very good teaching results in children learning very well and making very good progress in all six areas of learning. Children attending the Reception class have a wide range of special educational needs (SEN), but common to them all is their limited communication and social skills. The school has therefore, quite rightly, made communication and personal skills development high priorities within the curriculum. This strategy has proved to be very effective; at every opportunity children are encouraged to communicate verbally, supported by signing or the use of symbols. Staff are versatile, changing their approach with each child, so that all children benefit from the highly skilled teacher and teaching assistants who work in the classroom.

55. Assessment procedures are very good. A range of ongoing observational notes and formal assessment, combined with expertise of the teacher, ensure that all children are understood very well and their individual learning needs are met very well. All the children benefit from periods of individual attention, as well as opportunities to work with other children. They make very good progress in achieving the targets on their IEPs.

56. A particular strength of teaching is the very high expectation that children will conform to expected codes of behaviour. If a child drops a coat he is immediately expected to pick it up and hang it properly. Physical and verbal prompts are given, and all children conform. Similarly, if a child starts screaming or rolling around on the floor, staff make it very clear that this is unacceptable and the child is quickly and firmly manoeuvred into curbing his behaviour. The consistency of these strategies, combined with meaningful praise, go a long way to creating a happy, nurturing learning environment where children achieve very well.

57. The classroom is used as a thoroughfare for pupils from other classes to get to the playground. Although teachers try to keep the inconvenience to a minimum, there is still an impact on time as the class waits for the other pupils to walk through. The distraction of other pupils detracts from the usual calm atmosphere and can have a detrimental affect on behaviour management.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High priority is given to this area of learning.
- The very good relationships, care and guidance make considerable contributions to learning.

Commentary

58. Children start the Reception class with significant difficulties in relating to others, and are often immature in attitudes and independent skills. Staff are sensitive to their educational and personal needs and are able to ensure individual needs are quickly identified and supported. Adults are very good role models, showing suitable affection to the children but remaining firm and purposeful in managing their behaviour. The consistency provided by the adults results in children learning the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. The regular use of verbal and physical prompts encourages children to be aware of each other, to understand how to take turns and to become more independent. Ample opportunities are provided for children to enjoy group activities and share experiences; for example, when holding hands as they re-enacted *The Bear Hunt*. Snack time is used very effectively to develop independence skills, with children waiting their turn, making choices about their snack and drink and then exchanging coins at the snack bar in return for their chosen food. Though this activity is relatively new, the children are becoming used to the very well organised routine, and snack time is a pleasant experience when children learn to socialise and be co-operative.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher expertise in managing children who have difficulties in communicating is very effective.
- A good range of opportunities is provided throughout the day to support the development of children's communication skills.

Commentary

59. All the children have considerable difficulties in this area of learning. The teacher has substantial expertise, fully understanding children's difficulties and adapting teaching strategies to match their learning needs. The very good assessment procedures are used appropriately to establish children's existing skills, to plan the next stage of learning and to monitor progress. In class activities staff sign key words in songs, stories or conversation. Children are encouraged to do the same, but they are also encouraged to talk and, if appropriate, use symbols to communicate their choices. The visual timetable is used successfully to help children understand the sequence of the day's events, and 'Hello' time is used very effectively for all the children to recognise their photographs and written

names, respond to the 'Hello' song in their chosen form of communication and to listen to each other.

60. Book time is a regular part of the timetable. Children show different levels of interest in books, but are encouraged to follow picture sequences and share and enjoy books with adults. All the children enjoyed *The Bear Hunt* and participated in the repetitive storyline. The playground provided an ideal setting as the class 'splish splashed' through the river, trudged through the autumn leaves of the forest and finally found the bear. The words of the story were reinforced well through this practical re-enactment. Children are taught pre-writing skills and the most capable are learning to form the letters of their names. The staff team works very effectively in providing a range of appropriate activities and games so children learn to make marks, hold their pencils correctly and verbalise the names of objects. Throughout the day, the adults speak clearly and provide good exemplars of communication; this encourages the children to listen and respond to the best of their ability. Each week, the children visit a mainstream nursery where they play alongside other children. This arrangement provides a very good opportunity for them to develop their communication skills, confidence and social interactions.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Constant repetition reinforces children's learning very well.
- Adults work very well as a team to ensure children get the maximum benefit from lessons.

Commentary

61. The teaching of mathematical skills is very good. Key vocabulary is constantly reinforced through songs and games. The focus during the inspection was on counting to five and learning the mathematical language of 'up', 'down' and 'over'. Linking well with *The Bear Hunt*, children participated in *Five Naughty Teddy Bears* and *The Bear Went Over The Mountain*, removing the bears as they fell out of bed to make one less and making the teddies climb over a pretend mountain as they listened to and joined in with the songs. Children achieve very well in this area of learning due to the firm management and high expectations of the adults and relevant experience of threading, counting, matching and water play. When children move from one activity to the next, no time is lost and children benefit from the very good range of learning opportunities available.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A consistently very well planned curriculum provides appropriate learning opportunities.
- Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are very good.

Commentary

62. Though they find difficulty in expressing their feelings or talking about experiences, children are curious about the people and objects around them. They explore the good range of toys available, and adults are adept in prompting children to investigate how switches and buttons work. Children learn to click the mouse and move shapes across the computer screen. Records and photographic evidence show that, over time, children taste a range of foods and become aware of hot and cold, and dark and light. They observe plants, are aware of the weather and gain some understanding of the environment through walks in the local area. The calm tone for the classroom is set each morning by the playing of classical music; children are delighted when it is their turn to switch off the CD player. The morning prayer of thanks encourages children to think of their family and praise God for keeping them all safe. The very well planned curriculum makes a significant impact on children's experiences, and the firm, caring attitudes of the adults ensure they achieve very well in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of resources supports children's physical development.
- The curriculum is organised to ensure children get regular sessions to support physical development each day.

Commentary

63. Each day, there are regular opportunities for children to use the soft play facilities and join older pupils in the hall for movement and relaxation exercises. They stretch and exercise, learning to move freely and safely. Climbing over, under and through the soft-play equipment reinforces their mathematical language as well as providing opportunities for children to move with increasing control and co-ordination. The weekly swimming session in the school pool is a further opportunity for fun and exercise; one parent commented in her son's home/school link book about how well he had slept following the swimming lesson. Children have easy access to the well-resourced outside play area and enjoy the wheeled toys, swings and slide. The splash pool is a further facility that supports children's physical development; they explore containers, funnels and tubes within the security of a small, safe watery environment. This wide range of regular learning opportunities each day results in children achieving very well in this area of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching encourages children to participate in creative activities.
- Imaginative planning links art and music with other areas of learning.

Commentary

64. Teaching is very good in this area of learning and children achieve very well. The classroom layout provides good opportunities for imaginative play. Music is frequently played in the classroom and adults lead familiar singing activities during the day. Children are given good opportunities to perform when they use percussion instruments; they are beginning to understand the cues for starting and stopping their drumming or tambourine shaking. In the lesson that was seen, there was a good link to the mathematical work on 'up' and 'down'; the teacher reinforced the words as children learned to play 'up' and 'down' the xylophone. Children's very good progress in this lesson was due to the challenging but enjoyable tasks. Children are given very good opportunities to experiment with paint, make salt dough models and make their own shaking instruments for music. The teacher and teaching assistants are imaginative in linking creative activities with other areas of learning so that key words from literacy and numeracy are reinforced during singing, painting and other creative activities.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 – 4 AND POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The most skilled pupils achieve very well in writing in Years 7 to 11 because of highly effective teaching.
- A few pupils in Years 3 to 6 with challenging behaviour do not achieve as well as their peers.
- Good teamwork across the school helps pupils to achieve well in communication.
- There has not been as much improvement in the primary provision as in the secondary provision since the last inspection.
- Although assessment is satisfactory, there is little evidence to support teachers' assessment of levels reached by pupils.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

65. Overall, pupils and students achieve well in English. Achievement is good in speaking and listening (communication), and in reading. In writing, achievement is good for most pupils, but the most capable pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve particularly well. This is because the teacher has high expectations, pupils are encouraged to write for a very wide range of purposes, and teaching assistants provide good quality support. However, in Years 3 to 6, not all pupils achieve equally well; a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour are not managed consistently well by classroom staff, with the result that these pupils are not always engaged throughout lessons. Nonetheless, their achievement is satisfactory.

66. Teaching and learning are good overall, and this is the case in all year groups except Years 3 to 6, where teaching is satisfactory. The best teaching is in Years 7 to 11, where a specialist teacher teaches pupils in ability groups. Here, teaching is consistently good or very good. Pupils are well managed by classroom staff, relationships are good and pupils are keen to do well. Expectations of good work and behaviour are particularly high. The teacher provides a challenging and appealing range of activities for pupils, including relevant and interesting homework tasks. Pupils are busy throughout lessons, and teaching assistants make an important contribution to this by re-focusing pupils, encouraging them and dealing with difficulties that arise. Therefore, the teacher is free to continue teaching, and the learning of other pupils is not disturbed.

67. Teachers have good expertise in the teaching of communication and reading skills. Roughly seven out of every ten pupils have the need for speech and language therapy included in their statement of special educational need, and the school is fortunate to have a skilled and well managed team of speech and language therapists who provide this support. They are training key teaching assistants to provide speech therapy support, which will strengthen the provision. Members of the therapy team, teachers and teaching assistants work well together, so that staff gradually increase their skills in signing and

using symbols and objects to support pupils' understanding. Speaking and listening are encouraged in many settings outside English lessons. All pupils have a suitable means of communicating, as the speech therapists ensure that external support, including assessment for electronic communication aids, is provided. For pupils with autism, suitable use is made of visual timetables to support their understanding of changes that occur during the school day. Verbal pupils steadily increase the vocabulary that they understand and use because teachers explain key words well and use them frequently, checking on pupils' understanding.

68. Pupils become more confident speakers; they learn to take turns, and to ask as well as answer questions. By Year 11, the most confident express opinions, describe events and feelings, and listen thoughtfully to what others say. For instance, more capable post-16 students were observed successfully taking part in a business meeting associated with a mini-enterprise activity. On another occasion, they watched a video of *Romeo and Juliet* and showed a good understanding of the plot. Those students with more complex needs make good progress towards their communication targets, such as asking for their meal at lunchtime or touching the 'more' card when requesting an extra helping.

69. Reading skills are taught well. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established across the school. The youngest pupils clearly enjoy listening to stories and taking part in actions associated with them. Pupils steadily increase the number of words they recognise on sight, as well as their skills in reading unfamiliar words. Letter sounds are taught carefully, and so are general rules that help pupils to read and spell. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, the introduction of the rule that 'when two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking', enabled pupils to build up words correctly from their component sounds. This task was particularly appealing because pupils did it using the interactive whiteboard and pen, which acted as powerful motivators. In Years 7 to 11 a good range of literature is read, including Shakespeare's plays, poems, and novels. The teacher skilfully teases out social issues, such as care of the elderly and disability, and this supports pupils' personal development well. Post-16 students consolidate and extend their literacy skills in work-related and social contexts, such as reading and following agendas and producing minutes of meetings.

70. The teaching of writing skills is best in the secondary classes. While it is satisfactory in primary classes, the primary subject leader recognises in her action plan that further development would strengthen the provision. The youngest pupils learn to make marks on paper, to colour within boundary lines and to form letters, starting with those in their own names. Suitable use is made of computers to enable pupils to write using symbols and text, and a few pupils with autism have learned to compile sentences using pictures and symbols. In Years 7 to 11, the most skilled pupils write for a very wide range of purposes, in English and in other subjects. They write in increasingly complex sentences, use metaphors and similes, and include punctuation, such as speech marks and question marks, correctly. Some high quality written work was seen linked to a Year 11 study of *Dead Poets Society*. Pupils had taken the role of Neil and had written to a friend asking for advice. Work showed a good understanding of the issues implicit in the plot, as well as an ability to empathise with the character.

71. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Planning has been improved and is now good. It is well established in the secondary phase, but has only recently been developed at the primary stage because of a lack of development prior to the appointment of the present primary subject leader. The library provision has been improved; stock is now better and there is a separate primary library. Both subject leaders are well informed, conscientious and keen to improve provision further. They lead well, by

supporting colleagues, participating in teamwork and evaluating provision as far as they can. Neither has an overview of English teaching in their respective phases, although this is a developing part of their roles. This shows in the inconsistent teaching of literacy skills in secondary tutorial sessions. Here, teaching varies from very good to satisfactory. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but would benefit from the collation of dated and annotated samples of pupils' work, so that the school is able to provide evidence of the levels that pupils achieve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Literacy is developed well in subjects other than English. There are many opportunities for pupils to speak and listen; teachers frequently ask different questions of pupils of different capabilities so that all are challenged. They also ask open questions to encourage full answers. Staff sign key words to help pupils understand them and use objects of reference to enable pupils to associate these with certain characters or events. Key words and symbols are taught carefully

and displayed well so that they become familiar to pupils; there are good opportunities for pupils to find information from books, and older pupils read newspapers. Pupils write for a good range of purposes as well. For instance, they label diagrams, compile lists and write short reports, and a few write extended paragraphs, about poverty in the third world, for example.

French and Spanish

No modern foreign languages were being taught during the inspection, as they feature only during the summer term, as part of a group of subjects that rotate through the school year. Pupils are taught either French or Spanish, with a focus on speaking, and listening to, conversational phrases. Planning shows that lessons are based on a series of themes such as 'clothes', 'food and shopping', 'leisure' and 'ourselves'. These are subjects the school wishes to develop; there is a draft policy and subject action plans in place, and these identify the key areas for development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, but less effective in the primary department.
- Teaching assistants manage pupils very well and have a positive influence on their learning.
- Opportunities to develop numeracy skills in other subjects are variable.

Commentary

73. Pupils' achievements are good overall, although they are satisfactory in the primary department. This is because of the increasingly complex range of special needs of the growing primary department population and a large number of new and inexperienced teachers in the primary department. Achievement is good by the end of Year 9 and, by the end of Year 11 many pupils are gaining accreditation in Entry Level examinations, where they achieve well. Other Year 11 pupils' achievements are recognised through the ASDAN Transition Challenge course. Post-16 students achieve good levels of accreditation via the National Skills Profile (NSP) and ALL. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

74. Pupils are well taught. Teachers manage their pupils very well and this is based on the quality of relationships, encouragement and trust that feature in all lessons. Teachers use discussions well, and questions are carefully worded to challenge individuals and extend the detail of the answers provided. There is extremely good teamwork between the teachers and the very effective teaching assistants; consequently, they ensure that individual pupils reinforce and extend their learning. Good use is made of ICT to support learning. For instance, the use of floor robots in a Year 8 group effectively reinforced and extended pupils' understanding of direction.

75. In the secondary and post-16 departments, the best lessons are well planned and teachers' high expectations are clearly established. Teachers organise a wide range of resources well, using materials matched to the capabilities and needs of the pupils. For

example, in a post-16 lesson PECS was used well with less capable students to reinforce their understanding of the passage of time, while Year 9 pupils with autism, prior to a shopping trip, were effectively challenged to recognise items they might find in a supermarket. Language was extended as pupils were asked to place items *in*, *on* or *under* a table. Lessons are well structured, using the three-part lesson format of the National Numeracy Strategy. This, together with the clear planning of the curriculum, results in good learning by most pupils. Very good support is provided in lessons by the learning support staff and this ensures all pupils are included in the learning opportunities offered. Pupils are very proud of their achievements and they evidently enjoy the tasks and the success they achieve. Lessons in the secondary and post-16 departments focus on individual pupils' needs; they prepare them well for examinations and give them the skills they will require for life after school.

76. A major factor in the primary department that influences the quality of pupils' learning is the inexperience of some teachers. However, the very good support and monitoring carried out by senior managers means that the overall standard of teaching is satisfactory. Some teachers have experience of mainstream schools but limited understanding of pupils with a diverse range of challenging needs, such as autism. Consequently, their teaching methods and organisation of groups are sometimes ineffective and much of the teacher's energy is spent on managing behaviour. This inevitably disrupts the continuity of the lesson that is taking place. All pupils are fully included in lessons, although progress rates do differ, depending on how the work is presented to them.

77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Subject leaders from the secondary and primary departments ensure there are clear plans and policies to maintain full coverage of the National Curriculum and procedures for teachers to keep track of pupils' progress. The assessment system employed by the primary department has now been adopted throughout the school and is beginning to provide a more comprehensive picture of pupil achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Overall, pupils' numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily across the curriculum, but pupils are not always given structured and planned opportunities to rehearse, use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects. Some mathematical skills are used incidentally within subjects, such as in science and food technology for measuring, and in ICT on spreadsheets. However, such opportunities are not planned routinely to ensure that all students practise, consolidate and improve their mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in lessons and some gain Entry Level awards at the end of Year 11.
- The curriculum is very well adapted to meet different pupils' needs.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

79. Pupils throughout the school receive good, and sometimes very good, teaching, enabling them to achieve well in a wide range of science activities. They increase their knowledge and understanding of topics such as the human body, plants and growth, earth and space and materials and forces. The secondary department subject manager, and some of the other teachers, use very effective methods that capture pupils' interest and promote learning. Investigations are used well to provide pupils with first-hand experience of basic scientific principles.

80. Teachers of pupils in Year 1 to 6 know pupils' needs well and provide interesting activities and learning opportunities based on first-hand experience through investigation. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class, good teaching gave pupils the experience of being pushed and pulled as part of their work on forces. By sitting on a blanket or a trolley, pupils learnt at first hand about the different forces at work as they were pulled and pushed across the room. A Year 3 class learned, through good teaching, how teeth grow and the importance of taking care of them. They explored the effects of different foods on teeth and described how they can look after their teeth by regular brushing. Pupils in the inclusion class in a local primary school examined objects around the room

and described their material characteristics; for instance, one boy described a plastic rule as 'hard but bendy.' Effective teaching reinforced pupils' use of this type of language and also introduced scientific vocabulary, such as 'flexible.' As a result of good curriculum coverage and effective teaching, younger pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

81. Very good specialist teaching in Years 7 to 11 ensures that pupils have opportunities to extend their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. Consequently, pupils show enjoyment in learning and are confident to answer questions and make suggestions, even when they are not sure of the facts. In addition, pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are reinforced well in science lessons, for example, through the introduction of specialist vocabulary and the use of digital microscopes and interactive whiteboards.

82. Teaching is so effective because it is well informed and the teacher uses good, open questioning that both assesses learning and helps pupils extend their knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils enjoy their science lessons and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 are grouped by ability, and this gives the teacher the opportunity to present the same curriculum content, but with activities at a different level of challenge. For example, in order to reinforce a lower ability group of Year 7 and 8 pupils' understanding of solutions and how molecules mix, the teacher organised a practical exercise in the gymnasium where pupils wore different coloured vests to represent different molecules mixing and separating. When the higher ability group studied the same processes, equally good learning resulted from extensive questioning and explanation, and pupils were able to demonstrate their learning by individually setting up an experiment.

83. The subject managers are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject, and this has ensured that there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Good long-term curriculum plans have been produced, with the result that individual lessons are very well planned. The science laboratory for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is of poor quality. It is a shared facility with art and design and design and technology, and lacks many features fundamental to the teaching and learning of science up to examination level. For example, it lacks adjustable work surfaces and sinks, safe storage areas and areas where investigations can be set up over a period of time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy ICT and are well motivated and interested.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across the curriculum.

Commentary

84. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There is now direct teaching of ICT skills in designated lessons throughout the school. Pupils and students are taught to use an effective range of ICT resources and to combine sources, for example,

images imported from digital cameras and data from the Internet. They use word-processing and desktop publishing tools with greater proficiency. They learn to make multi-media presentations for specific audiences and improve their ability to use spreadsheets to handle information, producing and interpreting tables and charts. Pupils now achieve well.

85. Teaching is predominantly good, and is sometimes of a very high quality. It is characterised by very good subject knowledge, good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, and motivational activities. A Year 3 class, for instance, thoroughly enjoyed learning how to manoeuvre toy cars using remote control devices. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the use of a floor robot and turtle program enabled pupils to move the robot, both practically and on screen. Pupils respond well to the activities and to the level of advice and support given, such as those in Year 9 who were challenged to design a poster. Pupils are keen to learn and they respond well in lessons; they concentrate, listen carefully and are productive. Within the curriculum resource room, equipment such as bubble tubes, fibre optic lights and switches successfully help to stimulate pupils with more complex needs through a multi-sensory approach.

86. Pupils' written work and teachers' records indicate that there is still scope for development in terms of the detailed information kept of pupils' progress. There are satisfactory assessment procedures in place, and the adoption of a whole-school approach using 'P' levels¹ will allow the small gains made by those pupils with more complex needs to be tracked more effectively. Both the primary and new secondary subject leaders have good knowledge of the subject and provide good leadership and management. Learning resources have been developed well; primary classrooms have interactive whiteboards and computers, and there are ICT suites for both secondary and primary pupils, enabling skills to be taught effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in the teaching and learning of other subjects. In one very good lesson, for example, post-16 pupils composed music using specialist software for manipulating sound and adding instruments and drumbeats very successfully. In science, the digital microscope is used well as a teaching aid during lessons. In English, pupils use word-processing to enhance their work, thus improving standards of presentation. Additionally, good use is made of symbol programs wherever necessary.

HUMANITIES

88. It was not possible to evaluate overall provision, quality of teaching or pupils' achievements in geography and history, because not enough lessons were observed during the inspection.

89. In the lessons sampled, teaching and learning were satisfactory overall. For example, in geography pupils in Years 1 and 2 made satisfactory progress in understanding how plans and arrow markings can help show the way from their classroom to the school office. In the secondary department, the grouping of pupils by ability enables the teacher to present suitably challenging activities to the different classes, and this results in time being used efficiently. Teaching and learning in these lessons were satisfactory. There were

¹ P levels give performance indicators for pupils with special educational needs. There are eight levels leading into the Level 1 descriptors of National Curriculum subjects.

particular strengths in the good use of ICT to enhance learning, the effective reinforcement of literacy skills and subject-specific vocabulary and the gradual introduction of artefacts to aid pupils' understanding.

90. A new subject leader has very recently been appointed and she is still familiarising herself with the pupils and planning, and auditing the adequacy and suitability of resources. However, pupils' work shows that the approach to humanities has been too narrow and limited, with an over reliance on worksheets, although learning has been well supported by visits. These have included, for instance, trips to the Imperial War Museum, Hampton Court Palace, the site of the Battle of Hastings and the Silchester Roman site. The subject leader is aware of the need to continue providing such opportunities for pupils to see and use first-hand evidence through field trips and visits to museums and historic buildings.

Religious education

91. Only one lesson of religious education was sampled during the inspection and so no overall judgement on provision can be made. However, religious education meets all statutory requirements. Planning covers the study of all major world faiths and also addresses social issues, such as rites of passage. In the secondary department, the subject is taught in blocks, together with history and geography, but appears incidentally in other topics, such as in the study of the Holocaust in history. A variety of religious festivals from a wide range of faiths is celebrated well. The policy and long-term planning documents are relevant, but are currently being reviewed and revised.

TECHNOLOGY

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers link art and design appropriately with other subjects.
- Accreditation has been successfully introduced.
- Assessment and monitoring are insufficiently developed.
- Accommodation in the secondary department is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

92. Pupils achieve well in this subject. The curriculum is broad, providing a good range of creative experiences for pupils throughout the school. Since the last inspection, there has been a number of staffing changes and a reorganisation of the full curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 11, and in the post-16 department. Due to these changes, staff have needed to prioritise tasks across the school in line with the school improvement plan. Art and design has not, therefore, been developed as much as some other subjects. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

93. Displays around the school and pupils' work indicate that they consolidate and build on their artistic skills as they progress through the school. The youngest daub paint, and cut and stick junk materials to make collages. Older pupils use their improving hand control to sketch still life, make pottery artefacts and paint self-portraits. By the time they are in Year 10, many make effective use of their sketchbooks, evaluate their own work and suggest ideas for improvement. Pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate the work of known artists such as Paul Klee, William Morris, Giacometti and Van Gogh, and to emulate their styles.

94. Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well. Pupils' attitudes are good, and older pupils confidently explain the rationale behind their pieces of artwork. A strong feature of the lessons observed was teachers' very good questioning to prompt pupils to think carefully about their work and how they might refine it. This occurred with the Year 7 group who had been doing three-dimensional work inspired by Andy Goldsworthy. Teachers throughout the school link art effectively with other subjects. Year 2 pupils made good progress investigating the colour, texture and smell of fruits and vegetables before they made their prints. The teacher used pink and purple paint so that, by repetition, pupils

could reinforce their understanding of the sound 'p'. In other classes, pupils used their artistic skills to make masks to celebrate Chinese New Year, illustrated symbols associated with the Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths, and made picture sequences of the storyline of *Hard Times* by Charles Dickens. Teachers also use ICT well to enrich pupils' experiences. For instance, in a very effective lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate a graphics package and pupils in Years 9 and 10 then used the software to design a poster.

95. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and multi-cultural development; visits to places like the Tate Modern and National Portrait Gallery feature in the curriculum for the older pupils. The school is rightly proud of its success last year in entering Year 11 pupils for Entry Level accreditation, and plans to build up this aspect of the subject. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leaders have been constrained by the wide range of whole-school developments, but are fully aware of the need to further develop the assessment and monitoring systems in art and design so teachers can plan for, and develop, pupils' skills more effectively. Accommodation for the subject is unsatisfactory. The room is shared with design and technology, and science, and this reduces opportunities for unfinished work to be left around and properly displayed.

Design and technology

96. Too little evidence was seen to make judgements on overall provision or the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements.

97. Only one lesson was sampled, and a literacy session in which pupils made Chinese lanterns was also seen. The teaching seen was good. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher presented pupils with a large cardboard box that had been flattened out. This fascinated them, and they were keen to suggest what might be done to get this back to 'being a box'. Once this problem had been solved successfully, pupils were given flat boxes of their own to reassemble. Most needed considerable support to do this, but a few higher attaining pupils managed this independently, securing the edges with sticky tape and even adding a design of their own using coloured pens. This was a productive and successful session; much was achieved in a short time. Pupils were given a relevant homework task, to bring in an empty box from home, and were well prepared for this by the teacher drawing out from them, through questioning, where they might find empty packages at home.

98. The school has a well-appointed room for teaching food technology, but the room allocated for work with resistant materials is unsatisfactory. It is shared with science and does not have the full range of machinery that would be available in mainstream secondary schools. This seriously restricts what pupils can do.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made good improvement in music since the last inspection.
- The introduction of ICT has enlivened the curriculum.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Other changes within the school mean that accommodation remains a problem.

Commentary

99. The school has effectively addressed the issues from the last inspection. At that time the school was criticised for unsatisfactory teaching, unsatisfactory progress for pupils, inadequate planning, a poorly equipped music room and a curriculum that was not relevant for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The school has worked hard to remedy this situation. This time, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, new planning has been introduced, and LEA training has helped to improve teachers' knowledge and confidence in the subject.

100. While the reorganisation of the secondary department, to enable specialists to teach their subjects, has generally proved very successful, it has resulted in a problem of recruiting a specialist music teacher. As a temporary measure, a member of staff who is a trained musician has successfully taken responsibility for teaching music until a new appointment can be made. A further problem the school has had to contend with is that of accommodation. After the last inspection a designated room was established and upgraded to meet pupils' learning needs. However, the increasing pupil roll meant that this area had to revert to use as a general classroom. The ground has been prepared for a new demountable classroom designated for music to be installed immediately after the inspection, and the school can, once again, develop the subject.

101. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils generally enjoy the lessons, especially when they make music with percussion or wind instruments. Lessons are well planned, although achievement can sometimes be restricted by the lack of sufficient resources. For example, whistles and recorders had to be disinfected between each pupil using them, causing delays that could have been avoided if there had been sufficient for the whole class of only eight pupils. Teaching is satisfactory, although the inexperience of some staff in managing pupils' behaviour occasionally detracts from the quality of learning.

102. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well. Imaginative teaching and relevant topics interest pupils, and they participate well in performing and composing music. They appreciate the importance of symbols to represent sounds in a musical score, use keyboard and percussion instruments to create mood and perform simple musical patterns to accompany an extract from *Harry Potter*. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow music modules through a rolling programme of different arts subjects, but they were not seen during the inspection.

103. Students in the post-16 department achieve very well. The introduction of computer technology in composition fascinates the students; they become engrossed when experimenting with sounds and adopt very mature attitudes as they work independently, building on their existing skills and producing more fluent compositions. A noticeable feature of the lesson seen was the broad smiles as students relished their success in altering tempo and using the browser to add new instruments to their composition.

104. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers in the primary department work with published planning schemes, using CDs effectively to support singing and musical appreciation. The curriculum for the older pupils is innovative, providing rich opportunities for performance, composition and appreciation of music in lessons. The school does whatever it can to bring in visiting musicians and develop musical projects based, for example, on the environment. The development of the curriculum resource room also supports pupils' musical awareness very well. In this room music and visual effects are combined to very good effect to support a sensory approach to learning, such as when pupils studied the Chinese New Year and the Egyptians.

105. Despite the difficulties encountered since the last inspection, the school managers have ensured that music has been maintained as an essential part of the school curriculum. The setbacks with accommodation are being addressed, as is the appointment of a specialist subject leader.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and, as a result, pupils achieve well across the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and this contributes to their good progress.
- Leadership and management are good, and good use is made of the school's physical education facilities.

Commentary

106. The good quality teaching is characterised by well-planned and structured lessons, good subject expertise and very positive relationships. A noticeable and positive feature is the contribution of teaching assistants in modelling good behaviour, maintaining pupils on task, and ensuring that they are always fully included in activities. This is most obvious in swimming, where they support young pupils in the water, allowing them to experience the feelings of buoyancy and building their confidence. The management of some pupils' more difficult behaviour is astute, calm, patient and effective. Therefore, their learning and the learning of others are not affected. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety matters and to the importance of the self-help skills of dressing and undressing. Good use is made of the digital camera to record pupils' achievement and to share the photographs with other pupils in the school.

107. Pupils display a real appetite and enjoyment for work, and experience a sense of achievement. For example, in swimming secondary age pupils and students work hard to improve their technique and stamina; in gymnastics primary age pupils listen well to instructions, watch the teacher's demonstrations carefully and try hard to refine their own skills; and in basketball senior pupils apply themselves to improving their passing, shooting, and movement around the court. A lovely moment was seen in a primary class where a pupil in a wheelchair and his ambulant partner worked with increasing sensitivity and accuracy in imitating and mirroring each other's movements. In all classes pupils display good sporting behaviour and the willingness to work collaboratively with a partner, in small groups or in teams.

108. There has been good improvement in physical education since the previous inspection. The new subject leader is a specialist and, along with a specialist swimming instructor, has raised standards and brought quality high expectations to the subject. Their expertise, drive and enthusiasm ensure that full use is made of the school's good facilities and that the school participates fully in all inter-school sports. Physical education plays a major role in the life of the school. The clean, warm swimming pool is used extensively and is well equipped with buoyancy aids and a hoist to help non-ambulant pupils enter and leave the water. The Jacuzzi pool is used effectively to benefit pupils who need to relax. However, the school should explore an increased use of community leisure facilities to provide more challenging and different activities for senior pupils and students.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff use every opportunity throughout the school day to promote pupils' personal development.

- Teaching and learning in discrete PSHE and citizenship lessons is good, and often very good, and, as a result, pupils achieve well.
- A very comprehensive curriculum plan is in place, which addresses a wide range of issues.
- In Years 1 to 6, insufficient discrete time is dedicated to the subject.

Commentary

109. Appropriately, the school places great emphasis on pupils' personal development and this is evident throughout all aspects of school life each day. The implementation of citizenship education has enhanced the PSHE curriculum in Years 7 to 13 and the programme is contributing positively to pupils' good personal development.

110. Long-term planning for PSHE and citizenship is very good; a comprehensive and progressive curriculum plan means that, from a young age, pupils become aware of personal and social issues, and what it means to be part of a community. Students in the post-16 department demonstrate clearly the positive effects of the quality of the programme, showing maturity, awareness of a wide range of situations and a clear understanding of the responsibilities associated with being a good citizen.

111. In Years 1 to 6, very little time for PSHE is indicated in pupils' timetables. This is often limited to ten or 15-minute sessions at the beginning and end of the day, identified as 'PHSE and circle time', when staff and pupils sit together in a circle and talk about the events of the day. Staff are aware of this and maintain that PSHE issues permeate everything pupils do. While this may be true, there has not been a rigorous audit of the curriculum to identify precisely the formal contributions that all subjects make in teaching elements of the PSHE curriculum. In the absence of such an audit there can be no guarantees that all topics are being covered and that some are not being covered twice. In the lesson that did have a specific PSHE focus, pupils achieved well. A class of Year 2 pupils were learning about the Chinese New Year as part of the topic of 'celebrations'. Good teaching shared with pupils the importance of New Year to the Chinese people and the story of how, and why, the years in the Chinese calendar are named after animals. A short circle time session at the end of the lesson indicated the good level of knowledge and understanding the pupils had gained.

112. Pupils and students in Years 7 to 13 are taught PSHE and citizenship in addition to the 15-minute circle time sessions at the beginning and end of the day. The quality of teaching and learning in all these sessions is good, and often very good. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils addressing the theme 'two wrongs don't make a right' showed mature and informed attitudes, and good teaching ensured an effective discussion that contributed well to pupils' understanding. The PSHE programme places a significant emphasis on health and diet. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils identified successfully foods that were 'good' and 'bad' in terms of a healthy lifestyle. Good teaching addressed well the difficult issue of helping pupils to understand that the foods people find most enjoyable are often the least good for them. Real life situations are used particularly effectively to facilitate students' personal development. They plan and cost meals for themselves and others, shop for them and prepare them. This was demonstrated very well in a lesson when very good teaching helped the group to identify the wide range of questions that it would need to address if they were to complete the task successfully. These included planning and organisation, the mathematics associated with costing, travel to the shops, purchasing, the technical aspects of preparing the food and the social implications of presenting the food, and eating within a social group. The group successfully negotiated all of these challenges.

113. Two subject managers co-ordinate the subject across the school well. They have been responsible for the production of the very comprehensive curriculum programme and long-term plans, and they are aware of the need to approach the subject with more rigour in Years 1 to 6. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

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