

INSPECTION REPORT

FIELD HEATH HOUSE SCHOOL

Uxbridge

LEA area: Hillingdon

Unique reference number: 102464

Principal: Sister Julie Rose

Lead inspector: Rosemary Eaton

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th July 2005

Inspection number: 268614

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils:	9 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	92
School address:	Field Heath Road Uxbridge Middlesex
Postcode:	UB8 3NW
Telephone number:	01895 233092
Fax number:	01895 256497
Appropriate authority:	The Trustees (The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary)
Name of chair of governors:	Fr James Kennedy
Date of previous inspection:	21 st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Field Heath House School is a non-maintained school for boys and girls aged nine to nineteen with moderate to severe learning difficulties and associated speech, language and communication needs. It offers day and residential provision. Currently, 92 attend the school, including 34 post-16 students. There are only five primary-aged pupils, in Years 5 and 6. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and, when they join the school, most pupils' attainment is well below average. Thirteen have moderate learning difficulties and forty-eight experience severe learning difficulties, with the needs of the remaining thirty-one lying between the two. Many of the pupils have speech, language and communication needs. Additionally, seven have autistic spectrum disorders, one has behaviour, social and emotional difficulties, and eight have sensory impairments. Although a Catholic school, Field Heath House welcomes pupils from all faiths and religious backgrounds and many of these are represented currently. Nineteen different local education authorities presently fund pupils to attend the school. Pupils' homes are mostly in London boroughs, but a few live in Hertfordshire, Slough or Surrey. Although their socio-economic circumstances are varied, overall they are below average. Thirty-six pupils are white British and there is no information about the ethnicity of twenty-five. Others are from a range of backgrounds, including nine of Asian and eleven of black heritage. None of the pupils have English as an additional language. There are no pupils in public care. A total of 21 pupils use the residential provision. During term time, five stay from Monday to Friday. Others board for one or two nights weekly or fortnightly. The school has gained the Investors in People award, the National Award for Voluntary Endeavour, and the Diana Princess of Wales Memorial Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15173	Rosemary Eaton	Lead inspector	Design and technology
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector	
17182	Michael Farrell	Team inspector	Personal, social and health education and citizenship Art and design
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History English as an additional language
20466	Alan Tattersall	Team Inspector	English Special educational needs
10781	Robert Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 7JX

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
WORK-RELATED LEARNING	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 AND 4 AND AT POST-16	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Pield Heath House is a **very good** school. Pupils achieve very well and their personal development is very good. The quality of teaching is very good and the school is very well led and managed. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The principal's outstanding leadership ensures that all staff share her determination to provide every pupil with the best possible quality of education.
- Pupils are cared for exceptionally well, both in school and in the residential provision.
- Extensive links with the community add significantly to the school's very rich curriculum.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual development.
- Very effective partnerships between speech and language therapists and teachers contribute greatly to pupils' very good achievement in English.
- The post-16 curriculum is matched particularly closely to individual students' personal and learning needs.
- The action plans to develop subjects vary too much in quality and usefulness.

The school has improved very well since the previous inspection. Pupils' overall achievement has improved, because teaching is now very good. Developments in the curriculum and assessment procedures have also contributed to this improvement. There has been substantial investment in the accommodation, resulting in much improved facilities, especially for post-16 students. The issues raised in the previous report have been dealt with successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is **very good**. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well, as do those in Years 7 to 9. Achievement is also very good in Years 10 and 11 and for the post-16 students. Throughout the school, achievement is very good in English, art and design, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics, and science. During Years 11 to 14, pupils are successful in a variety of accredited courses. Girls and boys and those from minority ethnic groups achieve equally well. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, speech, language and communication needs, and sensory impairments make as much progress as other pupils.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **very good**. The excellent opportunities for spiritual development include a weekly mass in the school's chapel. Pupils' attitudes to school are also very good and so is their behaviour. They are very happy in their school, work very hard, and are keen to help others and take on responsibilities. Pupils' attendance is good and they arrive on time to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching is **very good** and, as a result, pupils learn very well. Teachers use their detailed and accurate knowledge of pupils very effectively to set work that matches their individual needs, ages and interests. Lessons and activities are planned and organised very well. Very occasionally, particular sections of lessons are allowed to run on for too long, so the pace of learning slows down. Teaching assistants make very strong contributions to teaching and learning – for instance, helping to manage pupils' behaviour.

The curriculum is very well organised, meeting pupils' special educational needs at each stage of their school career. Post-16 courses are highly relevant to students' present and future lives and offer a variety of accreditation. A very wide range of activities is provided to enrich the curriculum and make learning enjoyable. A number of courses and activities contribute to the very good PSHE programme, which is further enhanced by opportunities offered through the exceptionally good residential provision. Pupils benefit from exemplary standards of care, and they are supported very well – for example, when they join or leave the school. The school makes excellent use of its extensive links with the community, in order to support pupils' learning and personal development. Partnerships with parents and other schools are very strong.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Leadership is very good, with outstanding leadership provided by the principal. She inspires staff, consults widely, and takes decisive action to move the school forward. Management is also very good and the new senior staff team is playing a very effective role in this. However, subject leaders do not all set out clearly what needs to be done in order to develop their subject further, or analyse how successful they have been. Governance is very good. Governors are very knowledgeable and fully involved in planning for the school's future. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school. They are very satisfied that their children enjoy school and are treated fairly. They are very confident that the school is led and managed well.

Pupils' views are also very positive. They consider that it is definitely a good school to attend. They like a great many things about it, but especially their friends, trips, and the staff. The majority would not change anything about the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Ensure that subject leaders plan systematically for future developments, making full use of all the available information about performance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and post-16 students benefit from very good teaching and, as a result, they achieve very well overall.
- During Years 11 to 14, pupils are successful in a variety of accredited courses.
- There is no variation in the achievement of pupils with different special educational needs.
- Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well.

Commentary

1. Pupils and students achieve very well in English, PSHE and art and design. Achievement is good in mathematics, science and ICT. Challenging targets for pupils to achieve are set in all subjects. The school's analysis of the outcomes of these indicate very good achievement overall and especially in English and PSHE. Evaluations of the targets set at annual reviews and in pupils' individual education plans confirm the judgement that pupils of all ages achieve very well.
2. The school provides very varied and extensive opportunities for pupils to have their achievements recognised through external accreditation. At post-16 particularly, almost all of pupils' courses are accredited. The courses they follow are matched very accurately to their individual special educational needs. For instance, each of the current Year 11 pupils is expected to gain certificates such as the Transition Challenge award, mathematics or art Entry level, or the Graded Assessment Profiles in English. Post-16 students are successful in National Skills Profile courses such as Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, Practical Work Skills, and Catering. They gain the Towards Independence award, and small numbers are entered for GCSE art. Last year, one pupil gained grade B and another gained grade C. In nearly every case, students move on to colleges, demonstrating their high aspirations and commitment to continuing to achieve.
3. Very high quality arrangements are made for all pupils, regardless of their special educational needs. For instance, they nearly all receive speech and language therapy from the therapists employed by the school, but those with the most significant speech, language and communication needs are a particular focus. As a result, all pupils are able to play a full part in lessons and school life, developing very good communication skills. Teachers ensure that the curriculum and lessons are adapted so that the work set and support provided for all pupils – for example, the higher attaining pupils and those with the most severe learning difficulties – enable them all to build systematically on what they have learned already and make very good progress.
4. The school's determination to provide the best possible quality of education for every pupil sets the tone for all its work. Consequently, teachers are very careful to include all pupils in lessons and activities, providing them with equal opportunities to learn and achieve. For example, boys – who usually outnumber girls – are not allowed to dominate discussions. The pupils from minority ethnic groups are similarly catered for very well and the cultural diversity of the staff is a strong feature of the school, providing very good role models for all pupils and encouraging them to have high aspirations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are **very good**. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also **very good**. Pupils' attendance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Spiritual development is excellent and pupils thrive as a result of the opportunities offered to them.
- Pupils are very happy in their school and are prepared to work very hard for their teachers and themselves.
- Pupils' moral development is very good because they are clear about what the school expects of them.
- A great many opportunities and activities are offered to promote pupils' social and cultural development.

Commentary

5. Spiritual development is greatly enhanced by pupils' opportunities to celebrate mass and worship in the school's own chapel, with its celebrant being the chair of governors. They play a full and thoughtful part in the service and consider questions such as 'Who am I?' with interest and enthusiasm. During the inspection, the dismissal hymn 'You shall go out with joy' rang out as a paean of praise from the whole school. A corner of the school is devoted to pupils who need a calm, quiet area to express forgiveness or reflect on how to improve themselves. During a morning prayer, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked to say the name of a person they wished to pray for. A non-verbal pupil flipped open her communication book and the class waited patiently for her to indicate who she had chosen. Displays reflect the school's belief in the concept of 'One World' as a driving force behind its commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of all, and the constant reminders that everyone is special and cared for. As a result, pupils respond outstandingly well to the school's expectations and practice of celebrating their personal achievements and raising their self-esteem.
6. In activities and lessons, pupils try very hard to participate and do their best. Parents feel very strongly that their children like coming to school, and it is evident from their response to lessons and activities that pupils enjoy these greatly. For example, in a lesson when Year 10 pupils were identifying symbols and signs relating to health and safety about the school, they quickly fanned out whenever entering a new area of the school to try very hard to find different signs and interpret their meaning. Pupils enjoy the activities open to them in the residential provision and make great efforts to look very smart and fashionable on social occasions. They are keen to help and take on responsibilities – for example, offering to help to prepare the evening meal in the residential provision, taking on reception duties in the Victor Braun post-16 centre, and initiating environmental schemes for the whole school. Pupils work very hard on behalf of others – for instance, to provide funds for national and local charities. They continue to support a child in Ethiopia and, most recently, have helped a local child cancer support group. Post-16 students are enterprising, raising money through the tuck shop in the Victor Braun centre and through Team Enterprise initiatives. By the time they are ready to leave school, they are sociable and confident young men and women.
7. Around the school, pupils are considerate to each other and friendships and relationships are strong. They do not consider that bullying is a problem, but do recognise that the behaviour of individuals can sometimes be, as they say, 'silly'. A student has been recently nominated for the Diana Princess of Wales anti-bullying award and the school council has compiled a list of classroom rules and put a copy into each classroom. Pupils understand what is right and what is wrong and the school works hard to offer them the highest of moral values – for example, by promoting the work of Amnesty International. Most recently, the members of the school

community acted together to support the 'Make Poverty History' campaign, many pupils wearing white wristbands to demonstrate their support. As a result, their behaviour and moral awareness when in lessons, out on visits, around school, and especially when in chapel, are very good. There were no exclusions in the previous year.

- Pupils have a very good awareness of the differences and similarities in the cultural beliefs represented in their own school and the wider society. The Sisters' links to schools across the world give pupils invaluable opportunities to understand and appreciate the cultures and faiths of other people – for example by supporting the Sisters' work with children in the Philippines. The school ensures that Halal and vegetarian food is always available at lunchtime, in the residential provision, and when prepared in lessons. Mealtimes provide very good social opportunities for pupils. The school council enables many to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school, but the lack of representation of younger pupils, although they do take part in school council elections, does detract from the opportunity to involve all pupils in this social arena.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0
National data	MLD:8.2 SLD:8.7	National data	MLD:1.8 SLD:0.5

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

- Attendance is good and has improved even more during the current school year. Punctuality is also good, to school and to lessons. However, the school's registration procedures do not accurately keep track of why pupils are away and registers are not always completed precisely. Procedures for recording the punctuality of buses and pupils to school are very well organised and accurate.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are very good. Pupils are supported very well and the quality of care is excellent. Partnerships with parents, other school and the community are very good overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good**. The assessment of pupils' work is also **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use their knowledge of pupils very effectively in order to match work to their individual needs.
- Lessons, activities and resources are planned and organised very well.
- Teaching assistants make very strong contributions to teaching and learning.
- Lessons run very smoothly because pupils are managed so well.
- Assessment procedures are very well organised and the data collected is put to very good use.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	20 (47%)	20 (47%)	2 (4%)	0	0	0

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

10. Teaching groups are usually made up of pupils with varying degrees of learning difficulty. Despite this, they all learn very well, because teachers adjust the content of lessons and the methods they use so as to cater for each individual. For instance, during an English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with needs including speech, language and communication, and autistic spectrum disorders, the writing tasks were tailored very precisely so each pupil worked at their particular level. A higher attaining pupil used a dictionary to check his spelling of complex words – such as ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘possessions’. As he did so, the teacher questioned him about their meaning, knowing that his comprehension is not as advanced as his ability to spell. In the same lesson, a lower attaining pupil traced over and copied letters, paying very good attention to their shape, size and spacing, and holding the pen correctly. Staff recorded how well each member of the class had performed, telling pupils what was being written so that they too were aware of what they had done well and what they needed to work on. Such day-to-day assessment procedures contribute to teachers’ awareness of each pupil’s stage of development and how successful lessons and activities have been. Teachers of all subjects use this knowledge very well to help pupils learn – for example, through taking part in discussions. In a social communication lesson for higher attaining students in Years 12 to 14, the teacher’s detailed familiarity with the group enabled her to extend their speaking and listening skills. When one student was struggling to add to the conversation about circumstances in which they felt confident, the teacher suggested ‘What about your horse-riding?’ This boosted his self-esteem and enabled him to contribute to the activity and practise expressing himself.
11. Teachers select activities and methods which are very well suited to pupils’ ages and interests. This helps to ensure that they are motivated to get involved and try very hard. For example, as part of a geography lesson, pupils in Year 7 were thrilled to take part in a game of ‘Pass the Parcel’, during which they discovered animals that are found in Kenya. In a ‘Looking Good’ lesson, lower attaining students in Year 12 learned equally well through activities that suited their status as young adults. They discussed the equipment used to keep teeth healthy and read information about the effect of bacteria and plaque, before recording what they had found out. In all subjects, lessons usually involve several changes of activity, catering for the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers are skilled at judging how long to spend on each part of the lesson, so pupils do not have chance to become bored. However, very occasionally, a particular activity is allowed to run on for too long and the pace of learning slows down. Once in a while, this is because teachers have failed to make full use of the skills of teaching assistants, in order to avoid pupils waiting to take their turn at an activity which could have been carried out in small groups.
12. Time is allowed for teachers and teaching assistants to meet in order to consider the work to be covered by particular classes, and written lesson plans indicate the role to be played by each adult. This forethought is evident during lessons, where teaching assistants are thoroughly involved in supporting pupils and teachers. For instance, in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 11, the class was divided into three groups, according to their stage of mathematical development. Led by either the teacher or a teaching assistant, each group worked at tasks related to money, matched carefully to what pupils already knew, understood and could do. As a result of the staff’s expertise and their shared and very high expectations, all pupils were fully involved in the lesson and learned very well. During class discussions in a

small minority of lessons, there is a less clear role for teaching assistants, missing opportunities, for example, for them to note down pupils' contributions.

13. Teaching assistants often share the task of managing pupils' behaviour. Once again, staff's knowledge of pupils is of great significance in the very high standards of behaviour in virtually every lesson. As a result, teachers know exactly how to get the best from each pupil, although the very interesting lessons and very positive relationships between staff and pupils are usually sufficient to ensure that all pupils are eager to work and learn. On the rare occasions when an individual is unco-operative, staff intervene quickly to make it clear that their behaviour is unacceptable. For instance, during an art lesson, a Year 8 pupil demanded to use a particular, unsuitable, paintbrush. The teacher refused to be drawn into an argument but remained calm and determined, setting out options for the pupil and making it clear what would be the outcomes of each. He soon made the decision to get on with his work. Lessons are very seldom disrupted by pupils' challenging behaviour, although the school is aware that the special educational needs of a few require specialist management skills in which staff have not yet all had training.
14. In every subject, the school has detailed records of the levels at which each pupil is working and the progress they have made. This information is used very effectively in order to set targets for pupils to achieve. The school has recently put structures in place that will enable it to better judge if standards are high enough in comparison with nationally gathered data. The available assessment data is currently used very effectively to inform judgements about the type of accreditation that will enable pupils to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have achieved. In a number of year groups – notably at post-16 – assessment information is also applied in order to group pupils into classes so that the curriculum can be more closely matched to their particular needs. The co-ordinator for assessment has, in her comparatively short time in post, enabled assessment procedures to progress very well, by focusing on priorities such as knowing the levels pupils are attaining, demonstrating progress, and setting targets. The school is aware that the next step is to develop further indications of added value – for instance, involving subject leaders more in analyses. There are plans to increase the involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning, with very good practice already occurring in science.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**, with **very good** opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well planned so that it remains relevant for all pupils as they progress from the primary years through to leaving school.
- Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good, enabling all pupils to achieve equally well.
- A very wide variety of arts and sporting activities enrich the curriculum, and the residential provision offers further opportunities.
- A very good programme for personal, social, and health education and citizenship education contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.
- The Victor Braun centre provides a modern and stimulating environment for post-16 students.

Commentary

15. The curriculum is very well matched to the learning needs of all pupils in all years. Primary-aged pupils have a very broad programme of subjects planned very well by their class teacher in close consultation with subject leaders. The pupils are prepared very well for their move into the secondary department when they begin to be taught by subject specialists. Although there is little emphasis on careers education in Years 7 to 9, by Years 10 and 11, the

curriculum has an increasing and very relevant focus on independence and work-related learning, and many courses lead to external accreditation. The post-16 programme, led and managed to a very high standard by the post-16 co-ordinator, in excellent purpose built accommodation, builds very well on learning that takes place in Year 11. The Towards Independence course, for example, extends and develops students' experiences of the Transition Challenge course in Years 10 and 11. Post-16 courses are carefully matched to students' learning and personal needs. Students with more moderate learning needs access GCSE and Entry level courses, and participate in a very successful Team Enterprise programme. The provision of externally accredited courses for these students is an improvement since the previous inspection, and a very relevant development. Students with more severe and complex learning needs follow the same wide and relevant core programme as other students but also enjoy additional sensory and practical experiences including work on creativity, music, textiles, horticulture, and daily living skills. The programme of work experience started in Year 11 continues in post-16, and is very carefully tailored to individual needs. Students are prepared very well for independence and leaving school, although only a small number of students have any extended experience of working in a college setting.

16. The large number of pupils who have speech, language and communication needs receive very effective support from speech and language therapists. External guidance is available if required to assist the school to cater for the few pupils who have hearing or visual impairments. There is a trend to admit to the school pupils who have more complex learning needs. Staff have received good training to ensure that, overall, the small number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders or severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties achieve as well as others most of the time. The school is aware that, occasionally, the strategies to manage the behaviour of a few pupils admitted recently are not consistently successful. However, there is good planning for further improvements to procedures and training for staff to ensure that the school caters unfailingly well for these pupils and is fully prepared for a possible increase in numbers of pupils with more challenging behaviour. Currently, there is an important school focus on meeting the challenge of the changing school population.
17. There is a very rich variety of learning experiences extended through excellent links with the community. Many pupils take advantage of the programme of lunchtime clubs, making their choices daily. These include dancing, colouring, sensory activities, reading, number, computers, indoor and outdoor games, for example. Very good arrangements in the residential area ensure that after-school activities, such as a youth club, are available to day pupils as well as those staying overnight, although there are transport difficulties for pupils living some distance from the school. Theme days and other events have a very strong multi-cultural focus, about Spain, South Africa, Brazil and China, for example. A technology day provides a very good focus for Christmas celebrations and traditions. Visitors support a very good programme covering music, dance and drama, for instance. The school takes full advantage of its proximity to London, in order to give pupils experience of museums, historic buildings, and theatres. There is an extensive range of sporting activities, with very good use of a sports coach for cricket, and of facilities in the community and other schools, for swimming, cricket, and indoor activities in a gymnasium.
18. A wide range of activities make up a very comprehensive PSHE programme. In addition to discrete lessons for this area of learning, there are, for example, Youth Award courses, namely Transition Challenge and Bronze award for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and in Years 12 to 14, Towards Independence. Also, for students post-16, there are programmes for mobility training, social communication, daily living skills, horticulture, 'Looking Good', and participation in Team Enterprise. Work experience in Years 11 to 14 and residential opportunities on site and further afield, extend the development of personal and social skills. In the residential setting, for example, there are team games, karaoke, dancing, scouts and guides. Pupils develop independence skills, preparing meals and snacks, clearing away their plates and cutlery, and loading the dishwasher.

19. The school is well staffed and resourced, and the overall quality of the accommodation is good. Extensive, purpose built post-16 accommodation is an excellent development since the previous inspection. It not only provides students with a range of teaching, recreational and catering facilities, but gives all pupils access to much improved specialist facilities for science, resistant materials technology, food technology, art and design, and drama. The chapel in the school grounds is an intensely spiritual place of worship. The residential accommodation is attractive and welcoming and provides a very suitable home from home for pupils when they stay. Extensive and very well tended grounds give pupils access to adventure play equipment, outdoor sports, and allotments for horticulture. Despite the long term absence of the site manager, the hard work of the maintenance staff has ensured that pupils and students work in attractive, clean and safe surroundings. Parts of the school – for example, the library and rooms for English and PSHE – cannot currently be reached by wheelchair users. Resources are good overall and very good in the Victor Braun centre. The school recognises the need to increase the number of interactive whiteboards in classrooms and update its ICT resources.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **excellent**. **Very good** support, advice and guidance are provided. The ways in which the school seeks to involve pupils in its work and development are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole school health and safety procedures are in place and child protection procedures are extremely clearly defined throughout the school.
- Healthy living is promoted very strongly, but adults who smoke in the school grounds do not provide pupils with a good example.
- Tutor groups, the residential provision, and the school council, contribute to the very good opportunities for pupils to express their views.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff enhance the formal arrangements for support, advice and guidance.
- Induction procedures are very good and have a significant impact on parents feeling secure when their child takes up a place in the school.

Commentary

20. Procedures for health and safety and child protection, both in the school and the residential provision, are exemplary. There are on-going health and safety audits of the premises, and rigorous provision for assessing risks to ensure pupils' safety in the residential provision, on school visits, and in lessons. All staff are aware of the arrangements for child protection and the identity of the designated person for child protection, the school nurse – who is also the joint head of care. Staff training related to the care of pupils is regularly updated. For instance, when managing pupils' behaviour, staff are encouraged to follow a range of risk reduction strategies which include non-verbal, verbal, and where absolutely necessary, physical intervention. As a few pupils now have more complex needs and challenging behaviour, the school has recently introduced specific strategies to predict and divert the behaviour of these pupils and is raising staff awareness of positive handling strategies. Care plans, behaviour support plans and risk assessments for each pupil make sure that each of them is cared for as an individual in the best way the school can. The pastoral, personal and practical care in the residential provision is exceptional and the recent, very positive Commission for Care Standards Inspection report confirms this. Arrangements for overseeing the arrival and dispersal of pupils are very well organised and ensure the safety of pupils, and staff, when they are in the vicinity of the large number of vehicles entering and leaving the school grounds. As a result of the school's insistence on this outstanding attention to all aspects of pupils' welfare, parents are very happy about the care provided for to their children.

21. Working towards the Healthy Schools award has involved pupils in healthy eating programmes, and through the school council, post-16 committee, and the residential house meeting, they are encouraged to follow a healthy diet. A breakfast club offers the opportunity for a good, nutritional snack to those who arrive before the start of the school day. Pupils have access to filtered drinking water in their classrooms. The school has a 'No Smoking' policy, but a number of staff and visitors to the school – such as bus drivers and escorts – smoke in areas where they are visible to pupils.
22. Staff share meals with pupils at all times of the day and, in the residence, at supper and breakfast time. They use this time very well to chat, strengthen relationships and to establish if anything is worrying pupils. School council meetings have made a number of important decisions about life in school and the residential provision – for example, establishing a 'thought for the week', that is of importance to the whole school, but modelled during Mass by one class each week. They have also encouraged pupils and staff to recycle paper and are quick to remind visitors to do the same. The members of the post-16 committee are proud of how they have improved social facilities in the Victor Braun centre – for example, through music and games. Tutor groups also provide another very good opportunity for the school to get to know pupils' views.
23. Tutor groups are pivotal to the support and guidance of pupils. They support both informal and formal procedures for monitoring and advice. Staff demonstrate genuine care for their pupils and the tutor groups offer a secure network of relationships for pupils – for example, when they need an adult to go to if they have any worries in school. Post-16 students receive very good advice on day-to-day life skills and personal grooming, through courses such as the 'Looking Good' programme. PSHE activities accustom all pupils to the concept of healthy eating, looking after themselves and help to ensure they stay safe. Because staff know pupils so very well, their academic achievements, which are supported by very good assessment procedures, are also enhanced by very good arrangements for their day-to-day support and guidance.
24. The school works closely with parents and the schools that pupils have previously attended, to establish a secure framework for pupils when they first join Pield Heath House. The speech and language therapists are closely involved in making preliminary assessments and the school office co-ordinates any meetings that are necessary to support pupils' induction. In the same way, pupils who have not stayed in the residential provision are gradually introduced to staying away from home. As a consequence, parents are very pleased with how the school helps their children to settle in.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **excellent** links with the community. Partnerships with parents are **very good** as are those with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes excellent use of opportunities and skills that exist in the community to enhance pupils' learning and well being.
- Parents and families are very supportive and there is regular day-to-day contact and consultation with parents. They receive very good information.
- Pupils' opportunities are extended very effectively by links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

25. The school is tireless in exploring and consolidating its links with the community. It has worked extremely hard to build up a varied range of work experience placements in the area and is strongly supported by the Education Business Partnership. Links between the local Team Enterprise representatives and the Victor Braun centre are excellent, with business mentors in

place for the students' company, 'New Horizons'. When taking part in mobility lessons to accustom themselves to road safety, shopping and understanding directions, pupils visit the local shops, the hospital and a garden centre on a regular basis, making very good use of the locality. A philanthropic organisation with a 'fun bus' provides pupils with a whole range of experiences in the community such as trips to the synagogue, local temple and theatres. The local Member of Parliament regularly invites pupils to the Houses of Parliament, and has also inspired pupils to hold their own mini-election in school. The school celebrates achievement through community visits, and there are strong links to a national airline which sponsors competitions and visits for pupils to support work-related learning (WRL). Through the work of the school's founding religious order, pupils enjoy links across the world. Closer to home, the local parish provides solid community support for the school, as do a local RAF base, university and bank. Pupils in the residential provision are members of local Scouts and Guides groups. The school sees itself as extremely fortunate to have such an extensive variety of links to the community and values them as a source of inspiration and support for pupils.

26. Annual written reports sent to parents are detailed and helpful and there are additional weekly reports for the youngest pupils in the school. Parents said they are kept in touch well and that reports are informative. They are provided with very good information about the school through regular newsletters, the annual review meeting, and an open evening, although a few would like another opportunity for formal consultation with staff. Parents have access to day-to-day information through home/school diaries, and student planners for those in the Victor Braun centre, and by telephone calls from staff – for example, teachers, the school nurse, speech and language therapists, or care staff in the residential provision. Because of constraints such as time and distance, most parents do not come into school regularly, but this does not stop them working closely with the school to back up at home what is taught at school, and their views are sought through questionnaires. Parents support the school's fund raising activities through the Friends of Pield Heath House School. The school is hoping to involve parents more through workshops on, for example, communication strategies.
27. There are very close partnerships with other schools in the area through the Catholic schools forum, and Pield Heath House has hosted 'learning conversations' with many schools on a diverse range of subjects. There are strong links to a secondary drama college and to primary schools, one of which hosts an extra-curricular drama group, the 'Chicken Shed' project, for pupils with special educational needs. Staff training is supported by close links to the Catholic forum and, through a networked learning programme, all the schools in the Hillingdon area are linked for staff training and discussion. Through the Connexions service, the school has built up close links to many college destinations and residential schools, of interest to Years 10 and 11 pupils and students in the Victor Braun centre. During the inspection, Years 10 and 11 pupils paid a visit to a 'Can Do' carousel of activities at the local college of further education and met pupils and students from other special schools in the area. Sports amenities are accessed at local schools and pupils participate in inter-school sporting fixtures. Overall, these partnerships have improved social and leisure opportunities for pupils, and parents appreciate the outward-looking nature of the school's leadership in supporting these chances for their children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed **very well**. Leadership, management and governance are all **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal provides outstanding leadership and an ambitious vision for the school's future.
- Senior staff play a very effective part in managing the school.
- Governors make a very strong contribution to ensuring the school's success.
- Very effective evaluations of the school's results guide the school to make improvements.

- The action plans for improvement drawn up by subject leaders are not consistently effective.
- Finances are managed very efficiently.

Commentary

28. The principal provides extremely thoughtful and effective leadership to realise the aspiration for the school to provide the very highest quality of education for its pupils. Through inspiring staff, consulting widely and taking decisive action, she has ensured that the school has improved very well since the previous inspection. Her excellent example, in concert with other senior staff, has successfully encouraged staff to value all pupils equally and exceptionally well. Recent improvements to the management structure of the school, sharing leadership and management tasks between a larger group of senior staff, representing teaching, care, and administrative roles, is proving to be very effective. Senior managers undertake very effectively specific responsibility for managing aspects of the school – for example, the residential provision. They lead beneficial developments in particular areas. For instance, improvements in the assessment of pupils' work have ensured that this aspect is very good. Parents have very great confidence in the leadership and management of the school.
29. Governors have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. Because they visit the school regularly, they are very aware, for instance, of the changing school population and the greater influx of pupils with more complex needs. This knowledge is used to very good effect in their decision-making. Governors have a very good development plan to improve their own performance and they evaluate their own work critically. They are fully involved and supportive of the school's plans to develop further, sharing the aspiration that it should be a centre of excellence.
30. The school is embedding a very effective system for the principal and senior staff to collect and analyse the results of assessments for all pupils in all subjects. This is already providing a means for the school to set targets to raise standards in subjects. The data is very useful since it highlights subjects that require assessment procedures to be improved – for instance, in design and technology – and provides a basis for discussions about why pupils have exceeded or failed to meet targets, in order to refine further what the school provides.
31. Strategic planning is very good. Last year, a very successful focus for school development – to improve pupils' communication skills – resulted in pupils achieving very well in this area. A current priority is to increase the involvement of all subject leaders in improving standards in their subjects. The intention is for them to follow the example set in English and build on the very effective work of senior managers – for instance, by visiting lessons more frequently and providing colleagues with relevant support and advice. Although all subject leaders draw up plans for the improvement of their subjects, the quality of these plans varies greatly. In a number of cases, the outcomes are not analysed sufficiently to determine whether actions have been completed satisfactorily, what still needs to be improved is not set out clearly, and there is a general lack of rigour.
32. The school's funds are managed very efficiently by the bursar, and the outcomes of regular checks on the current state of finance are communicated thoroughly and regularly to the governors and principal. The principal, governors and the bursar are very vigilant in ensuring that they receive the best value when making purchases. All concerned with financial management are very aware of the need to compare the school's success, and what it provides for pupils, with similar schools – for instance, when establishing fees. There is ongoing dialogue with local education authorities to ensure that they understand the reasons for requests for increases in fees. For example, the school explained very well why it was necessary to do this in order to meet a nationally agreed pay structure for teachers to reward success. At the same time, the school reviews and adjusts the tasks that senior staff perform, in relation to any pay increase for undertaking responsibilities. Governors challenge the school very well on the decisions taken and check up on many aspects. For instance, they take part in evaluations to determine the benefits that accrue to pupils, following staff training. The

principal and the governors review very effectively the number and quality of staff in order to meet the changing school population.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2199066	Balance from previous year	79445
Total expenditure	2150536	Balance carried forward to the next	48530
Expenditure per pupil	21505		

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Team Enterprise projects provide excellent opportunities for many post-16 students to learn about the world of work.
- The wide range of very good work-related activities in Years 10 to 14 is led and managed very well.
- Local partners support the WRL programme very effectively.
- Pupils enjoy participating in very good 'Can Do' days at a local college but, overall, opportunities to develop work-related skills in college settings are limited.
- There is insufficient planning for careers education within the PSHE programme for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

33. Post-16 students with more moderate learning difficulties participate with great enthusiasm, and understand very well, the roles they play when running their Team Enterprise company, 'New Horizons'. They have recently won a local competition for their success in managing the company, and are now preparing a presentation for a regional event. Involvement in the company, however, is not currently available for students with more severe learning difficulties.
34. There is a comprehensive and very well planned programme of WRL from Year 10 onwards. This comprises discrete lessons in Years 10 and 11 about the world of work, careers education lessons post-16, a brief but very effective college programme of 'Can Do' days, the Team Enterprise company, and work experience opportunities in school and in the local community. The various Youth Award programmes that the school provides, namely Transition Challenge, Bronze award, and Towards Independence, contain vocational units that are well matched to the learning needs of pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. The co-ordinator for WRL in Years 10 to 14, together with the post-16 co-ordinator, lead and manage WRL to a very high standard. They ensure that links with partners in the local community are very strong, that work experience placements are very carefully matched to individual needs, and that leavers are very well prepared for adult life.
35. WRL for pupils in Years 10 to 14 is supported very well through very strong links with the local Education Business Partnership, the Connexions service, and with the local Youth and Team Enterprise team. School staff also provide very good support for students who engage in work experience on the school site, in the dining hall and kitchen, for example, where a programme of training is arranged.
36. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 very much enjoy choosing from a wide range of activities provided on a day visit to a local college. These include painting, clay work, music, animal care, pizza

making, and aromatherapy. Pupils can also choose 'practical engineering' where team work skills are promoted during a project to make an object move. Although they all make at least one visit to the college or placement they will attend on leaving school, only a very small minority of post-16 students – the ones who are local to the school – have opportunities to attend 'taster' courses at college and learn how to use college facilities.

37. The PSHE programme in Years 7 to 9 includes some scope for WRL. However, overall there is not enough planning for careers education in these years, in order to prepare pupils for the more formally planned WRL programme that starts in Year 10.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 and 4 and at post-16

Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects. Judgements were based on evidence collected through observing lessons, analysing pupils' work and assessment records, reviewing subject plans and other documents, and holding discussions with staff.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Eight lessons of English and drama were seen, together with literacy taught through other subjects and speech therapy sessions. One Spanish lesson was observed. Judgements were not made about Spanish.

38. All pupils in Years 7 to 11 study **Spanish**. A very good Year 8 lesson was observed. The specialist teaching was very energetic and enthusiastic. This promoted a very good response from pupils who loved pronouncing Spanish words and phrases, and eating Spanish food. No discrete Spanish accreditation is offered in Years 10 and 11. The subject leader has compiled a very useful portfolio of standards of work in each year group. Spanish lessons and a 'Spanish week' make very good contributions to pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn Spanish flamenco dancing, for example, they taste and cook traditional Spanish foods, and learn about the culture and history of Spain. The quality of the annual action plan for the development of this subject is barely satisfactory. The subject leader requires further training in development planning.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective links with speech and language therapists have enhanced pupils' achievement in communication very well.
- Very high quality assessment provides information that teachers use very well when planning lessons and courses.
- Drama increases pupils' confidence to express themselves.
- The subject leader ensures equally high standards across the school.
- The recent development to improve the way that all staff support pupils' communication skills has been very successful and the school plans to do the same with reading and writing.

Commentary

39. The school is very successful in ensuring that pupils develop communication skills. Through effective staff encouragement, pupils in Year 8 discussed their trip to the zoo and suggested and helped to write captions for pictures. They improved their reading skills further by reading each other's captions and succeeded very well in a key aim of the lesson – to learn to take turns during conversations. Individually, pupils went to a speech and language therapist in the neighbouring room, where they continued to develop their understanding of the sequence of events in a story, through discussing pictures of events at a party. This lesson demonstrated outstanding collaboration between teachers and speech and language therapists in planning weekly lessons to improve pupils' communication, reading and writing skills. The assessment of pupils' work is very good and the teachers and therapists share information about each pupil very effectively. This ensures that tasks are matched very closely to pupils' assessed needs. Through the support of speech and language therapists, pupils achieve certificates in

Graded Assessment Profiles in English and several pupils gain certificates in Effective Augmentative and Alternative Communication at Entry level.

40. Teachers are skilled at matching tasks to pupils' needs and this is a significant factor in pupils' very good achievement overall. They plan very effectively to ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to read and write in English lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for instance, followed up a discussion about their news with activities to develop their reading, handwriting and spelling. Each pupil received individual help to follow specific tasks such as placing known words in alphabetical order. Work was very well matched to pupils' needs and this enabled average-attaining pupils to read and spell words such as 'fact' and 'camp'. Older pupils' achievement in English contributes well to them receiving recognition through ASDAN awards. A few pupils achieve National Skills Profile certificates in communication and, this year, pupils in Year 11 have begun to follow a course leading to Entry level certificates. In a very relevant lesson, pupils in Year 11 discussed their personal strengths and included these in persuasive letters of application for jobs, such as at a supermarket. The strategy to help pupils who find this difficult was very effective. The pupils described the positive features of an imaginary character, using adjectives such as 'friendly'. After listing the character's attributes, they were able to understand the task better and describe themselves. The very thorough marking of their books provides pupils with guidance to improve and has ensured that they develop their writing very well. Pupils have good opportunities to produce extended pieces of imaginative writing and to improve their use of grammar – for instance, by following the advice to add 'speech marks' in their next piece of writing. In many lessons, teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to use ICT for tasks such as creating a corrected copy of their creative writing.
41. Teachers use drama lessons very well to provide pupils with valuable opportunities to express new ideas and improve their listening skills. During the introduction to one lesson, students at post-16 enjoyed creating an imaginary mural which they then explained to the group. Progress was very good and students achieved very well in an important aim of the lesson – to listen carefully to each other. This was evident during role-play, where students took turns to solve the problem when their car keys had been lost down a drain. Their responses showed how well they had developed confidence as they improvised what they would do – for instance, using an imaginary mobile phone to ask for help. Other students showed how well they had been listening, by spontaneously responding to the appeal for help and joining in the search.
42. Leadership and management of English are very good and have ensured that there has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. A significant strength is the way that the subject leader has ensured that there is a whole school approach to improving pupils' literacy skills. This is evident for instance, in the regular reading sessions that take place in the time following morning registration.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. The actions to achieve last year's school development plan target, to ensure that teachers plan specifically to improve pupils' communication skills in most lessons, have been successful and there were many instances of this during the inspection. There are good examples of teachers planning for pupils to develop reading and writing skills in many subjects. There is very good planning in science to increase pupils' use of technical vocabulary. Lessons such as PSHE and citizenship for pupils in Year 9 provide good examples of teachers planning effectively for pupils to use their literacy skills through interpreting notices and warning signs in the community. The aspiration for teachers to plan more specifically and regularly to improve pupils' reading and writing skills is an important part of the current school development plan.

MATHEMATICS

Four mathematics lessons were observed.

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils, including those with additional special needs, achieve well because teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of the pupils' needs.
- Because leadership and management are good, standards have improved well since the previous inspection.
- Improved assessment procedures are just beginning to produce useful data upon which future improvements can be based.
- Pupils are offered increasingly good opportunities to have their achievements recognised through external accreditation.

Commentary

44. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and individual lessons are often taught very well. Teachers share clearly with the pupils the learning objectives of lessons so that everyone knows what is expected. They are enthusiastic and exude confidence about their subject knowledge. This is transmitted to pupils, whose high standards of behaviour and willingness to learn contribute to their good achievement. They are interested in their work and are eager to reply to challenging questions. Teachers present challenges and tasks that are adapted very well to match the needs of the pupils. For example, in a lesson about weight, for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with needs including speech, language and communication and autistic spectrum disorders, practical activities were very carefully tailored to move each one on to the next stage of learning. Whilst lower attaining pupils used scales to identify objects that were heavy or light, the faster learners made estimates and then recorded the actual weights in grams. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and make important contributions to pupils' learning. They are good role models and provide valuable additional support to enable pupils to keep on task and achieve well. Time is used well in lessons and the pace is appropriate to the needs of the pupils. For instance, lower attaining students in Years 13 and 14 were fully involved in a lesson about time, because it was made relevant to their own experiences. They sequenced everyday events and then, having had good opportunities to understand the task and the ideas involved, identified the hours on a clock face.
45. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher, recently appointed to the post. He is currently mentored and supported well by an experienced colleague. This good practice has enabled the subject to move forward rapidly, following a period when the school was without a specialist teacher. A good start has been made in identifying areas of the subject which require further development – for example, keeping track of the use of mathematics in other subjects.
46. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work. At the end of lessons, they are involved in reviewing their work to establish what they have learned. Their work is annotated carefully by teachers, which is helpful to staff and pupils. Informal and formal assessments are continuous. Data is being collected which shows how pupils are progressing year upon year. However, this is not yet used sufficiently to plan for future developments in mathematics. Assessment is used increasingly well to identify suitable external accreditation. For example, this year, for the first time, higher attaining pupils in Years 11 to 14 have followed courses leading to Entry level. Post-16 students also gain National Skills Profile certificates and the work of Year 11 pupils contributes to their Transition Challenge awards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Numeracy skills are consolidated well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 10 use their ability to count during lessons in physical education. In science, Year 11 pupils put their mathematics skills to good use as they present the results of their surveys in graphic forms. In music, post-16 students count to the beat as they compose and play. Recently, the subject leader has worked hard to encourage other teachers to formally plan mathematics into their policies and programmes of work. This is developing well and is beginning to provide information to enable mathematics to be tracked across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Three lessons of science were seen.

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils make good progress, achieving up to Entry level standard by Year 11.
- Enthusiastic teaching and good use of interesting resources encourage pupils to work hard and enjoy science.
- Pupils learn very well how to assess and record their own progress.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills in science is very good, but there are too few opportunities for all pupils to use computers.
- The subject leader collects an unnecessary amount of information about what pupils have done and learned.

Commentary

48. Primary and secondary pupils of all abilities achieve well. Those with autistic spectrum disorders enjoy learning science, participate in practical tasks with other pupils, and mainly achieve as well as other pupils. Occasionally, however, their progress is hampered by teaching methods that are too stimulating. In the primary years, the breadth of pupils' learning enables them to distinguish push and pull forces, observe and feel the different properties of materials, see changes in materials when they are heated, and recognise, group, and learn the life-cycles of plants and animals. By Year 9, pupils with more severe learning and communication difficulties can sort animals with backbones from those without. They create instruments to make different sounds, and learn how the ear works. Pupils investigate how moving air can propel balloon rockets. This is particularly challenging for pupils with limited manual dexterity, but with support they succeed. Year 11 pupils with moderate learning difficulties know how plants produce seeds. They develop a good range of enquiry skills, for example, when investigating the conduction of electricity. They can base their predictions on scientific knowledge, and plan fair tests. They understand why it might be necessary to repeat experiments, and they look for patterns to help explain results. Secondary pupils generally learn more biology and physics than chemistry because of a slight imbalance in the planning of science.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In the primary years, tasks are very well matched to individual learning needs, pupils' individual behaviours are managed very well, and the work of teaching assistants is very effective. Although the primary science curriculum is broad, too little information is reported to parents about progress in biology topics. In the secondary years, teaching is very enthusiastic, and many practical activities are planned to motivate pupils. The quality of teaching assistants' support for secondary pupils is generally good, but there are inconsistencies in the overall quality of support provided.
50. The assessment of pupils' progress is good overall. The marking of their work is very good and encouraging and the level of support each pupil receives is clearly stated. In Years 10

and 11, pupils' achievements are recognised through externally accredited awards, namely the Transition Challenge award for pupils with severe learning difficulties, and Entry level for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The analysis of pupils' progress over time is very thorough. The school's targets for science last year were met, and pupils respond very well to the challenge of meeting their individual science targets. In the secondary years, pupils make very good progress learning how to assess their own progress. This is because the science subject leader has developed very effective self-assessment procedures. He has also introduced 'My science achievement' books, where pupils choose and collate their best pieces of work. However, in the secondary years, too much descriptive information about each pupil's work is collected. This large amount of information is unmanageable. It is difficult for clear judgements to be made about how well each pupil achieves the planned learning outcomes for each lesson or topic.

51. Pupils develop their scientific vocabulary very well because key scientific words are promoted extensively. In Year 8, pupils write interesting stories about, for example, imaginary journeys on a space-ship. There is very good promotion of reading in science. Secondary pupils make regular use of a science library in the laboratory, each keeping a record of books read and how much they have enjoyed them. Secondary pupils learn to use block graphs, pie charts and line graphs to record the results of their investigations. They learn how to 'tally' when conducting surveys, for example in work on human variation. There is, however, only occasional use of computers. In Years 10 and 11, for example, pupils word process their accounts of investigations.
52. Leadership and management are good overall. There is a strong link between the primary and secondary staff to ensure good quality subject planning throughout the primary and secondary years. A number of good innovations, for example, the science reading programme, the 'My science achievement' books for pupils' best work, and termly individual targets, reflect the subject leader's enthusiasm and commitment to helping pupils enjoy science, and to celebrate their achievements. The annual action plan for developing the subject is over-ambitious and without priorities. Once again, the collection of excessive amounts of written information makes clear action planning very difficult. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. There is excellent new specialist accommodation which is used very well. Good teaching and standards of work have been maintained and the pupils' attitudes to science have improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Five lessons were observed.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn well as a result of the good and often very good teaching.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about ICT, enjoy their lessons and behave very well.
- The effective use of on-going assessment enables teachers to plan effectively for individual pupils.
- Good leadership has recently led to good improvements, but subject management needs to be developed further.
- There is no co-ordination or monitoring of the use of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

53. Pupils are eager to learn and they make good progress in lessons. As a result of the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, pupils used a graphics program to create a rainbow, using curved lines and the fill tool, choosing the colours carefully. Independently, one pupil word processed his name, the title and the names of the colours. Pupils in Year 7 use the interactive whiteboard

to move a turtle around the screen on a specified course. As they move up through the school, pupils continue to make good progress and by Year 9, they use word processing with confidence, highlight text to make changes and edit their work using the cursor and delete keys. However, they only have limited opportunities to use spreadsheets and databases. Pupils in Year 11 are increasingly confident users of ICT and there are good opportunities for accreditation at post-16, which enable these students to have their achievements recognised.

54. In the very good lessons, teachers encourage pupils to use ICT in meaningful contexts. For example, during one lesson, pupils in Year 11 were learning to use presentation software to display images and text about their recent work experience. They will be using these presentations in an assembly to let the rest of the school know about their experiences. A higher attaining pupil used slide transitions and animations in his presentation. This exciting use of ICT ensures that pupils are fully engaged and enthusiastic about their work.
55. Teachers use assessment effectively in lessons to ensure that it is clear what pupils have achieved. For example, the teaching assistants in a Years 5 and 6 lesson, in consultation with the pupils, added text to the pupils' work, saying what they had achieved, what they found difficult and how much support had been needed. As a result, teachers are able to plan for what individual pupils are to do and learn and, consequently, pupils of all abilities and those with additional special educational needs achieve well. The pupils appreciate the good quality ICT equipment in the computer room. However, opportunities to use the Internet have been limited as the school has only just been able to acquire an effective broadband connection. As a result, pupils have had little experience of searching for information on the Internet or sending and receiving emails.
56. Leadership of ICT is good and the subject leader, who is a good role model for other staff, has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the subject. He is aware of staff training needs and provides training to teaching assistants on the use of software, such as presentation software, so that they can support the pupils more effectively. However, subject development planning is weak. In addition, the subject leader does not have the opportunity to visit the lessons of other teachers and share good practice. The subject is heavily reliant on a published scheme of work and the school needs to reflect upon ways in which the non-computer elements of this can be covered in other subjects so that the time allotted to use the computer suite can be used more effectively. As a result of this, and the lack of co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum, the management of the subject is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Word processing is used well to promote literacy skills, while subject related software enables more pupils to practise mathematical skills independently. During an art lesson, pupils made good progress as they learned to manipulate images. However, although the use of ICT is identified in teachers' planning, there is no co-ordination or monitoring of its use. As a result, there is no whole school record of how pupils apply what has been taught in their ICT lessons or how the use of ICT is making a significant contribution to learning in each subject.

HUMANITIES

One lesson of geography was observed. History was not taught at the time of the inspection. Judgements were not made about these subjects. Religious education is not within the scope of this inspection.

58. The curriculum for **history and geography** ensures that pupils build up their knowledge of the world around them and events in the recent and distant past. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have investigated the Victorians in Britain, looking at how people lived then and comparing life then with that of today. They have learned about the Egyptians and dressed up as an Egyptian pharaoh. An attractive display showed that pupils in Year 8 have studied Henry

VIII and have visited Hampton Court Palace. There is clear evidence from teachers' detailed planning that the geography programme is varied and interesting. Pupils have found out about the local area, identifying different buildings such as houses, the post office, shops and the nearby hospital. Pupils in Year 7 have studied people in Kenya and dressed up as Masai warriors. By Year 9, pupils' work has covered topics such as rivers, volcanoes and the tropical rain forest.

TECHNOLOGY

One lesson of design and technology was observed. Judgements were not made about this subject.

59. In **design and technology**, pupils learn to design and make items using food, textiles and resistant materials. As they move up through the school, their tasks become increasingly more complex, so post-16 students, for example, experiment with cams in order to discover how mechanical toys work. There is good specialist accommodation and teachers of several subjects, such as Spanish and lifeskills, make use of the food technology room, reinforcing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in this aspect of the subject. The teacher is not a specialist in design and technology and recognises the need for further professional development.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

One music lesson was seen and three of art and design. Judgements were not made about music.

60. **Music** plays an important part in the life of the school. For instance, there is school choir and an orchestra. During the weekly mass, pupils sing very enthusiastically, accompanied by the orchestra. They enjoy listening and dancing to music at breaks and lunchtimes. In the lesson seen, post-16 students counted to the beat of the music and identified loud and quiet music. They composed short pieces and played individually and as a group. The lesson was well planned and, as a result, students made good progress. They treated the instruments with great respect and took care when playing them. The music room is rather isolated and lacks effective communication with the main building. This weakness was identified in the previous inspection report.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader has very high expectations for pupils to achieve.
- The curriculum is very broad and carefully constructed.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to have their achievements recognised through external accreditation.
- Art contributes effectively to pupils' cultural development although community resources are not used to the full.

Commentary

61. Art and design is taught very well and, in consequence, pupils' achievement is very good. The many vibrant displays illustrate very clearly the range and quality of pupils' work. This combines technical skill and attention to detail, with imagination and creativity, stemming from the rigour and expertise of the subject leader, who is the main teacher. Lessons are typified by the expectation that pupils will work to the highest of standards. For instance, during a lesson for pupils in Year 8, including several with autistic spectrum disorders or speech, language and communication needs, the teacher and teaching assistants encouraged them to observe very carefully, as they developed and painted flower designs. The teacher used

questions very skilfully to prompt one boy to examine minutely the colours in the image he had scanned into the computer and distorted – ‘Is it pink or white? What do you think?’ As a result, he mixed colours judiciously and applied the paint with great care. The teaching assistants demonstrated similarly high expectations, one providing very good support to a pupil with autistic spectrum disorders whose attention was fleeting and who needed significant help to focus on his task.

62. As they move up through the school, pupils learn a wide variety of techniques, using materials such as textiles, clay, recycled materials, papier mache, and paint. They work on individual projects, in pairs, and as part of a class group. They use different scales and produce two and three-dimensional outcomes. At post-16, higher attaining students follow examination programmes, whilst courses in pottery, ceramics, and textiles, for example, are offered to others. During Years 10 and 11, pupils’ course provides opportunities for accreditation at Entry level. Those who do well in this move on to GCSE at post-16. Last year, the two candidates gained grades B and C, and the three who were entered for this year’s examination are expected to achieve similarly well.
63. Pupils find out about the work of a range of artists from different cultures. They learn from the techniques used by these artists and also by looking at artefacts such as African masks and drums. Pupils’ work shows clear evidence of the influence of other cultures – for example, the totem poles created by Year 11 pupils. Pupils have not yet benefited from an artist in residence, although a parent has painted murals in the hall and religious education classroom. Currently, they do not visit art galleries or exhibitions and the subject leader intends to take more advantage of the facilities offered in London.
64. Leadership and management are very good overall, because of the clear focus on pupils achieving as well as possible. Future plans include working towards the Artsmark award. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

One lesson of physical education was observed. Judgements were not made about this subject.

65. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their skills in all aspects of **physical education** and the range provided is very wide. For instance, in addition to gymnastics, athletics, swimming and team sports, pupils take part in activities such as horse-riding, golf, dance, weight training, and snooker. In the tennis lesson seen in Year 10, staff had very high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and work, and, consequently, pupils responded well and worked very hard. The lesson was well planned and ensured all pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, were fully included. Pupils gained new skills and knowledge. They worked well individually and in pairs, taking turns and sharing equipment. They showed obvious enjoyment and took pride in their achievements. Resources are very good and community facilities are used very well. Pupils have opportunities to compete against those in other schools, in sports such as basketball, football and cross country running.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No citizenship lessons were observed and judgements were not made about this subject. Two lessons of PSHE were seen. Lessons in a variety of other courses contributed to the judgements made.

66. Pupils throughout the school learn about **citizenship** through their PSHE lessons and other activities and events. For instance, days are devoted to topics such as elections, developing pupils’ understanding of the workings of democracy, or an ‘International Day’, in which the whole school celebrates ways of life in other countries. Electing the school council provides all pupils with first-hand experience of voting, with older pupils holding office and representing others. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn about issues including rights and responsibilities, the

need for laws, and the European Union. Post-16 students have a strong link with the local MP and have very good opportunities to observe democracy at work, through visits to the Houses of Parliament. Taking part in school-wide projects, such as recycling paper, gives all pupils practical experiences of responsible citizenship. However, there are not enough ICT resources for the subject.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Provision in PSHE is **very good**.

- A wide range of activities and courses to promote personal and social development supplement PSHE lessons very well.
 - Teaching is very good and staff are committed to helping pupils to achieve very well.
 - There is insufficient focus on careers education in Years 7 to 9.
67. Pupils achieve very well as a result of the combination of discrete PSHE lessons, daily routines – such as lunchtime – and other subjects and courses. For instance, many of the post-16 students' lessons contribute to PSHE. They all have lessons in mobility, during which they learn to be safe and independent when using roads, and lower attaining students follow courses in 'Looking Good' and daily living skills. As part of the latter, students learn, for example, to prepare a shopping list, identify items on sale, and select the correct coins to pay for their purchases. Social communication lessons in Years 10 to 14 not only promote speaking and listening, but also boost pupils' self-confidence and help them to present themselves in a positive light. The 'Key Steps' programme in Years 7 to 9 has a PSHE focus, teaching pupils about topics such as keeping fit and healthy eating. Pupils who stay overnight in the residential provision have plenty of opportunities to develop important social skills, such as living with others. They are encouraged to share domestic tasks – clearing tables, making snacks etc. Work experience in Years 11 to 14 enables pupils to put into practice skills and knowledge learned in school – following instructions, keeping safe, forming relationships, for example. This programme forms a key part of the very good arrangements for preparing pupils for their lives beyond school.
68. Teachers are enthusiastic about this area of the curriculum, recognising its importance in pupils' present and future lives. Lessons are well prepared and teachers work hard to provide practical activities that give first-hand experiences and help pupils to consolidate what they have learned. For instance, in a PSHE lesson, pupils in Year 8 learned that all medicines contain drugs and then sorted a variety of containers into medicines and non-medicines. Again, Year 9 pupils visited the post-16 centre to look for signs and symbols seen in the community. Staff have very positive relationships with pupils. As a result, all pupils – including those with speech, language and communication needs – are confident to join in discussions, so teachers gain a greater understanding of any misconceptions or uncertainties they may have, or where individuals have learned particularly well. For example, during a 'Looking Good' lesson about care of the teeth, one of the Year 12 students volunteered the information that smoking 'makes teeth yellow and you smell horrible'. The teacher rightly praised him for making the connection between the work done with her and that learned in a PSHE lesson.
69. The area is led and managed very well and this has led to good improvement since the previous inspection. In addition to the subject leader, several staff take responsibility for aspects of the curriculum that are closely linked to PSHE. Recently, their number has been increased by the identification of a teacher to oversee 'life skills' elements by carrying out an audit of existing practice in order to ensure that there are no gaps in pupils' experiences or learning. The PSHE subject leader has pinpointed priorities for the subject, which include working towards the Healthy Schools award. The remit for careers education in Years 7 to 9 falls within PSHE and this aspect of the subject requires further development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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