

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SPRINGHALLOW SCHOOL**

Ealing

LEA area: London Borough of Ealing

Unique reference number: 101970

Headteacher: Ms Jayne Jardine

Lead inspector: Alan Lemon

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 March 2005

Inspection number: 268638

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:	4 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	67
School address:	Compton Close Cavendish Avenue Ealing London
Postcode:	W13 0JG
Telephone number:	020 89982700
Fax number:	020 88107610
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Joan Ansell
Date of previous inspection:	22 February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Springhallow School caters for up to 67 pupils, with 67 on roll made up of 61 boys and 6 girls. This includes 6 children in their reception year who all attend full-time. Most pupils' homes are in the London Borough of Ealing and a few live in neighbouring boroughs all of which comprise an even mix of more and less privileged areas. There is hardly any alterations or changes to the pupil population during the school year. All the pupils have statements of special educational needs and their learning difficulties relate to autistic spectrum disorders. Across the school, a minority have severe autism and this is also a trend in new admissions. In September 2004, Primary Gold, a special class, was created to provide a period of intensive support for the more challenging pupils being admitted before they move onto other classes. As a result of autism and learning difficulties, attainment on entry is well below average. There is considerable diversity in pupils' ethnic backgrounds and nearly every principal group is represented. The great majority speak English as their first language but for two pupils English is an additional language. One pupil is in the care of the local authority.

Springhallow School gives support to 12 schools in its area, some of whose pupils have autism. The school also has long-established links with local primary and secondary schools. These serve to provide many opportunities for Springhallow pupils to join with mainstream pupils for social integration and lessons and, in Years 9, 10 and 11, to pursue examination courses.

Over several years the school has collected many awards for the quality of its provision. These include Investor in People, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Healthy Schools and School Achievement awards. At present the National Autistic Society's autism accreditation and an Arts Quality Mark are being actively pursued.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Religious education Special educational needs
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
17260	Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Citizenship Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation stage

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Springhallow School is very effective** and it provides very good value for money. Leadership and management are very good and there is a sharp focus on continued improvement and raising standards. The quality of education for autistic pupils is very good. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils achieve well overall, but very well where teaching and learning are very good. Their attitudes, behaviour and other personal qualities are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Ambitious leadership is very determined to stay at the forefront of special school provision for autistic pupils by striving to always do better.
- In the very effective provision made for pupils there is high quality expertise applied by all staff and this meets the special needs of pupils very well.
- As a result of the very good care and support, pupils develop excellent relationships with each other and adults and quickly acquire very good attitudes to learning.
- The very good opportunities for pupils to mix with their peers, share lessons and pursue examination courses in neighbouring mainstream schools contribute much to their personal development and other achievements.
- The very good achievement of children in the Foundation Stage and of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold is a result of very good teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by the addition of many interesting activities in and out of school, in particular, the very good opportunities for pupils to participate in the arts.
- There are shortcomings in teachers' subject knowledge, resources and accommodation for science which result in lessons that are less challenging than in other subjects for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The interactive whiteboards in most classrooms are not often used to their full potential as a teaching aid.

This was a good school at the time of the last inspection, and it has improved well as a result of strong leadership and management. Progress on the key issues from the last inspection has been good, especially in relation to provision in information and communication technology, with the result that the standards pupils now achieve are much higher. The picture of improvement in all aspects of the school's work is, in general, a good one.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Achievement is good, overall.** However, achievement in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in the Primary Gold class is very good. Overall, achievement is good between Years 3 and 11.

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

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

As a result of their special educational needs, children at the Foundation Stage are unlikely to accomplish the nationally expected goals by the end of their reception year. They do, however, achieve very well in all the areas of learning as a result of very expert teaching. As children do particularly well in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development, they are well placed to make progress more generally. The priority given to personal development

throughout the school results in very good achievement in personal, social and health education and, overall, good achievement in religious education. In Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold, which is for pupils in Years 2 to 4 with complex needs, pupils achieve very well. Together with very good teaching and learning in these years, the debilitating effects of autism on learning are tackled very effectively. Achievement in English across the school is good in reading and writing and very good in speaking and listening as a result of the consistent stress on pupils developing their communication skills. Achievement in mathematics throughout the school is good, overall, and very good in numeracy. In science, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and thereafter achievement is no more than satisfactory as pupils could contend with greater challenge. The development of curriculum and resources in information and communication technology has led to good achievement across the school. The small group of higher attaining pupils from Years 9 to 11 achieve very well in the examination courses they follow.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.** Relationships are excellent. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are very good. Attendance is good, overall.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.** Teaching and learning are good, overall. Very effective teaching is seen throughout the school but more so in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold, where teaching and learning are very good. The planning and conduct of the most effective lessons combine substantial expertise in managing autism with challenging learning opportunities. The small amount of teaching that was not that effective provided learning opportunities that did not have as much challenge for pupils. The curriculum is very good in providing for the needs of autistic pupils and adds a very wide range of additional activities that greatly enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils are very well cared for and supported, especially through the very good partnerships with parents, the community and neighbouring schools. Most classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are not often used to their full potential in teaching.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher sets high expectations and is determined in achieving her vision for the school. Other key staff support the headteacher with very effective leadership in their areas of responsibility. The management of the school is very systematic and sharply focused on achieving priorities. Governance plays a very good part in setting the school's direction and complies with statutory requirements.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. It is a popular choice for parents of autistic children. Pupils view the school very positively.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Address the shortcomings in science knowledge, the use of resources and the facilities of the science laboratory.
- Ensure the full potential of interactive whiteboards is reached in teaching across the school.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

While standards are below average compared to national expectations, overall, pupils achieve well. At the time of the last inspection, pupils made good progress and, generally, progress remains good. However, there has been a positive improvement in Years 1 and 2 and here achievement is very good. In provision that has developed since the last inspection, achievement is very good in Primary Gold and in relation to children at the Foundation Stage.

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

- After admission, children at the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold begin to make rapid progress.
- By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils have achieved very well in examinations as a result of the very good partnership with the high school.
- Very effective approaches used by staff in dealing with autism mean that pupils have good access to learning and achieve well in many subjects.
- Good improvements in information and communication technology have led to good achievements, overall.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' attainment, as measured by the school and in National Curriculum tests and assessments, shows a wide range of ability across the school. More pupils are being admitted who have complex learning difficulties and very low attainment. Most of these pupils are provided for initially in a specially created class, Primary Gold. The school collects data on pupils' performance in all subjects and at present analyses the results in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. This analysis shows substantial gains being made by pupils in these subjects beginning immediately after admission. This accentuates the positive impact of very effective provision for pupils with autism. In particular, the use of substantial expertise in autism leads to thorough planning of learning opportunities at the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold. As a result, achievement in these groups is very good. At the Foundation Stage, achievement is very good in each area of learning because of highly effective teaching. Children's progress in personal and social development is rapid and here the strong partnership with parents makes a significant contribution. Across the school there is no significant variation in the achievement of different groups of pupils. The very good provision for inclusion ensures this is the case.
2. Higher-attaining pupils, having made considerable progress in relation to their autism, follow courses at a local high school. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 take as many GCSE courses as they can contend with. This depends not only on pupils' abilities but also on how well they are adjusted to the considerable demands for them of attending a mainstream school. This year, the number of courses ranges between two and ten GCSEs for the small group of pupils involved. Each year, for several years, these pupils have achieved very well as a result of Springhallow School's very effective provision and its very good partnership with the high school supporting their education there. In 2004, three pupils gained GCSE A\*-G grades at the high school. One pupil passed in six subjects, one passed in three subjects and another passed in one subject. In the school, in 2004, several Year 11 pupils also achieved well in Entry Level Certificate in English, mathematics, science and French and the majority passed at the highest level. Results in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) courses are equally good.
3. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in English. They make good progress in reading and writing, as there are good opportunities in English and many other subjects for pupils to



develop these skills, in particular, the good use made of word processing. The very effective approaches used by staff in dealing with autism mean pupils have good access to learning. These approaches give special stress to developing pupils' communication skills and, as a result, they achieve very well in speaking and listening, especially at the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in Primary Gold. This is a very important achievement that puts pupils well on the way to being less affected by autism and making it possible for them to progress in their personal development and in other subjects. Personal, social and health education and religious education stand out in this respect. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in personal, social and health education. In religious education, pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve very well and the achievement of those in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. Achievement in mathematics is good, although progress in problem solving is slowed by pupils' difficulty in interpreting a problem and devising a strategy to deal with it. However, the additional emphasis given to pupils learning number and counting leads to very good achievement in this aspect of mathematics. There are opportunities in numerous situations for pupils to apply and improve number skills, from the youngest counting their coat buttons to the oldest dealing with real-life matters of money and time. A few higher-attaining pupils reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 9 and, by Year 11, pass GCSE mathematics, which are achievements linked to the success of their integration at the high school.

4. The good improvement in provision for information and communication technology has increased pupils' opportunities to learn and this has resulted in them achieving well, despite the fact that teachers are not always exploiting the advantages information and communication technology resources provide. While the use of interactive whiteboards is effective in promoting progress in some lessons, more often their use is unadventurous.
5. Achievement in science is no more than satisfactory between Years 3 and 11, partly because the interactive whiteboard is not exploited well and other useful electronic equipment in science is left out of lessons where it could be used profitably. A lack of expertise in teaching science plays a significant part also, especially in limiting the opportunities for pupils to carry out their own experiments. However, higher-attaining pupils going on to the high school for GCSE science courses achieve well.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. The level of attendance is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved well since the last inspection.
- Excellent relationships contribute to very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.

### **Commentary**

6. At the time of the last inspection, attitudes and behaviour were good; they are now very good as a result of refinement in the support given to pupils and in how their behaviour is managed. Pupils enjoy coming to school, settle willingly, and show themselves capable of a high degree of concentration. Inattentive and disruptive behaviour caused by their autism is tackled consistently and successfully from the day they enter the school. They rapidly experience successful learning and this improves their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils respond positively to the well-earned praise given by teachers and other adults, and this motivates them to do their best. Excellent relationships with staff continue to make a positive contribution to the caring atmosphere of the school and enable pupils to feel safe and supported at all times.
7. Pupils develop a growing awareness and responsibility for themselves and others. Their relationships with the staff and with each other are excellent. Pupils form constructive and lasting friendships which are mutually supportive. Very good opportunities for self-

assessment help them to take personal responsibility for improving their learning. They treat books and equipment kindly. They have opportunities to develop skills of independent learning, particularly in the very good opportunities they have for joining pupils and attending lessons in local primary and secondary schools. Incidents of bullying are very rare, but are dealt with promptly and effectively. There have been no exclusions.

8. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' social development. Pupils have the confidence to speak up for themselves, when asked, and put forward an opinion. Pupils who attend local primary or secondary schools for part of the school day have the self-confidence to flourish, make new friends and achieve success. Liaison with local schools and colleges is so good that they are very well prepared socially to move on.
  
9. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development described in the last report has been well maintained. Daily acts of worship including the recitation of the school prayer are still strong features of pupils' spiritual development. The annual Holocaust memorial assembly enables them to empathise with the victims whilst reflecting on suffering and evil. Pupils have very good additional opportunities to reflect upon and consider the needs of others in their charitable activities. All staff continue to have very high expectations of behaviour, and provide excellent role models. Pupils are left in no doubt as to what is right and wrong behaviour and are prepared to say why this is so. Pupils are capable of reasoned moral debate in a range of subjects, including English. The variety of resources used in lessons reflects the multi-ethnic nature of the school. Pupils have very good opportunities to extend their cultural experiences by attending ballet and theatre performances and visiting museums, galleries and places of worship.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.4	School data	0.2
National data	7.4	National data	0.9

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

10. Attendance levels at the school are good, overall. Compared to other schools catering for autistic pupils, the level of authorised absence is broadly the same but unauthorised absence is much lower than in other similar schools. Pupils arrive punctually except on the rare occasions when their transport is late.

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

The quality of education is very good, overall. In general, teaching and learning are good, although there is a good proportion of very effective teaching. The curriculum is very well adapted to meeting the needs of autistic pupils. It has many added activities, in and out of school, which pupils greatly enjoy. These promote, in particular, very good participation in the arts. The opportunities for pupils to work alongside others in mainstream schools and to pursue examination courses are very good. The school takes very good care of pupils and supports them very well.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good, overall. They are very good in the Foundation Stage, in Years 1 and 2 and in the Primary Gold class. Assessment is good, overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Primary Gold has become very well established and has developed highly effective teaching approaches. This is also the case for children at the Foundation Stage.
- A key factor in the success of teaching is the high degree of expertise there is for addressing pupils' autism and giving them access to learning.
- The great majority of lessons are very well planned and tightly structured in terms of meeting pupils' needs.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	17 (35%)	17 (35%)	14 (28%)	1 (2%)	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.*

11. The quality of teaching and learning has improved well since the last inspection in respect of an increased number of very good lessons. Nearly every teacher was seen teaching at least one very good lesson, and very effective teaching and learning took place consistently in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This includes the Primary Gold class, established in September 2004 to provide for new pupils who have very challenging behaviours and who find learning much more difficult than most. In the Foundation Stage and in Primary Gold, assessment procedures and the use made of assessments are very good.
12. Primary Gold's teaching approaches, in particular, make learning in English and mathematics very good. In English, pupils enjoy Big Books and love listening to stories and this contributes to their learning of letter sounds and reading and writing of some words. A considerable emphasis on signing, symbols and speaking means pupils are learning to communicate and use language. The very effective approaches to teaching mathematics means pupils concentrate very well and work hard. Very thorough assessment when pupils are first admitted and the continual tracking of their progress ensure very close support for learning. Routines and the management of behaviour are very well embedded, which is the result of the extremely effective teamwork of teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils' needs are thoroughly understood and when one encounters difficulties, immediate steps are taken to resolve the problem and ensure learning is not disrupted for others. Comprehensive lesson planning leads to pupils learning essential routines and the appropriate responses to the high expectations of staff. As a result, challenging behaviour is on the decrease. These same features also explain the success of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage. As in Primary Gold, assessments are very good and lead to staff having a detailed knowledge of each child's needs. Close assessment also ensures activities are made relevant, interesting and enjoyable for children. The imaginative use of attractive resources such as books, tricycles, toys and dressing-up materials contributes very effectively to children's learning. Communication runs through all the activities, with key words being frequently stressed and lots of singing developing children's vocal skills.
13. Throughout the school, the improvement seen in teaching is the result of continual and successful development of specialist approaches together with the positive impact of the

school leadership's high expectations for the quality of teaching and learning. There has been a marked improvement in the teaching of information and communication technology, which is now good but had been unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Several teachers use their electronic whiteboards to display learning objectives, which are clearly set out for pupils to read. As they are achieved in the course of the lesson, they are marked off, usefully giving pupils an awareness of progression in their work. However, this is the only use made by some teachers and they do not get best value from them as a result. By contrast, in a very good science lesson for Years 1, 2 and 3 pupils, the electronic whiteboard was linked to the Internet where pupils could use animated sequences to test the rigidity and flexibility of different materials. This was so successful with the group that their predictions about materials became increasingly accurate by the end of the lesson. Teaching and learning in English are good, overall, and the strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' communication skills results in very good learning linked to speaking and listening. Mathematics lessons are well planned with the result that pupils work at a good pace and are well challenged.

14. In the planning and approach to most lessons, pupils are reassured by the familiar routines and also by the clear explanations given of what is expected. This means learning gets off to a positive start. A particularly good start was achieved in some lessons, using a short period of calm, quiet, individual work before the group came together to listen to the teacher. Learning such routines means pupils work in a good variety of ways but especially co-operatively and collaboratively with each other. The progress made in this respect has made it possible for many pupils to go out to mainstream schools to take part, much to their benefit, in lessons and other activities.
15. A great deal of care is exercised in explaining and demonstrating what pupils need to know in order to do their work. When illustrations are used, the strong visual reinforcement succeeds in achieving a high level of interest and interaction with pupils, using large colourful posters, video extracts and electronic whiteboards. In a religious education lesson, images of the interior of a Sikh temple led to an animated discussion of its features and very good learning about their holy significance. Effective teaching also depends upon teachers' knowledge of their subjects and, to a large extent, this is good. It is very good in personal, social and health education and, with the strong emphasis across the school on personal development, there is very good learning taking place. However, a lack of science expertise in teaching several groups detracts from the typically very effective approaches in lessons. Scientific facts are not explained convincingly and pupils do too few experiments, with the result that learning is less challenging in science than in most subjects.
16. In general, assessment in subjects is good and for each pupil a portfolio is kept up to date with assessments and examples of work that demonstrate the progress made. Supporting this is a good process of teachers and classroom assistants making regular observations and noting pupils' progress in lessons. Measurements of progress using National Curriculum levels and P Scales for pupils working below the level of the National Curriculum are a long-established and effective record. The paper-based records are now being replaced with a computer program, which allows a more detailed and efficient analysis of the data teachers generate on their pupils' progress. This has been developed in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and here the analysis is used effectively to set individual and school targets. In the other subjects, the process of collecting data on computer has just begun.

## **The curriculum**

Overall, the curriculum is very good. There are very good opportunities for enrichment and for pupils to take part in work in mainstream schools. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is a very good match to pupils' needs and capabilities.

- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education and this aspect of the curriculum permeates all the work of the school.
- The curriculum is very effectively enriched by educational visits, visitors to school and after-school clubs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to support learning.
- There are areas of provision and learning constrained by a lack of space and specialist facilities.

### **Commentary**

17. As well as fully meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, the school's curriculum is an expert adaptation in relation to the learning difficulties experienced by all of its pupils. It is also well adapted to the different levels of attainment of pupils. As a result of the considerable insight and skills teachers put into making effective learning opportunities, their pupils' special educational needs are met very well. Tried and tested approaches to educating autistic pupils are thoroughly embedded and used with a high level of consistency across the school. New developments that extend and refine the curriculum are continually brought on board. For example, Applied Behaviour Analysis has been introduced to complement other approaches, which ensures the most challenging behaviour is managed effectively so that the pupils affected gain good access to learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because their language development is well addressed as part of individual planning. On arrival, pupils are tested in their own language, which provides a strong basis for on going provision. Very well developed relationships with local mainstream primary and secondary schools means many pupils have an added breadth of opportunities for social development and learning.
18. Several pupils from Year 9 onwards are included in GCSE classes in the local high school. Where appropriate, the pupils involved are included in a tutor group in the high school, but can continue to benefit from the security of regular contact with members of Spinghallow staff. Some are now making firm friends with mainstream pupils and are predicted to achieve well in examinations. These arrangements are very well managed and are appropriately driven by the needs, abilities and preferences of each pupil.
19. There has been clear leadership in developing a very positive and responsive approach to pupils. All adults in the school work consistently to develop aspects of personal and social education, such as working together, respect for other people's opinions and self-esteem. Regular 'sleepovers' using a local facility and annual residential trips are eagerly anticipated and help pupils become increasingly independent.
20. A very rich programme of visits and visitors contributes to the curriculum. During the week of inspection a primary group went to Kew Gardens. The school makes very good use of its proximity to galleries and museums. There is also very good evidence of the work of visiting artists, with wonderful metal sculptures, stained glass and other three-dimensional works around the school. Music and drama groups are very well used to reinforce learning and broaden the pupils' experience. There is a very good range of out-of-school clubs and arrangements to allow pupils to participate in sporting events with other schools. The school works very effectively to ensure that pupils can join in by putting families in touch with each other to provide after-school transport.
21. The school has arranged for staff to have time at the beginning and end of the school day to plan and discuss their work. This means that teachers and teaching assistants work very consistently and, where necessary, can be flexible and responsive in maintaining purposeful teaching and learning. Teaching assistants know pupils and their particular needs very well and are particularly effective in providing continuity and individual support throughout the school day.
22. The accommodation has continued to improve since the last inspection but there are still activities that are constrained by a lack of space and specialist facilities. There are too few

areas in the school that can provide quiet, undisturbed places to work with families. The outside space has attractive play equipment and quiet planted areas, but there is no playing field for team games, so these have to be played on the playground's hard surface. Accommodation for design and technology is limited and restricts the range of resistant materials used in lessons. In the science laboratory there are too few gas outlets and associated equipment with the result that the scope pupils have to learn by experimentation is greatly reduced.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety very well. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance. The extent to which pupils are consulted and the school responds to their views is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have excellent and trusting relationships with all adults in the school.
- Day-to-day attention to health and safety matters is very good.
- Excellent relationships ensure that staff provide pupils with a high level of pastoral support.
- There are excellent arrangements to help new pupils settle into school.
- Pupils are involved well in the school's work and development.

### **Commentary**

23. The school provides a very happy environment that is conducive to learning. Pupils feel very secure and well cared for and they have excellent and trusting relationships with all adults. There are excellent induction arrangements for the youngest pupils and also for new arrivals at all stages to help them settle in to the school. Pupils were seen to care for and help each other. Parents confirm that their children love coming to school. Their healthy and safe living is promoted through very good personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons. Child protection procedures are very good and there is good liaison with other agencies. Designated members of staff are fully up to date in aspects of first aid, and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Pupils are well supervised at lunch and break times.
24. Pupils are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. Staff are sensitive to individual needs and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance. Every pupil is equally valued. Assessment procedures are good overall, and they are very good for supporting the personal development of the pupils. Pupils are well informed of their personal targets which are discussed with teachers and are communicated to parents, and they are also involved in evaluating their own work. Pupils returning to mainstream education are given good support and guidance.
25. Consultation with pupils is good. Pupils discuss class and playground rules and are enthusiastic members of the school council through which they have contributed towards a sponsored walk for charity and are actively involved in publicising and collecting money for 'Red Nose Day'. Staff listen to them and whenever possible act on what they say.
26. The careers guidance provided to the older pupils is good through, for example, the local Connexions service. Work experience placements are offered to pupils and there are many opportunities for further education in colleges.

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

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Links with the local community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. The support by the school for pupils with autism in other schools is very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in very high regard and have confidence in the work of the headteacher and staff.
- Very effective links with the community and other schools and colleges make a very good contribution to learning.
- The school is providing skilled support to mainstream schools and services in the area.
- Parents are helped to support their children's learning at school and at home very effectively and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The quality of information given on annual reports is not consistently good across the school.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents are very pleased with their children's achievements. These views are amply demonstrated by the very positive views expressed in the parents' questionnaire, at the parents' meeting before the inspection and in conversations during the inspection. They feel the school is very well led and managed and they feel very comfortable about approaching it at any time with any questions, problems or complaints. Parents are also very pleased with the range of support services to help their children and appreciate the quality of care given to their children. They feel that their children are making good progress and are being encouraged to become more mature. They also say that their children love coming to school. The inspection team agrees with all these views.
28. Parents are provided with good levels of information about the school and their children's progress. The very close partnership between parents and teachers ensures concerns and queries can be quickly addressed. Home/school books are well used as a two-way medium for the exchange of information. However, although the quality of information on the progress of the pupils in the annual reports is good overall, this is not consistent in every class. The Family Liaison worker is ensuring that parents are receiving very good support. She encourages parents to become much more involved in the work of the school. This means parents work together with teachers to help pupils to improve, for example, their behaviour and attitudes towards their learning in the home and school environment. Many questionnaires are sent out to parents to identify any needs of pupils and parents, and these are addressed through the many courses that she organises. These courses are greatly appreciated by the parents and they confirm that the school listens to them and acts on their suggestions when appropriate.
29. Some parents come into the school to help with general classroom duties and there are many volunteers to help on school trips. 'Friends of Springhallow' is a very active group of parents and staff. The main aim of the group is to provide social events for families and friends to meet together but they have also raised money to provide equipment to contribute to pupils' learning and help to raise achievement.
30. The very good links with the community are used to pupils' benefit. Many visitors come into the school, such as members of Brentford football club, Middlesex cricket club and many artists and musicians. Pupils' work is displayed at a local gallery and in local shops and they use the nearby swimming pool and library. The wider community is used as an educational resource with visits to such places as the Tate Modern and the Museum of London. There are regular school journeys to, for example, Fulmer Grange and the headteacher organises 'sleepovers' at the Blue Peter Log Cabin.
31. The school has very good links with a number of mainstream schools and it works very well with them to provide very good opportunities and support for the benefit of its pupils. There are very good mechanisms for transferring pupils back into mainstream schools and many opportunities for pupils to attend further education courses at local colleges. There is a very good programme for sharing the expertise of staff with other schools in the area and the school is making arrangements to extend this programme even further in the very near future.

Older pupils gain significant benefits from work experience opportunities and the pupils are given good advice on careers through, for example, the Connexions advisor who regularly comes into the school to give guidance and to conduct interviews.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. The school is managed very well. Governance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher leads with vision and determination and this has brought much improvement.
- The considerable consistency in the way the school is managed arises from staff working systematically and as a very effective team.
- Governors are fully committed and enthusiastic contributors to the school's success.
- Governors, the headteacher and staff work very effectively to identify priorities and plan for development.

### **Commentary**

32. The headteacher provides a very clear vision for the school. Determined development has brought further improvement to the school's provision, the effectiveness of which was already good at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher has a very firm remit for putting the school at the forefront of special school provision for autistic pupils and this has driven continuous efforts to be more effective, particularly by increasing expertise in school and streamlining its work. The gaining of many awards and the pursuit of others are recognition of the school's achievements and a stimulus to move further ahead. This sets very high expectations and is fully supported by all the staff. Staff holding key responsibilities follow the strong direction set by the headteacher and, being very clear in their roles, ensure very effective leadership throughout the school. Leadership is very good in most core areas of the school's work such as the Foundation Stage, English, mathematics and personal, social and health education.
33. The very good understanding of what has to be achieved has ensured successful developments in school and beyond. There has been steady improvement in the skills for supporting autistic pupils and these are of a high order and very consistently applied. While Primary Gold is a recent development into providing for much more challenging pupils, its conception and development have been very well led and this has resulted in rapid success. The school's vision extends well beyond its own boundaries to include in significant ways parents, the community and other schools. It draws upon very good partnerships with other schools to the great benefit of its pupils and gives much appreciated specialist support to many local schools in how they provide for their autistic pupils.
34. The considerable consistency in the way the school is managed arises from staff working very effectively as a team. This leads to very smooth operations based on a high level of regular communication. The success of this is linked to the need for a high level of consistency among staff in order to support autistic pupils. All the way through the school, procedures are made very clear; they are understood and very well adhered to by all staff. This affects significantly how key management roles are performed, and through these, much has been put into ensuring the school operates systematically, for example, in relation to agreed formats for planning and procedures for assessing and recording followed by all staff. This takes on an overall coherence, which is supported with thorough monitoring focused on ensuring the work done contributes meaningfully to pupils' wellbeing, support and achievement. Through much self-evaluation, which is being made increasingly systematic, particularly in relation to pupils' performance, strong links are made to staff performance management and targets for teachers and others. There is an equally good link to professional development. One training initiative standing out is the 'Leading from The Middle' course, which has contributed to



clarifying for middle managers how to meet the expectations of their responsibilities. This is part of a determined thrust towards making a good delegation of key areas of the school's work to talented individuals.

35. Governors are fully committed and enthusiastic contributors to the school's success. They have a wide range of useful experience and expertise. Their roles in relation to the school's work are as sharply defined as those of the staff. They are each linked to a key area of provision, follow a schedule of monitoring these and report back to committees on their findings. Together with a strong flow of information from the school, governors are very well appraised of strengths and weaknesses. They make a very positive contribution towards helping shape its direction. They are fully behind the leadership of the headteacher but are independent in their own clear view of the school's duty to parents and the community and to its future.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,128,808	Balance from previous year	66,617
Total expenditure	1,122,275	Balance carried forward to the next	73,150
Expenditure per pupil	17,265		

36. Governors, the headteacher and staff work very effectively to identify priorities for development. The systematic processes for school improvement planning include everyone in the school and draw purposefully on the issues emerging from school self-evaluation. Finances are very well managed and this ensures modest surpluses accrue regularly to be spent on developing new initiatives. The school has succeeded in increasing the number of places it offers in response to growing demand and has succeeded in making very special provision in Primary Gold for the very challenging pupils that need additional support. Best value from financial decisions is achieved well and most particularly through consultation with parents and schools made possible by the very strong links that exist. However, the mixed picture on the use of interactive whiteboards means the school is not getting as much value as they could from this equipment.

## WORK-RELATED LEARNING

37. Work-related learning was sampled and therefore there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on provision. However, opportunities for work-related learning have been developed as a result of the effective co-ordination of provision. This has ensured it meets statutory requirements. The curriculum has been thoroughly audited to identify where the opportunities to learn about work, and for work, already exist. Further provision for work-related learning has been developed and includes coaching in work-related speaking and listening. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn the skills of successful interviewing, for example, discussing and evaluating what was most effective. Special events, including an annual 'thinking skills' day, focus on the world of work. The school organises visits to workplaces and invites visitors to the school who speak about their occupations. The school links very effectively with a range of specialist careers organisations and colleges of further education and more access to careers information through CD-ROM is being developed. In learning through work, the school provides very good opportunities for well-supported work experience.

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers assess children thoroughly when they are first admitted.
- Teamwork and the very good relationships between children and adults ensure that every child feels valued and is happy to learn.
- Children achieve very well in all the areas of learning as a result of very effective teaching.

#### Commentary

38. The initial assessments contribute towards a Foundation Stage profile for each child and these are well used to note day-to-day achievements. These profiles help to identify what each child should learn next and they show that most children demonstrate a significant improvement in all areas of learning.
39. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and all adults work very well together as a consistent team. The very strong links with parents result in an effective partnership which supports children's development. One child was taught to use the toilet at home with the help of a classroom assistant spending a week with him. Provision in the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff often meet with other Early Years practitioners to keep well informed about new initiatives and projects. The curriculum is well managed. Children are taught together with pupils in Year 1. The class is well organised and work is planned so that each group gets the appropriate activities. A lesson may be started as a full class and while the Year 1 pupils go on to do formal work on the topic, children take part in structured play. Children have appropriate access to a good outdoor play area. There was no provision for children under the age of five at the time of the last inspection and therefore no judgement on improvement compared to then is possible.
40. Children achieve very well in their **personal and social development**, a particularly important area for autistic children. Many arrived with difficult behaviour and have grown to be part of a happy and settled group. They now have very good attitudes to learning and generally behave very well. Children sit together for greetings, songs and stories. As they are praised warmly by adults, they try very hard and learn to concentrate, sit still and contribute to discussions. Children are very happy to participate and they enjoy all of their activities. In the playground, they share their toys when reminded and take turns with each other. Children make very good progress in becoming independent. At meal times, they tolerate different types and textures of food and use cutlery. They put on their shoes and coats and are confident in asking for help. All now use the toilet independently.
41. In **communication, language and literacy**, children achieve very well in communicating. Some children are using good spoken language to comment and ask questions, while others are beginning to use single words and picture communication symbols. Adults make sure that their own communication is clear so that the children are not confused by unnecessary or ambiguous words, underpinning this with signs and symbols where appropriate. Children enjoy looking at books and some recognise several letter sounds.
42. Children achieve very well in **mathematical development**. Some are reaching standards expected of children in mainstream schools – counting the number of legs on a cow, recognising numerals and giving, for example, five mugs when asked. They name shapes such as stars, circles and squares and use simple language to compare a big doll and a little

doll. The highest-attaining children are beginning to add and subtract in practical situations. They sing familiar number songs, such as 'ten fat sausages' and enjoy taking off the two sausages as they go 'pop' and 'bang'. Adults make opportunities throughout the day to reinforce counting skills, applying them at meal times and when doing up buttons.

43. Children achieve very well in **knowledge and understanding of the world**. They use a painting program independently on the computer and build purposefully with a variety of construction materials. Children experiment with wheeled toys on different slopes and surfaces, experiencing pushing and pulling forces. Several show curiosity about the way things work and move, and investigate mechanisms. One child made their own orange juice using water and a squeezed Satsuma.
44. Children achieve very well in **creative development**. They are beginning to join in with the words and actions for number songs and nursery rhymes and play a range of percussion instruments. They have good opportunities to paint, print, colour and make collages. Imaginative play is well modelled by adults. All the children participated very well in a game of being the doctor and looking after the sick baby. Several carried this on independently, feeding and cuddling the doll with care.
45. The classroom has an attractive and very well resourced outdoor play area including wheeled toys, a climbing frame and slide, decked area with wide steps, play train and house. Children are very well motivated to play energetically and this contributes to them achieving very well in their **physical development**. During outdoor play time, most children choose to move happily between several different activities, showing good progress in their play and independence skills. Children run, climb and jump skilfully with a good awareness of others around them. Manipulation skills are well developed through the many opportunities to co-ordinate the use of hands and fingers such as when drawing, cutting, threading and gluing.

## **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

#### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Pupils in the Primary Gold class are taught very effectively.
- The emphasis placed on pupils' learning to communicate effectively leads to very good achievement.
- Lessons throughout the school are characterised by clear learning objectives with activities well adapted to suit the learning needs of individuals.
- Very good leadership and management have led to a recent and very good level of improvement.

#### **Commentary**

46. In Primary Gold, the Years 1 to 4 pupils achieve very well because the difficult behaviour caused by their autism is addressed consistently and successfully, with the result that they settle to learning. Lessons are designed to appeal to all the senses and this helps pupils to learn. Pupils are very attracted to the big books, for example, which hold their attention. Classroom assistants give pupils a high level of individual attention and their very good support means all pupils, whatever their ability, make very good progress. Pupils enjoy listening to stories and in their enthusiasm they increase the words they know. As a result,

pupils achieve a very good vocabulary. They develop reading skills by hearing and saying first letter sounds and rapidly learn to read simple words. Pupils overwrite and copy letters and words and enjoy crayoning images they have described in the lesson.

47. Achievement is good, overall. However, in speaking and listening it is very good as a result of the strong emphasis on pupils learning to communicate. This is very effectively accomplished with a high level of expertise applied by all staff in helping autistic pupils overcome their difficulties in this respect. To communicate, signing is used where appropriate and this helps pupils who find vocalising difficult to develop understanding. Achievement in reading and writing is good. Most pupils cope with increasing independence in writing and reading and work effectively in groups.
48. Teaching and learning are good overall. Classes are well managed, and behaviour is very good as a result. In Years 3 to 6, pupils respond very well to praise and the very consistent management of their behaviour. There is a high level of well-focused individual support. Pupils learn well in pairs, small groups and individually because support for collaborative and independent learning is specifically addressed and well planned. Lessons, well informed by the National Literacy Strategy, have very clear objectives, so pupils know exactly what they must achieve. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make good progress in writing. Good use of word frames that support well-structured writing help them to express their ideas clearly. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make very good oral contributions to lessons. In their reading of 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time', they identified from their reading of the text the main character's obsessions. One higher-attaining pupil in Year 10 has lessons in English and English literature at the local high school where he is making very good progress and on track for achieving grades A\*-C in each subject.
49. The subject leaders for English have a clear vision of how standards can be further improved linked to a recent ambitious level of subject development. The school has taken good professional advice on the curriculum, which takes full account of the National Literacy Strategy. The range of resources has been improved. Reading is being further promoted with activities at the public library and the introduction of Readathon and book week events. There are frequent poetry assemblies. Management is very good, with teaching and learning very well monitored. Since the last inspection, standards in speaking and listening have improved due in part to some additional lessons in a mainstream school and also to interventions by the speech and language therapist. Assessment is now very good and in line with school policy.

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

50. Language and literacy are well promoted and carefully monitored across the curriculum. Speaking and listening are key strengths, very well supported by the speech and language therapist. In many lessons pupils are encouraged to express opinions and have good opportunities for explaining why they think as they do. Some address the whole school in assembly and they have good opportunities for public performance in the Christmas pantomime. Pupils are given good opportunities to read in many subjects. In religious education, for example, they read aloud in unison. Higher-attaining pupils read text on Internet websites and from CD-ROMs to find out facts for simple research activities. As part of their studies in personal and social education, pupils write letters on behalf of prisoners of conscience. Writing is particularly notable in geography and religious education. Word frames are well used throughout the school to enable pupils to write effectively. Examples of writing are, at best, thoughtful, well expressed, carefully re-drafted and well presented, often using a word processor.

## Modern foreign languages

51. Modern foreign language was not a focus for inspection and one lesson was seen in **French**. In this one lesson, teaching and learning were good. The pupils, in Years 10 and 11, achieved well in responding to a simple request in French for street directions. In this lesson they showed themselves capable of very basic conversational French. The lesson was well planned with well-judged and appropriate use of the target language. Pupils learned well because the learning activities provided enough challenge to keep them stimulated and interested, whilst allowing them to experience a measure of success.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Assessment is good and well used to develop planning and to track pupils' progress.
- Achievement in number is very good as this has a high priority in teaching mathematics.
- The subject is very well managed.

### Commentary

52. Overall, teachers set high expectations for learning and lessons are brisk and purposeful. As a result, pupils are motivated and challenged to do their best, so that they concentrate, reflect on their learning and work hard. This was particularly evident in a lesson in Primary Gold where very effective routines alternated mathematical activities with very short reward periods and pupils were kept on task for a long and productive lesson. Here a wide variety of methods are used in teaching mathematics and very good planning means tasks are closely matched to pupils' diverse abilities.
53. The assessment system is relatively new and has not yet been used to analyse and develop provision, but the data is now there to allow the subject leaders to do this. Individual work is well supported and monitored and independence is encouraged so pupils are confident when they come to do tests and examinations. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and behaviour is very well managed. This enables lessons to proceed smoothly. Resources are of good quality and pupils learn to work in a tidy and uncluttered way so that distractions are minimised. This helps pupils to concentrate calmly on what they are doing.
54. Pupils enjoy the routines and structures of number work. By the end of Year 2, pupils are improving their recognition of numbers up to 20, they develop their skills in addition and subtraction of single-digit numbers and they recognise common flat and solid shapes. They use pennies to work out the cost of two items. Higher-attaining pupils count in twos and lower-attaining pupils recognise numbers up to nine. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils double three-figure numbers in their heads and are beginning to estimate distances up to 50cm with reasonable accuracy. By the end of Year 9, pupils identify prime numbers and have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. The highest-attaining pupils attending mathematics lessons at a local high school are predicted to achieve the standards expected in the national tests at the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11, several higher-attaining pupils each year gain GCSE A\* - G grades in mathematics. Others achieve the Entry Level Certificate in mathematics. They also use their mathematical skills effectively within Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) challenges, for example to plan and cost projects.
55. Achievement in the application and use of mathematics is satisfactory because many pupils have difficulty in thinking through mathematical problems and understanding what is being asked. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well in this respect because of the good

opportunities provided for the practical applications of mathematics. Achievement in other aspects of mathematics is good. Pupils use standard measures of length accurately. Lower-attaining pupils recognise mathematical signs and symbols and use these appropriately in writing numerical equations. Almost all know that a right angle is one turn and identify and name different sorts of angles. Higher-attaining pupils know that a straight line is 180 degrees.

56. Good computer software is effectively used to support learning, but interactive whiteboards are not yet fully exploited. The new subject leaders have a very clear vision for developing the subject, are monitoring teaching and planning carefully and developing provision very effectively. This, together with the consistently good teaching and learning through the school, represents good improvement since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. Numeracy is promoted appropriately in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils read scales on thermometers. In design and technology, pupils learn to weigh and measure out ingredients and have opportunities to compare American and Imperial measures for recipes. In information and communication technology, pupils learn to represent and interpret data.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good planning provides many varied and active learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Too little expertise in teaching science from Year 3 to Year 11 means that pupils are not as challenged by their work as they could be.
- While there has been a steady development of science since the last inspection, improvement has been uneven across the school.

### **Commentary**

58. In Years 1 and 2, lessons are organised and presented extremely well and succeed in being interesting and enjoyable to all pupils. This is accomplished with the very good understanding of each pupil's learning difficulties and expertise in dealing with their autism, which is shared by teachers and classroom assistants. This results in very good achievement in Years 1 and 2. The science curriculum has been adapted very successfully and maintains a good emphasis on pupils' learning by predicting and testing pupils' own hypotheses. Pupils in Year 1 learnt much in a wide variety of activities that had very clear objectives and high demands. A particular strength was a sustained focus on pupils' communication and vocabulary. They learnt and said the names of farm and zoo animals and sorted these accordingly. They also counted them and the number of their legs, ears and eyes. This meant they made very good progress by assembling a cut-out picture of a pig, getting all the body parts in their correct number and relationship. In Year 2, pupils speculated on whether different materials were rigid or flexible. Very good use of an Internet website for school science projected onto an interactive whiteboard meant pupils could choose different materials, say if these would bend easily or not and operate the program to test if they were correct. The strongly visual character of this work suited pupils' learning needs very closely and pupils increased the accuracy of their predictions as the lesson progressed.
59. The curriculum taught between Years 3 and 11 contains a good breadth of study, leading to pupils achieving satisfactorily. While teaching and learning are satisfactory, there is insufficient regard paid to pupils' learning by using scientific methods and this restricts any better achievement. While the extent to which pupils conduct experiments is limited by their

autism, the opportunities to carry out meaningful investigations are nevertheless underdeveloped. This is largely because there is too little expertise in teaching science and leading groups through their own experiments. In each lesson, scientific problems are soundly posed, tested and conclusions drawn based on experiments demonstrated by the teacher. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved as active learners. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, working on whether metals expanded when heated, watched a test being carried out, which the teacher repeated three times. The group was capable of testing the hypothesis alone. The science laboratory has only two gas taps and they are placed next to each other, making it almost impossible for heat experiments to be carried out by pupils. The science underpinning lessons is often not explained effectively and what pupils have learnt is not tested sufficiently through close questioning. Science resources are not always used effectively. The teaching potential of interactive whiteboards is largely untapped in Years 3 to 11. Microscopes were not used when they would have been helpful to Years 3 and 4 pupils working with plants and learning about the conditions for growth.

60. The provision in science has not altered significantly since the last inspection and improvement has been satisfactory. The role and responsibilities of subject leadership are clear and these are carried out satisfactorily. The development of resources and the curriculum has continued and this has been supported with training courses and expert advice. The benefits are more evident in Years 1 and 2 and slow to take root beyond this. However, through the effective monitoring of provision in science, by senior staff and the subject leader, strengths and weaknesses are understood. The development planning process for science sets relevant priorities for improving provision and these are linked closely with the performance management objectives for the subject leader. This currently prioritises and is leading to building closer links with the science department of the local high school, which at present provides GCSE science courses for a few higher-attaining pupils. A stronger relationship is rightly seen as important in strengthening science expertise and approaches to teaching.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in all years.
- There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection brought about by good leadership and effective management.
- Some staff are not fully confident in their use of computers, despite attending good training courses.

### **Commentary**

61. Achievement is good throughout the school because pupils are well taught. Their knowledge is reinforced by the good opportunities for using computers in many lessons. Pupils are interested in computers and well motivated to use them. The ICT curriculum is good and builds pupils' knowledge well so they rapidly experience success. Older pupils follow an accredited course and they find this motivating. In a lesson involving Years 1 and 2, pupils delighted in a program that allowed them to make choices which had differing outcomes. They concentrated very well and understood how to click and move the mouse to operate a program.
62. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, pupils do well to enter a series of commands into the program of a robotic toy and make it move in a square formation. Pupils in these years also achieve well in developing word-processing skills and in selecting and importing pictures from separate files to illustrate their writing. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils improve their word-processing by changing font, printing capital letters and saving a file. Pupils use the word processor to design advertisements, incorporate pictures and evaluate the effect. There is evidence of

pupils' capacity in these years to conduct PowerPoint presentations. Older pupils use skills of modelling to help them make calculations. All become more adept at computer processes to help them in a variety of their learning tasks.

63. Teaching is good. Teachers have been trained, although not all are yet fully confident computer users. Their knowledge is, however, sufficient for most lessons. Lessons are well planned. Resources are attractive to pupils and appropriate. Pupils learn well, showing interest, concentration and confidence. They behave well and maintain their interest.
64. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has had the vision to see how the subject could be improved, and his good management skills have put this into effect. All teaching and learning are well monitored, with pupils and staff well supported.
65. Since the last inspection, both provision for the subject and the achievement of pupils have improved well. The co-ordinator has produced a good strategic action plan and evolved a clear and comprehensive policy for the subject. Schemes of work have been well thought out and carefully adapted from a range of sources and are now suitable and worthwhile. Teaching has improved in response to training. The school now has a dedicated computer suite. Assessment of pupils' work has been improved and is now in line with school policy. Resources have been improved to include alternative keyboards, the lack of which was criticised in the last report. Programmable toys and other control equipment have now been provided and these are well used to extend pupils' learning. Statutory requirements are now fully met.

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

66. ICT has been developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. All subject plans now contain an element of ICT and this provision is carefully monitored. Interactive whiteboards are used often by teachers to project lesson plans so pupils may read and follow these. However, some teachers make little additional use of this equipment, although there are occasions when interactive whiteboards are used extremely effectively to promote learning, as was the case in a science lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils.
67. Generally, pupils use word-processing and a range of other computer applications in subjects. They have little difficulty in using CD-ROMs or accessing websites on the Internet. Pupils, for example, find recipes for food technology by this means. In mathematics, CD-ROMs are well used by pupils to find the words of the songs which help them to count. Pupils control robots in design and technology. Programs helping sound sequencing and sound sampling are well used in music. However, in science, the digital microscope and data logging equipment are not used even though lesson topics would have benefited from this.

### **HUMANITIES**

68. **Geography** and **history** were not a focus for inspection and no judgement is made on the effectiveness of provision in either subject. Three lessons were seen in geography. Teaching was good overall. Lessons were well planned, with learning activities well adapted to suit pupils' different abilities. The lessons went at a brisk pace and gave pupils good opportunities for active learning. Pupils achieved well in their identification of key features of economic development, climate and its side effects, and in the investigation of the geography of rivers. One lesson in history was seen. Pupils achieved well in comparing maps of their immediate area which had been published in the last 150 years. The teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard to point out what had changed and what had stayed the same. The pupils successfully identified the spread of urban areas and understood its cause as proximity to London. Pupils were interested because they knew the area they were studying and could visualise the places named on the map.



## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education is taught in very interesting and relevant ways in Years 1 to 6 and results in very good achievement.
- In Years 7 to 11, pupils learn about different religions but lessons are not always planned effectively to ensure pupils are consistently well challenged.

### Commentary

69. Through religious education, pupils in Years 1 to 6 learn in a very effective manner about themselves and the world around them. Topics are well chosen for promoting positive values, for example that each individual is special and how this is celebrated. Religious education makes a significant contribution to these pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The substantial expertise in teaching pupils with autism means there is a very good level of communication with pupils as well as by them. Pupils' exploration of topics has important opportunities for them to listen and say what they think or know. They are greatly encouraged to work together and share their interests. This is achieved by the very skilful methods used by staff to attract and hold each pupil's attention. Occasionally this is with good use of an interactive whiteboard to present information and visual effects, although further good use of the whiteboard is too limited. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop very good awareness of the cycle of life and growth and, as a result of high quality teaching, relate this very well to themselves and others. The objects and images chosen for teaching, for example, a short video of an egg hatching, are a source of enjoyment. These resources serve very well as one of many good strategies for communicating the desired messages about birth and life to a group with the most complex learning difficulties. By Year 6, pupils know about the character of different religions and learning is much supported by interesting and good quality religious artefacts. Years 5 and 6 pupils learnt about Judaism through reading and examining an example of the Torah and went on to present an assembly to the school on facts about the Jewish faith.
70. A well-planned religious education curriculum succeeds in pupils from Years 7 to 11 learning satisfactorily, overall, about the major religions. The quality of learning was very good in one lesson exploring the Sikh faith. This was very well planned and the way in which the topic was presented interested pupils. They enthusiastically recalled what was remembered from previous lessons, for example that a Sikh temple is a Gurdwara. Large colourful posters of a Gurdwara's interior acted as a very useful talking point and the teacher skilfully led the group into identifying key features and learning the correct vocabulary for describing them. Pupils achieved very well in developing their knowledge and understanding, which is a good preparation for a forthcoming visit to a Sikh temple. While this lesson was a good match to pupils' abilities, other lessons are not planned as carefully. A Year 7 group, having enjoyed and learnt much about Moses and the Ten Commandments, found it well beyond them to write ten of their own rules. In Years 10 and 11, pupils study religious education as part of their Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course. While the lesson was organised adequately in relation to pupils' needs, pupils did not learn any more about Christianity than pupils in Year 6. The challenge in the work is also reduced sometimes because of the way class groups are arranged. While there is distinct planning for what should be taught for each year group, where classes mix the year groups, pupils are taught only the topic for one of the year groups involved.
71. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The strengths seen then are still prominent and the standards achieved in Years 1 and 2, in particular, have risen as a result of improved teaching and learning. Currently, the subject leader is a temporary teacher who

has not held the role for long. The school's expectations for leadership and management in this role are very clear and well supported. This ensures that the co-ordination of provision in religious education is sound.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

72. Three lessons were seen in **design and technology**. This provides insufficient evidence to judge provision and achievement. However, pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions indicate that pupils are provided with at least a satisfactory range of work. An issue from the last inspection was the lack of opportunities for pupils to work in resistant materials. This has been addressed satisfactorily with opportunities for pupils to construct using mainly paper and card. However, fewer opportunities for pupils to work in wood, metal and plastic restrict their learning. Teaching of design and technology in lessons seen was satisfactory, although the development of social and communication skills was very well addressed. For example, in a food technology lesson, Years 10 and 11 pupils tasted scones and researched recipes in preparation for making their own the following week. Pupils showed that they already knew what sort of ingredients went into scones and were aware of health, safety and hygiene issues around food. All the work was well supported, pupils were polite and co-operative but there were few opportunities for new learning, design or discoveries.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

73. **Art and design** and **music** were not a focus for inspection. One lesson was seen in art and design and two lessons were seen in music. Therefore, it is not possible to judge provision in either subject.
74. In the lesson seen in art and design, the high level of expertise involved in planning and carrying out activities created a very good challenge for the group of Years 3 and 4 pupils. They thoroughly enjoyed developing painted images involving a self-portrait and an animal, an idea based on the paintings of Frida Kahlo. The work gave rise to animated conversations between pupils and they put a lot of thought and care into the making of their work.
75. Around the school, art work on display showed a very wide range of interesting themes using a good variety of materials and techniques, including two and three-dimensional pieces. Work done in lessons is regularly supplemented with art projects led by visiting artists. This has resulted in a range of work achieving high standards for the pupils involved. The active programme of visiting artists contributes much to the school's very good provision in the arts.
76. In the lessons seen in music, teaching and learning were at least satisfactory. Pupils' work, planning, displays around the school and a short discussion with the subject manager indicated that pupils are provided with a suitable range of work. Pupils sing tunefully in assemblies and some younger pupils are already confident to lead the full primary department in a call and response song. The younger pupils with the most complex needs know a good number of appropriate action songs and enjoy joining in with these. Secondary pupils were learning to use a computer program to distort and sequence sounds to produce a space 'sound-scape'. There are also very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play African drums and keyboards and to participate in school performances.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

77. One lesson was seen in **physical education** and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision and achievement. However, planning and discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils are provided with a broad and interesting range of work. A good variety of professionals also visit to coach pupils. These include members of staff from Brentford Football Club and Middlesex Cricket and Tennis Clubs. In the games lesson seen,

secondary pupils were practising football skills and participating in a game. Teaching was

good and the lesson was skilfully structured so that pupils were developing a knowledge of healthy exercise and good team spirit as well as games skills.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very good throughout the school and pupils achieve very well in PSHE.
- There is a consistent and positive approach to PSHE that permeates the whole work of the school.
- The planned curriculum is satisfactory but the additional opportunities across the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities are very good.
- PSHE and citizenship is very well led and managed.

### **Commentary**

78. Teaching is very good. For example, in Years 10 and 11, pupils were learning about the work of Amnesty International. Teaching was informed by very good subject knowledge and provided good quality resources, such as copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Amnesty magazines, so, appropriately, pupils had adult materials to work from. Good links were made to previous lessons and pupils remembered the names of other non-violent protestors and were eager to learn more. Adults explained unfamiliar vocabulary and added details to the articles. This enabled most pupils to imagine something of what it was like to be a prisoner of conscience or a member of a persecuted family. In a well-organised lesson for younger pupils, they were encouraged to talk to each other about their favourite activities. Where pupils found this difficult, teaching effectively modelled and supported conversational skills, helping everyone to make very good progress in communicating with their peers.
79. PSHE is part of all aspects of school life. A strong emphasis is put on developing pupils' personal and social skills throughout the school day and pupils respond very well. The gentle and consistent approach to all members of the school and the positive behaviour management are particularly effective in developing pupils' self-esteem and co-operation. This helps create a safe environment in which pupils are given independence and responsibility. This philosophy is also shared with families so that home and school work very well together. Inclusive lessons in other schools, reading buddies, after-school activities and residential trips also make a major contribution to developing friendships, independence and responsibility. Pupils understand that there are wider and more interesting things that are available to them as they get older and move through the school. This prepares them well for leaving school.
80. A school council has recently been established, so pupils are beginning to learn about electing representatives and contributing to the decision-making process in the school. There are also plans to become part of the Regional School Council. Fundraising is frequent for regular causes such as Jeans for Genes and for events such as the recent tsunami, so pupils learn that they can be part of a worldwide community response to an international tragedy.
81. Leadership of the subject is enthusiastic and effective. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored and thoughtful support is given to class teachers. Assessment is in place and can now be used to evaluate and develop provision. Good links to other professionals and drama groups effectively extend and enhance provision, for example in respect of drugs and sex education. Very good provision has been well maintained and continues to develop, meeting well the requirements for citizenship, sex and drugs education. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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