

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANN'S SCHOOL

Hanwell

LEA area: Ealing

Unique reference number: 101971

Headteacher: Gillian Carver

Lead inspector: George Derby

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 February 2005

Inspection number: 268641

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 special
Age range of pupils:	11 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	65
School address:	Springfield Road Hanwell London
Postcode:	W7 3JP
Telephone number:	0208 567 6291
Fax number:	0208 840 4664
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Stephen Silver
Date of previous inspection:	January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Ann's School is a maintained day special school for boys and girls with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple difficulties (PMLD) and pupils with autism. The number of boys is significantly greater than the number of girls, which is typical of a special school of this type. About 40 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils mainly come from the borough of Ealing. All pupils and students have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Pupils entering the school now have much more complex needs than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is usually very low because of their special educational needs.

The school site consists of an Edwardian main building and a large number of temporary buildings, accommodating 27 Post-16 students. A new building, which contains specialist rooms for science/design and technology, art and design, and music with an upper floor dedicated to Post-16 provision, is nearing completion. The main building and the new building have been beset by a number of problems, work is behind schedule and the school has found itself in considerable difficulty with resources and facilities often not being available. In addition, staff and pupils have had to move classrooms many times while building work has taken place.

Most pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Seventy per cent of pupils are at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language. Twenty one per cent are white, while 17 per cent are from Indian backgrounds and 14 per cent Pakistani. Twenty three per cent are from Black or Black-British heritages. The remainder come from a wide range of other heritages.

Since the last inspection the school has developed well-established inclusion arrangements with a local mainstream secondary school and some outreach facilities. The local education authority (LEA) has undertaken a review of its special educational needs provision. St Ann's is now beginning to take pupils from Year 7 (originally pupils started in Year 8) and numbers are beginning to increase. The school has received many awards since the last inspection: Artsmark in 2001, Healthy Schools Award in 2002, Investor in People (IIP), School Achievement Award and a Record of Achievement award in 2003, and the Princess Diana Award in 2004. A new headteacher was appointed to the school in January 2002 and a new deputy headteacher in September 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25349	George Derby	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Science Art and design Design and technology
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
21899	Gillian Lawson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Personal, social, health and citizenship education Post-16 Religious education Work-related learning
10099	Sue Lewis	Team inspector	English Music French Special educational needs Physical education
17288	Megan Warner	Team inspector	English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Ann's School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. However, the school has faced a number of major barriers to its work over recent years, particularly in relation to the remodelling of the accommodation and the depletion of the senior management team. Pupils' academic achievements are sound overall. All pupils make very good gains in their personal development and against their personal targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision for students in the Post-16 department is good.
- The 'can do' ethos of the school and the very good care for pupils strongly support their personal development; this is especially strong in the Post-16 department.
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their disposition to learn is very strong.
- Support for pupils' self-expression and communication is good; signing is very effective, although more use could be made of symbols and objects to aid communication.
- Staff insist on high standards of behaviour and manage pupils very well.
- Music and art are very strong features of the school.
- Assessment, including the use of information and the monitoring of data, is unsatisfactory.
- Aspects of information and communication technology provision are unsatisfactory.
- Governors do not fulfil all their statutory duties and some aspects of health and safety require attention.
- The school improvement planning to guide the school's work is insufficiently sharp.

Improvement since the school was inspected in 1999 has been satisfactory overall. Pupils with complex difficulties are now better included in lessons and teaching mostly takes better account of their needs. The use of communication aids has increased, although there is still room for more improvement. Planning is much better and the outcomes for pupils with differing needs are identified in the best practice. Strategic planning has been affected by the upheaval caused by building work and the plan to guide improvement is relatively new and not properly costed. The school does have a clear view of where it needs to improve; capacity for improvement is good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall with some good features. Achievement in English, mathematics and religious education is good, and in science and ICT it is satisfactory. Writing is satisfactory but more use could be made of ICT by the pupils themselves. Weaknesses in the planning for ICT mean that it is up to individual teachers to build on what pupils have learned earlier. This works reasonably well but means that higher attainers are not always stretched enough. Not all pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn a modern foreign language and are unable to make the progress they could in this subject. Achievement in Post-16 is good with very good features. This is because of the well-tailored courses for students; however, college provision is lacking until students' final year. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who are learning English as an additional language make sound progress. The very good emphasis on communication using signs means that they are well supported in their communication. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and autism achieve as well as the rest of the pupils.

The pupils' personal qualities are very good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good overall. Pupils are very keen to come to school and enjoy their lessons very much. Their attitudes are very positive and their behaviour is very good. The way the school promotes good relationships and harmony is excellent. As a result, relationships in the school are very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop personally, for example in the peer signing group. Pupils have many ways to express themselves, including through art and music. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. It is good in the Post-16 department. Support staff are used very well and are a very effective part of the staff team. Difficult behaviour by pupils is managed very well. Pupils are encouraged well by interesting and exciting activities. As a result, they work very hard. Pupils are mostly fully included in lessons and pupils with PMLD have work planned that builds on their skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment is unsatisfactory; this is a key area for the school's development. While there are some procedures in place, these are not systematic or used sufficiently effectively. The very good care and welfare for pupils, the good links with parents and very good use of the community, contribute to the pupils' opportunities and achievement. Links with other schools are good overall, especially with the local secondary school. The school is aware of a number of health and safety concerns, mainly related to the re-build project, identified during the inspection. The accommodation is broadly satisfactory, although the main building lacks many facilities for disabled pupils and the acoustics are still poor. This has been identified in the last two inspections.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The work of the governors is just satisfactory overall but they do not ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They know strongly what the school does well but they lack sufficient knowledge about what needs improving. The work of senior staff is also satisfactory. They are more involved in management of their own separate areas than leadership of the whole school. The leadership of the headteacher and new deputy headteacher is good and they clearly know what improvements need to be made. It is a tribute to the headteacher's leadership that the school has provided a satisfactory education in such difficult circumstances and with a severely reduced senior management team. However, while improvements have been made, some work has been slowed because of the barriers that have affected the school. Leadership of Post-16 is good. The role of subject leaders has improved, although some do not always have a full overview of their subjects, including the quality of teaching. Communication across the school's complex provision is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, carers and pupils have positive views of the school. A small number of parents would like more work for their children to do at home but homework is satisfactory overall and good for the oldest students. Some parents would like to be more fully involved in the Annual Review process; staff and governors are aware of this and are seeking ways of improving it. Parents are also given opportunities to attend regular coffee mornings where relevant speakers are invited, such as clinical psychologists. Pupils enjoy their lessons and activities very much.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Develop assessment procedures and analyse and use the information effectively when planning.
- Improve the planning, leadership and management of ICT and raise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils in ICT.
- Improve school development planning and the senior management and subject leaders' involvement in this and in monitoring.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all pupils have their entitlement to the full National Curriculum, including a modern foreign language.
- Review and update all statutory policies and ensure all the required information is in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.
- Address health and safety matters / procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements, including those with English as an additional language and the various minority ethnic groups, are satisfactory overall. They are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the Post-16 department. Attainment in all subjects is very low because of the nature and extent of pupils' learning difficulties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Post-16 students achieve very well in communication.
- Good achievement is usually due to good teaching and a well thought-out programme of work; occasionally, achievement is very good.
- In ICT and French, the opportunities for learning limit some pupils' achievements.
- Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is good.
- The school has not yet fully developed its whole-school target-setting systems for raising achievement.

Commentary

1. The success of students' achievements in Post-16 is linked to the good quality of teaching and the way the curriculum is planned to effectively meet their needs. The award-bearing courses recognise the broad range of students' achievements and the Post-16 programme prepares them very well for future life. A particularly effective aspect of the Post-16 work is the development of students' communication skills. The very good emphasis on spoken language, together with sign and symbol use, which is promoted effectively in most lessons, means that students get many opportunities to practise their skills. The more able students are given every opportunity to contribute and develop their speaking and listening skills through, for instance, group discussion and presentations to the class. Information and communication technology supports students' learning and communication skills well. All students grow into confident young adults because the school uses communication very much as a way of supporting students' social development.
2. Where teaching and the programme of work that the students follow are good, their achievements are usually good. The needs of pupils with PMLD and autism are now catered for well and this enables them to make progress similar to that of the rest of their peers. Many pupils' additional language needs are catered for through the methods used for all pupils in the teaching of communication skills. New pupils are given considerable bilingual support in their first few terms and this accelerates their understanding of English and of sign. Boys and girls achieve equally well.
3. Achievement is very good in communication and speaking and listening, because of the very good use of sign and sensitive support of all staff. Staff demonstrate expertise in gaining pupils' attention so that pupils show interest in people and events around them. Good use of sensory resources helps the pupils to be involved and switch technology is used to activate a response more accurately. More able pupils are consistently challenged and supported towards saying more, becoming more interested in what others have to say, and using their language and communication in more complex ways. Early reading skills and an interest in symbols, text and books are systematically supported. Symbols are used well to help pupils remember and read back their experiences. All pupils make good strides in their interest in books. Writing is less well developed but achievement is satisfactory overall. There are fewer opportunities provided for writing, other than for handwriting skills. Pupils could achieve even more in writing if the school used the resources it has better - in other words, if there were

more use of symbols, ICT, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and other resources to enable pupils to write more independently.

4. In mathematics, a well-structured programme which embodies the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy enables the pupils of all abilities to maximise their potential. Teachers go to great lengths to find ways of making learning relevant for the widely differing needs of pupils and the sensory approaches are successful with pupils with the most complex learning needs. All this helps the pupils to achieve well. Similarly in religious education, the broad curriculum with its strong links supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The use of visits and visitors helps pupils to develop their understanding of the values and practices of the major world religions well. Consequently, achievement is good in the subject.
5. Occasionally, the work seen is of a very good standard for the pupils' abilities and pupils achieve very well. In art and design the pupils show their highly creative skills through the two and three-dimensional work which they frequently exhibit. Their skills are developed very well and their imaginations stimulated by the infectious enthusiasm of the teaching, which is highly expert. Similarly in music, because music pervades the whole life of the school and is used very effectively to help pupils engage with lessons and respond to others, the pupils achieve very well. The high achievement is also due to it being very well taught by an expert teacher. The pupils respond very well indeed. A very good range of resources, visitors and visits enrich pupils' musical experiences.
6. In some subjects, the pupils' achievements could be a lot better. Although achievement is satisfactory in ICT, this is merely because each individual teacher knows the pupils well and thinks of ideas and ways of extending what they have learned previously. The programme of work does not do this and teachers have to work out what the next steps are for themselves. This means that the more able pupils do not always do as well as they could. In French, although some Post-16 students showed very good achievement in the lesson seen, not all pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught French (as is required by law) and so do not have the opportunity to make progress in the subject. Achievement in science is sound but could be a lot better if the staffing and resources difficulties were overcome.
7. Pupils achieve very well in their personal targets in their IEPs. These are clear and focus mainly on the pupils' communication, numeracy, and personal development. The PSHCE programme and opportunities to develop personally pervade the school's work and this supports their good achievement. Occasionally, the end-of-day session, used to evaluate pupils' work and achievement during the day, is not focused enough and this is a missed opportunity.
8. The school does not yet have a system for setting whole-school targets. It sets individual P level targets for the pupils in the relevant year groups in English, mathematics and science. However, these do not summate to whole-school targets to raise achievement overall and are not used to raise achievement in important areas of the school's work. The deputy headteacher is reviewing the system. At present, the school does not undertake a sufficiently rigorous analysis which leads to an exploration of why targets are not reached.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' and students' attitudes to school are very good. Their behaviour is also very good. Overall, pupils' and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance and punctuality to school are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students of all ages show a very high level of interest in all aspects of school life.
- Relationships between pupils are excellently promoted; relationships throughout the school are very good.

- Bullying, which is rare, is dealt with very effectively.
- Pupils and students have very well-developed social, moral and cultural awareness.
- Attendance levels continue to improve.

Commentary

9. Pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour were considered to be good at the time of the last inspection and they are now even better. It is evident from parents' opinions and what pupils and students themselves say and indicate that they very much enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in the pleasure that is seen in many lessons. For instance, in a Year 8 literacy lesson pupils laughed out loud at the story owing to the teacher's infectious enthusiasm. As a result, the pupils tried very hard and were able to turn the pages of the book at the right time and sign the various animals and fruits they saw there. Older students are also very eager and talk enthusiastically about other aspects of school life such as swimming, going to college and serving on the school council. Pupils and students have developed a very high level of confidence and self-esteem, which is reflected in, for example, the way they greet and respond to visitors. Such very positive attitudes have a very good effect on learning.
10. Very strong relationships have been maintained since the last inspection as a result of the highly consistent way that adults act as very good role models. For example, all pupils and students are treated with a very high degree of respect and they are expected to, and do, act in the same way with their peers. Many pupils were seen to help each other, pushing wheelchairs across the playground, for example, and all accept the difficulties of others, showing a very high level of patience and understanding. One of the best examples of pupils relating very effectively with each other is in the *Makaton Peer Tutor Group* where pupils work in pairs to improve their signing skills. Tutors are encouraged to praise their partners and to work together to construct sentences and they do so extremely well.
11. Because relationships are so good and expectations of behaviour are consistently very high, there is little bullying or harassment and no racial problems. Pupils who show challenging behaviour are very well managed by staff, either in the classroom or away from other pupils, and senior members of staff are often involved in this. As a result of the support given to these pupils, there have been no recent exclusions, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
12. The provision for pupils' and students' spiritual development has improved and is now good. Similarly, their moral, social and cultural development has also strengthened and is very good. All of this has a very positive impact on the ethos of the school and how pupils and students learn. Although there is no overt planning for a spiritual element in lessons, opportunities do occur. For example, older students were given the opportunity to experience different sensations such as warmth, soft material and fine mists of water while listening to appropriate music. Projects such as the *Thinking Big* art work allowed students to reflect on their own desires and ambitions. In addition, although there is some inconsistency in practice and effectiveness, the tutor period at the end of the day gives pupils an opportunity to think about the work they have done and how they have behaved.
13. Pupils and students show a very high understanding of the needs of others and are encouraged to respect the differences that might be due to race or special educational needs. They are encouraged to be polite to everyone and are reminded about what is right and what is wrong, for example in the way they may greet someone. Adults are very effective role models in the way they show respect for each other, as well as the pupils and students, and this has had a very positive impact on relationships and behaviour in the school.

14. Pupils' and students' social awareness is very well developed through activities such as the *Makaton Peer Tutor Group* where they learn to appreciate giving and receiving help from others. Pupils and students also have many opportunities to experience wider society through visits to local shops and cafes as well as to places further afield such as the London Eye. An improvement since the previous inspection is that students in Post-16 now have the opportunity to go on residential visits, which does much to enhance their social awareness as well as their confidence and self-esteem. Those pupils who are elected to serve on the school council also have an understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community as they discuss issues such as how to improve the playground facilities.
15. There are very many opportunities for pupils and students to understand and appreciate other cultures as well as their own. For example, major religious festivals are celebrated in a very meaningful way that may include pupils visiting local shops to purchase artefacts for Diwali before a whole day's focus on the celebration. Visits are also made to synagogues, Gurdwaras and mosques, and to local churches for major Christian festivals. Art and music feature strongly in pupils' and students' cultural awareness through, for example, appreciating the work of Matisse by creating felt pictures or listening to music from Africa before a story in a literacy lesson or playing steel pans or gamelans. There are also many opportunities to visit art galleries and music venues as well as to work with music therapists. All of the above means that pupils and students have a very wide experience of different aspects of their own and others' cultures.
16. Attendance levels at the school have improved since the previous inspection and are very good, considering the physical difficulties and medical needs of many pupils. This reflects their very positive attitudes to school. All pupils and students are brought to school by bus and so punctuality is only affected by adverse traffic conditions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.9%	School data	0.0%
National data	Not available	National data	Not available

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, although it is good in Post-16. The very good quality of care and welfare, the good links with parents and the very good links with the community effectively contribute to the pupils' education and personal skills. However, the school is aware of a number of health and safety concerns, mainly related to the re-build project, identified during the inspection. The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and good in the Post-16 department. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and assistants provide much encouragement for pupils and students; they have a strong commitment to pupils and want them to do their best.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to lessons.
- Pupils with the most difficult behaviour are managed very well.
- Resources are used to positive effect in lessons.

- Although there are strengths in planning, some aspects need to improve.
- Assessment procedures have improved recently but the school still does not have in place documentation that gives a clear picture of how each pupil is doing in all subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	16 (33%)	19 (39%)	10 (20%)	3 (6%)	0 (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.

17. Although nearly three-quarters of the teaching was good or better, and a third of it was very good or excellent, the amount of satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching reduces its quality overall. This also impacts on pupils' learning, which is satisfactory. The potential for teaching to be good or better is strong. This is because teachers have a high commitment to the school and the pupils and have a strong determination to do better. For instance, they see the positive effects of new technology and wherever possible make good use of the school's interactive whiteboards. They use resources well to engage and involve pupils. A good example was in science where video, pictorial and sensory resources helped to simplify ideas about food chains. Pupils with PMLD and autism are included well in lessons. Those who have English as an additional language are supported well in the development of their communication skills, often through signing and symbols in the same way as the majority of the pupils are taught. However, they have good opportunities for supporting their home language and intensive English language support on entry to school.
18. In three lessons the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. This was because the work did not meet the varied needs of the pupils, was not challenging enough for the pupils who could readily do what they were being asked to undertake, and because a well-thought-out plan for a lesson taken by a teacher other than the class teacher was ignored and pupils were merely entertained. Some temporary staff also showed weaknesses in lessons which were otherwise satisfactory. This was due to their lack of experience with such a diverse range of pupils' needs. Owing to the issues relating to the building and the lack of a full senior staff team, monitoring of teaching to improve its quality, until recently, has not always been systematic.
19. In a few lessons the quality of the teaching was better than the learning because the pupils' challenging behaviour affected the pace of lessons and the learning of others. However, the pupils are always managed very well at these times. Teaching assistants follow the pupils' well-designed behaviour programmes very well indeed. This mostly minimises the effect on the learning of others. In fact, teaching assistants are a very important part of the staff team and make a significant contribution to lessons. Their roles are very well defined and they are clear about what they should do in lessons. They use their initiative to very positive effect and often have to make important decisions about the management of pupils based on the changing dynamics of some groups.
20. Teachers know the personal needs of their pupils well, although a few have difficulty interpreting the National Curriculum Programmes of Study so that they are entirely meaningful and relevant. The Post-16 staff have good command of the courses that students follow and modify them so that the work in lessons is challenging and interesting. They have high expectations of what students will achieve. Teamwork among staff in the department is strong and teachers are skilful at using the practical application of real-life situations to help students prepare for the real world and to learn effectively.

21. There are a few subject specialists, who mostly teach their own subjects; they have a very good knowledge of the pupils and provide work which challenges and helps pupils to learn. Lively, enthusiastic teaching helps the pupils to be highly involved in lessons and work very hard. This is why high quality work is often seen in French, art and design and in music.
22. Planning is satisfactory overall, although there is a mixed picture of strengths and weaknesses. Planning for individual needs is generally much better than seen at the last inspection, although not all staff follow the school's designated approach of identifying the outcomes for the different groups. Some lesson objectives are not clear or specific enough; for instance, in a design and technology lesson the objective was 'to have a design and technology experience'. In the best practice, and there was much of that, teachers identify at three levels what pupils are to do and learn. The timing of each section of the lesson is often identified, although plenary sessions at the end of lessons to assess and reinforce learning are reduced because time has not always been managed well. Information is also provided on the help pupils with English as an additional language will require, although this is often similar to the support most pupils need. It helps to ensure that a range of signs, symbols and objects are used. Effective bilingual support is provided for some pupils. A weakness is that symbols are not always used consistently, although the use of sign is very good. Not all staff evaluate their lessons and pupils' learning. Some do this thoroughly and some not at all. The school recognises this inconsistency and is working hard with the new deputy headteacher to ensure that all staff follow the school's guidance.
23. Assessment and its use are unsatisfactory overall and improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The school has now introduced the use of P scales in core subjects and there are plans to develop this further. In English and mathematics the information gained from this is used well to 'set' pupils. Data is more systematically collected in these subjects, although the analysis of it to support whole-school and group target-setting is only just beginning and it is not consistently shared with other teachers who teach the pupils, so that they can plan to meet differing literacy and numeracy needs in their lessons. In subjects other than English and mathematics assessment and monitoring practice is variable and sometimes very little work is kept to illustrate pupils' progress. Work collected for the pupils' *Record of Achievement* tends more to document activities and experiences than actual achievement. Assessment is good in the Post-16 department and stronger in parts of Years 10 and 11 for those areas where an accredited course is followed, as the requirements for this ensure more consistent practice. Most teachers and teaching assistants do, however, have good informal knowledge of where pupils are in their learning. They give strong support in classes so that pupils' achievements are satisfactory and help pupils to be clear about how they are doing through much personal feedback. However, marking is variable and is not used effectively overall.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but there are still many problems with the building; resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for pupils with additional needs is now good.
- The curriculum for Post-16 students is strong.
- The varied and relevant programmes for students aged 14 to 19 years prepare them well for the next stage of their education; however, there is limited experience of work for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used well.
- Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good overall, although the planning in specific lessons in PSHCE as a subject is still developing.
- The curriculum is planned satisfactorily overall, although some subject planning is limited.

Commentary

24. The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which satisfactorily meet the interests, aptitudes, and complex special educational needs of pupils. Developments in the curriculum have been hampered for the last two years by the disruption that the building programme has brought. However, the particular difficulties of pupils and students with PMLD are now addressed by the new planning, resulting in relevant learning objectives which are mostly well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in lessons through the alternative means of communication used at the school and the work of the bilingual support assistants. This has a positive impact on achievement and is a good improvement since the last inspection. The pupils' learning is aided by good target-setting which helps pupils to make progress in small steps. Targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are well founded and promote maximum progress.
25. Although there are clear curriculum aims, there is no current curriculum policy and this restricts whole-school planning. Provision is appropriately balanced in favour of literacy and numeracy, with strategies well adapted and well emphasised at all stages of pupils' and students' education through good daily programmes of English and mathematics. The breadth of curricular opportunities in English, mathematics, religious education and in Post-16 is good and they are very good in music and art and design.
26. The school teaches a wide range of subjects, carefully and effectively adapted to reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, most pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not learn a modern foreign language and some pupils do not have access to parts of design and technology (resistant materials) owing to the demolition of the old building and the delayed opening of the new school, which will house a specialist room for the subject. Planning is out of date and is designed for pupils who are more able than the pupils currently entering the school. The scheme of work for ICT is underdeveloped and does not help teachers when planning activities which are meant to build on what pupils have learned previously. This is unsatisfactory. Religious education is well planned and provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences.
27. The provision in PSHCE overall is good, with pupils and students making very good progress in relation to their individual targets. Lessons in sex education and relationships, drugs awareness and citizenship form part of a satisfactory, developing programme of PSHCE. The new co-ordinator has audited the provision to ensure it contains all the required elements and is incorporated in other subject planning. There is an appropriately generous time allowance for the subject and generally it is used well. Where planning is less secure, time is wasted and pupils make less progress.
28. The school is successful in its aim for all students to leave school with awards from the courses they follow and to go on to education at local colleges. Pupils at the end of Year 9 begin an induction module which is a good preparation for their entry into Years 10 and 11. The recently-introduced ASDAN Transition Challenge in Year 10 provides sound progression routes to Post-16 education. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities have access to a wide range of activities which are fully accredited. A weakness is that, although art work is a significant strength of the school, pupils leave Year 11 with no award.
29. Pupils in Year 11 have limited experience of work and careers preparation from outside advisors. Work with the careers service and *Connexions*, apart from transition interviews as part of the review process, begins in Year 12. Year 11 pupils have sessions at a local college giving tasters of courses and work-sampling rather than actual work experience placements. This restricts their opportunities for work-related activity.
30. The curriculum for Post-16 students is very well planned and they have access to a good range of experiences which prepare them well for the transition to education post 19. Courses are well structured, well organised and well resourced to ensure all students' needs are matched by the appropriate resources. Students respond positively and gain socially and

academically from these experiences. They work on externally-accredited courses, both at school and at college, for 'Life and Living Skills' and 'Towards Independence'. Students have well-collated photographic evidence of their achievements and are confident to show their records and work in interviews at local colleges. There are good college links for many students and over the last four years St Ann's has had link courses with West Thames College in Isleworth for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is expected that some pupils will transfer to the full time course in September.

31. The school involves many visiting artists, performers and musicians who enrich the curriculum. A good example of this is the school's close association with a local drama company 'Impact'. Many ex-students from the school are members of this company and during the inspection they were rehearsing a production for the following week. Each player was paired with a Post-16 student, well directed by the company leader, and they produced a confident, exhilarating and very professional performance. Pupils have also taken part in a major production, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with Triffid Productions at the Questors Theatre. In addition, participation in the arts is good through pupils and students having the opportunity to perform in drama productions as well as art projects such as the *Thinking Big* work undertaken with a visiting artist. The performing arts, music and art are particular strengths of the curriculum.
32. The school's short lunch break makes it difficult to run any lunchtime clubs and there are logistical problems in relation to organising after-school clubs due to transport. However, the school is looking into grant aid which might support such developments. To compensate for the lack of clubs the school ensures that pupils and students have many opportunities to participate in visits and for older students this now includes residential visits. Pupils and students also take part in other activities such as attending Makaton conferences and older students participate in *Team Enterprise* activities. As a consequence of all the above, pupils' and students' learning and experiences are extended well.
33. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum with a mix of long-established staff and those new to the school. Subjects such as art and design, French and physical education benefit very well from the expertise of specialist teachers. Teachers are now more experienced in the teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, which is an improvement since the previous inspection and has led to these pupils and students being more fully included. Occasionally, temporary staff find it hard to meet the diverse range of pupils' needs. The number and experience of the support staff are very good. Many provide very high levels of support to teaching staff and several members have taken their training further by completing an 'in house' NVQ qualification.
34. The school has undergone a long period of turmoil as a result of the new building work, which is running well behind schedule and is £1m over budget. This has had a negative impact because temporary accommodation has had to be used which makes access difficult for pupils and students in wheelchairs. In addition, there are still outstanding issues from the previous report, such as the poor acoustics in the original building. This has a negative impact on the learning of some pupils. In addition, although there are a few specialist rooms such as an ICT suite, access and use of equipment is difficult for some pupils. In general, disability access is poor, as there are no automatic door openers, deficiency which hampers some pupils and students moving independently around the school.
35. Resources for ICT have improved since the previous inspection, although access is not satisfactory for some pupils. Resources for music are still very good with a plentiful supply of various instruments and a specialist room for teaching. This has a very positive impact on how well pupils and students learn. Resources for design and technology are now insufficient, partly because of the loss of facilities and also because they do not match the needs of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' and students' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. Care and welfare are very good but there were a number of health and safety concerns identified during the inspection, which reduces the overall quality of the provision. The support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very effective, although the school needs to update its policy.
- There are some health and safety concerns and the policy is out of date.
- Pupils are very well cared for with very good support for their personal development.
- Pupils and students are very trusting of adults and feel fully involved in the school.
- Induction arrangements are very good.

Commentary

36. The headteacher, who is the designated child protection co-ordinator, and the deputy headteacher, have both been formally trained in child protection procedures. The school's health adviser and the education social worker (ESW) are also both fully involved in child protection matters as this is an area that is given a high priority by the school. The staff handbook gives advice on what staff should do if they have any concerns and child protection is included in training for all staff.
37. Issues have arisen in relation to health and safety. Some of these are as a result of the new building and the impact this has had on storage of equipment and resources, for example. However, the governors and staff are aware of the concerns and know they need to be rectified as soon as possible.
38. Both the health and safety and child protection policies need to be reviewed in the light of more recent legislation. Governors also need to ensure that all relevant policies in relation to pupils' and students' welfare, such as a policy for the use of the Internet, are put in place as soon as possible.
39. Pupils and students who need specialist support such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy have limited access to these resources. The school shares the concerns that some parents have about the allocation, but this is determined by the health trust and the school is beholden to this authority for the provision.
40. The personal support, advice and guidance that pupils and students receive is very effective as a result of the very high level of knowledge staff have about pupils' and students' needs, likes and dislikes. Information is gathered and disseminated through weekly multi-disciplinary meetings where individual pupils are discussed in relation to their progress in, for example, how they relate to others and how they are feeding and moving. Pupils, students and their families are also given very good support from the ESW, whose knowledge of the school, its pupils and the local facilities is very high. The result of this very strong level of support is that pupils' and students' personal development is very good and they establish very strong and trusting relationships with adults. Academic support, advice and guidance are satisfactory.
41. Pupils and students are treated maturely by staff and as much as possible are fully involved in the life of the school. This is done through formal methods, such as the school council, where the representatives can bring the ideas of their peers to the meeting and then are given the chance to voice their opinions, such as the need for more go-karts and bikes in the playground.
42. Pupils settle very well into school when they first arrive. This is due to well-established induction procedures and close links with the main feeder school. Staff at the two schools

liaise very closely to ensure that information is passed on and pupils and their families have several opportunities to visit. As a result, although change is very difficult for some pupils to cope with, the great majority settle well into their new environment.

43. Guidance on further study or career opportunities is good overall, although the main strength is in the guidance for the oldest students in the Post-16 department. Careers input from outside agencies mainly begins in Year 12. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a timetabled careers lesson each week and pupils in Years 7 to 9 do some work on careers as part of their PSHCE. Staff have worked very hard to establish opportunities for some of the oldest students to attend college one day a week. There are also work experience opportunities for those in their final years at the school as well as the opportunity to attend a local college's 'can do' day. This gives them a good chance to think about what routes are available to them after school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. There are very good links with the community and links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views about the school and the school involves them well.
- Although information about the school is satisfactory, with a good informative website, parents do not always get the information they are entitled to.
- Very good use is made of the local community.
- Varied and mutually beneficial links have been established with other schools.

Commentary

44. Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting were pleased with most aspects of the school. They are particularly happy with the behaviour in the school, how approachable it is and how fairly their children are treated. Inspection judgements confirm these views. A small number of parents would like more work for their children to do at home but homework is judged to be satisfactory overall and good for the oldest students. The school provides a homework trolley with resources for pupils and students to borrow and, for example, reading books and mathematics quizzes can be sent home too. Staff involve parents well through the use of the home school communication book and parents' views are taken into account. However, a small number of parents would like to be more fully involved in the Annual Review process. This is something that staff and governors are aware of and are addressing. Parents are also given opportunities to attend regular coffee mornings where relevant speakers are invited, such as clinical psychologists. Parents and carers make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home, working with the school on feeding and behaviour management programmes, for example, to ensure continuity, which has a positive impact on pupils' development. In addition, the Friends' Association provides the school with funding to help run the minibuses as well as to improve other resources. It also gives parents the chance to meet socially, which is difficult on a daily basis given the wide catchment area and the bussing of pupils and students to school.
45. In the annual written reports the school provides adequate information about pupils' progress. There is, however, some inconsistency in the use of P levels to monitor progress and in advising parents of what their child's targets are. Whole-school newsletters are regular and informative and parents are also kept well informed about events in the local area that may interest their children, for example the special sports groups. However, the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents no longer meet statutory requirements in relation to all the information they should provide.
46. The school has improved the links with the local community from the good levels seen at the previous inspection and pupils and students have enriched experiences as a result. Much use

is made of the area with frequent visits to shops and cafes to give pupils and students wider social experiences. Swimming pools are well used, as are other sports facilities and the park. Visits further afield also take place so that pupils and students can benefit from the wealth of opportunities in London. Local businesses also support the school well by, for example, sponsoring termly awards, such as for exceptional performance. Pupils and students benefit greatly from working with music specialists as part of the Ealing Music Therapy Project.

47. Effective links with other schools and colleges have been established through the hard work of staff. The strongest links are with a local specialist arts college. This has resulted in pupils from the two schools collaborating in several drama productions as well as a current art project where students from the two schools are making very colourful model birds. The school also uses the resources of other schools effectively, which widens the opportunities and experiences of pupils and students. In addition, staff have offered to disseminate their experience and knowledge, for example by giving a talk at a mainstream school about studying with and helping those with Down's Syndrome. Very strong links are in place with the main feeder school so that the transfer of pupils is handled very well. This ensures that the move to the next stage of their education happens as smoothly as possible for the pupils involved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The work of the senior management team is satisfactory and has been strengthened by the new deputy headteacher. It is now beginning to play a more active leadership role within the school. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school.
- The school's accommodation difficulties have dominated governors' and the headteacher's work over the last two years and, as a consequence, progress towards addressing some of the school's weaknesses has been slow.
- Governors are strongly committed to the school; however, they do not fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
- The current improvement plan does not yet provide sufficient impetus for development through detailed costing and monitoring of timescales and impact.
- The senior leadership team is now in a much better position to address whole-school issues and recognise the areas in which practice must be more consistent across the whole school.
- Subject leadership has improved and is effective in most areas except ICT.
- The school has been particularly effective in building strong classroom teams and in maintaining staff morale and standards since the last inspection.

Commentary

48. The school has had considerable difficulties since the last inspection in relation to accommodation, health and safety and in recruiting a deputy headteacher. These have meant that the headteacher, since her appointment three years ago, has had to spend considerable time 'fire-fighting' - ensuring pupils are safe, that building work is up to standard and that pupils have somewhere to be taught. Much has fallen on her shoulders but, nevertheless, it is a tribute to the headteacher and governors that the school has continued to run and provide a satisfactory education in such difficult circumstances. She and the senior team have done well to maintain staff morale and standards in teaching and learning, despite the constant disruption to classrooms, resources and working environments. Parents are very appreciative of this. She has been well supported by senior staff during that time who have taken on whole school management responsibilities. However, the development of some areas of the

school's work, such as assessment, target-setting and ensuring policies are up to date and consistently implemented, has suffered.

49. The new deputy headteacher and the headteacher work very well together and have a clear understanding of what now needs to be done. They lead by example in their own teaching and care and concern for pupils, their families and staff. A good start has been made with reviewing the national strategies and the review of subject co-ordinators' responsibilities. The school is now collecting data on pupils more systematically in the core subjects, though it is not yet using this effectively to set targets for whole-school improvement. Performance management is used well to support standards, teaching and learning and to develop subject co-ordinators' roles. The school has been particularly effective in building strong classroom teams and recruiting new committed teachers over the last few years since the last inspection. All staff work very well together, are mutually supportive and are very good role models for pupils.
50. Governors are strongly committed to the school and their good support is valued by staff and the headteacher. They know the school's strengths well but many are reliant on the headteacher for information in relation to their monitoring of the school's work. They have been tenacious in helping the school through its building difficulties, especially in keeping the school open. However, this has diverted them somewhat from their oversight of the school's total curriculum and from fulfilling their statutory responsibilities in relation to policies in place and providing all subjects of the National Curriculum. A modern foreign language is not taught to all pupils in Years 7 to 9, despite no pupils being disapplied from this, and many policies need revision and updating. Some are very old. Governors know the school well now and are beginning to be much more involved in development planning.
51. The school improvement plan is a recent document which correctly identifies the priority areas the school needs to address. It clearly articulates the strong vision that the headteacher has for the school and her good knowledge of how it needs to develop. Actions that the school needs to take are detailed. However, it is not costed and there are few clear timelines and monitoring arrangements to secure the pace of development. Success criteria are too general and not tied in to standards. This limits governors' and senior management's ability to monitor the impact of their spending decisions. The headteacher is seeking support and training in school development planning.
52. The senior leadership team has been considerably strengthened by the appointment of the new deputy headteacher. Senior staff have generally managed their departments effectively and supported staff morale well, but have only recently played a more whole-school leadership role, such as in development planning. They have supported the headteacher well over the past years of difficulty, dealing with day-to-day issues and taking responsibility for aspects of the curriculum and training. They recognise the need to ensure that the school's guidance and policies are consistently implemented throughout the school and that they must monitor and evaluate practise effectively.
53. Subject leadership has improved and is effective in most areas. It is particularly strong in Post-16 and physical education. In several subjects co-ordinators were new at the time of the inspection, but they are building on some good work by previous co-ordinators, such as in English. Co-ordinators monitor coverage in their subjects effectively and are beginning to monitor standards and teaching. This is strongest in English and mathematics where there are clear assessment practices in place and where the senior leadership team have responsibility. Leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory because of the lack of strategic thinking in this important area of the school's work. The subject has largely developed through the commitment and goodwill of individual staff and the senior leadership team.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,444,805	Balance from previous year	52,633
Total expenditure	1,362,142	Balance carried forward to the next	135,296
Expenditure per pupil	22,330		

54. The headteacher has fought hard to gain funding which meets the changing needs of pupils and reflects the difficulties encountered as a result of the building work. The budget has been managed well. Much of the current surplus is to be used to support the move to the new building through the purchase of additional resources. Funding has been tight and the large majority of funding has been spent on staff and ensuring pupils' safety. The school has been particularly prudent over the past two years but is now in the process of securing additional funds to cope with requirements for the new accommodation. Some aspects of this are still unknown, however, and this is causing much anxiety. A weakness is the lack of costings in the development plan. However, priorities are reflected in the way the school has allocated resources in the budget plan.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning (WRL) is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for a range of work-related experiences in Post-16.
- Provision is well led and is improving rapidly with new courses in Years 10 and 11; however, experience of work and visits from employers are limited in scope for these years.

Commentary

55. Planning for the teaching of WRL is effective in the 'Transition Challenge' and pupils' work-related skills are developed satisfactorily through ASDAN in Years 10 and 11 and in PSHCE. Pupils visit a variety of work places, interview workers about their jobs and take part in local college 'can do' days. They learn about health and safety in the workplace and raise money for charity through team enterprise. However, pupils do not have formal careers guidance and formal work experience only takes place at Post-16. This serves to narrow pupils' opportunities. The school recognises there is more work to be done to strengthen provision here. Post-16, students have a well planned accredited course, 'Towards Independence', which, together with the 'Life and Living Skills' course, provides good opportunities for WRL.
56. Careers education is satisfactory in Years 9 to 11 and very good in Post-16 department. Links with *Connexions* are well established and advisers attend some transitional reviews. The school is working hard to develop an improved partnership in relation to the growing complexity of student need. The main work with students begins in Year 12. All Post-16 students have experience of work through the ASDAN Towards Independence award and when appropriate, placements are available students complete a period of supported work experience. This school year, one student has been extremely successful in unsupported work experience placement.
57. Post-16 students take part in a range of Young Enterprise activities variously entitled: 'Leave it to Us!' where students made candles, cards, photo frames and tags; 'Just Us' where they

made tea-light holders, cards and frames and 'The Business' where they planted bulbs, made paperweights and pomanders. Photographic evidence shows the pleasure of both delighted students and satisfied customers at the end of the process and the success in achieving awards in the regional competition. Students have made carefully prepared presentations, and raised money for local and African charities. At present, students are in the process of opening a bank account.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 TO 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very skilled at recognising and responding to pupils' communications and these are consistently promoted within English and in other subjects.
- Sign is used very well to support pupils' access and involvement, but more use could be made of symbols and objects of reference.
- Reading is promoted well through the use of symbols.
- Too few opportunities are provided in English and other subjects for writing and for pupils to record their work.
- Teaching is generally lively and teachers work hard to keep pupils' interest and engage all pupils, including those with the most complex needs.
- Post-16 students make very good progress in all aspects of English.

Commentary

58. Improvement since the last inspection in English has been sound overall. The achievement of pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language, is now good. Good bilingual support is provided on entry to the school which 'kick starts' pupils' understanding and use of sign. All pupils achieve very well in communication and speaking and listening, because of the very good use of sign and sensitive support of all staff. Staff know pupils very well and are adept at involving them in lessons. There is a good, relevant curriculum, which takes account of pupils' ages and interest. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Teaching and assessment have also improved. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. A library has now been developed, although it is not yet in use and is acoustically problematic.
59. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in English is very low because of their learning difficulties and a few are at the very earliest stages of communication. Staff, in general, are expert at gaining these pupils' attention so that they begin to show interest in people and events around them. Good use of sensory resources helps them be involved further. Those with the most complex needs hold eye contact for longer and are much more aware of others around them as they progress through the school. They are more attentive to books and listen with more interest and engagement to familiar stories and songs, often moving rhythmically to them and increasingly joining in. They use switch technology to activate a response more accurately. Pupils with less complex learning difficulties and with autism are consistently challenged and supported towards saying more, becoming more interested in what others have to say, and using their language and communication in more complex ways. By the end of their time in the school, these pupils listen very well and have been well prepared in their English skills and attitudes for the next stage of their education. The highest attainers now use simple sentences and phrases and use these to express their views. Students in the Post-16 department make particularly good progress in self-expression and are very well prepared through their accredited courses for making choices and for independence.
60. Early reading skills and an interest in symbols, text and books are systematically supported. Symbols are used well to help pupils remember and read back their experiences. The highest attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11 have a growing repertoire of words and symbols that they recognise, and they are proud to demonstrate this. Similarly, older pupils with severe learning

difficulties, including those in the Post-16 department, have very systematic support for their reading and writing skills and achieve well and sometimes very well. They are very proud of their skills and keen to try them out; the certificate courses that they follow are suited well to promote these. All pupils make good strides in developing their interest in books.

61. Although achievement in writing is satisfactory overall, writing skills are less well developed throughout the school. There are fewer opportunities provided for writing, other than for handwriting skills, particularly for the less able pupils. Some good examples of adults scribing for pupils were seen as well as some good use of mark making. In Post-16 a very good lesson involved students themselves using a 'writing with symbols' ICT package and successfully being able to produce and read back simple text and symbol writing. Pupils could achieve even more in writing if there were more use of symbols, ICT, The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and other resources to enable them to write more independently.
62. Teaching and learning are strong and teachers work well with the limited amount of speech and language therapy support that is available. Most teachers plan well to meet pupils' different needs and teaching assistants are used particularly well to achieve this. Teaching assistants make very strong contributions to pupils' learning and achievement. Behaviour, in particular, is managed very well, often because teaching itself is imaginative and lessons strongly motivate pupils. Assessment and monitoring of progress in English are good. There is systematic tracking of individuals' progress, although the data is not yet analysed for different groups. Teachers' planning draws well on staff assessments, as well as on day-to-day observations and the evaluation of pupils' responses. Strong feedback to pupils as to how they are doing contributes to pupils developing self-awareness. In this way, and through the very good achievements in speaking and listening, the strong curriculum and many visits, English makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness.
63. The subject is well led and managed. The new co-ordinator, a member of the senior management team, is currently reviewing the provision, using funded consultancy time, to adapt the programme of work and national strategies for the changing intake of the school. The curriculum, teaching and standards are monitored by the co-ordinator, who has a clear vision as to what the school is trying to achieve. Planning is variable, however. Some staff have detailed and evaluative plans to support their teaching and involve teaching assistants well. Some, however, keep very limited plans and, occasionally, this means that pupils do not have the right balance of learning opportunities. Books and general resources for English have improved, and there are more resources appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils available.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Provision for literacy across the curriculum is good overall, although there is more scope to monitor this and to ensure that writing, in particular, is extended through the curriculum in all classes. The school's strong emphasis on communication is carried over into other subjects and there is good and often very good support for this in almost all subjects. Similarly, early reading skills are generally well promoted. Most teachers systematically help pupils to apply their reading skills in subjects either through photographs, symbols or text as they try to find out more about a topic or subject or place. The certificate courses that they study in Key Stage 4 and Post-16 promote literacy well, as do the visits and outings when pupils are encouraged to make simple shopping lists and write notes and plans, according to their ability.

Modern foreign language

65. The school does not fulfil statutory requirements in relation to the teaching of a modern foreign language in Years 7 to 9. Few pupils in these years are taught a language and none have been disapplied from this requirement. The school does teach **French** to higher-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in Post-16. Only one French lesson could be seen during the inspection, although discussions were held with teachers and an examination of pupils' records reveals a number of good features. This was very well taught and pupils achieved very well. The very good teaching observed and very good use of sign ensured each pupil was included and enabled to succeed at their own level. There was good support for speaking and listening, but less evidence of support for reading and writing. Pupils are very strongly motivated to learn French and almost all concentrate and listen very well, despite their often considerable difficulties. They are proud of the French they know and try hard to pronounce words. The programme for French has been strengthened and is very practical and relevant. A topic approach introduces linked vocabulary and phrases and good class routines reinforce key phrases and vocabulary.
66. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The subject is still not taught to the pupils who are entitled to learn a modern foreign language. French is led and managed by a committed co-ordinator who is enthusiastic as to how the subject also supports the pupils' listening, special educational needs, confidence and self-esteem. Records and assessments made are adequate.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because of good teaching and planning.
- Teaching teams are skilled particularly in using more structured and sensory approaches for pupils with very complex learning needs.
- Good improvement in planning and organisation has enabled teachers to develop more breadth in pupils' mathematical skills and understanding.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is sensitively adapted and generally taught well; occasionally, the end of lesson discussions are rushed or cut short.
- There are some missed opportunities to use ICT.

Commentary

67. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school, with students in Post-16 achieving very well. The National Numeracy Strategy is adapted sensitively and, together with a strong sensory approach and a curriculum that builds well on what pupils have learned previously, meets the learning needs of all pupils. This allows pupils to maximise their potential. Teachers go to great lengths to find new ways to support those pupils with regressive conditions or very unusual special educational needs in developing their full potential. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress similar to that of their peers through informed and skilled support.
68. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 know and order numbers to 10. They reinforce their learning by matching numbers and doing simple 'sums' on the computer. Most pupils in these years recognise a few shapes and match them to objects in the classroom. Some can match and sort objects such as plastic animals by colour and number. They learn to recognise, count and order numbers by a good variety of counting games and songs. Pupils with the most complex needs, working towards their individual targets, feel, hear and track the

movement of objects presented, enabling them to develop an awareness of the objects' physical properties. With varying degrees of support, pupils collect and record data accurately and, using ICT, display their findings in a range of charts and graphs.

69. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow and create patterns using two-dimensional shapes. Teachers make good links with art and music and this supports pupils' understanding of pattern by the recognition of different patterns in art and of rhythm and sound in music. By the end of Year 11, through precise and knowledgeable teaching, pupils experience a wide range of numeracy activities. Pupils with severe learning difficulties match shape cards and symbols to numbers. All make significant progress towards their individual targets through careful and skilful support. Strong teamwork and very good relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are encouraged and the most difficult situations are dealt with sensitively and efficiently. A particular strength in the teaching of more able pupils in Years 10 and 11 is well-focused questioning techniques and prompts, which are carefully matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Higher-attaining pupils learn to work independently with increasing self-confidence and teachers cultivate this by regular opportunities and routines in lessons. Students in Post-16 achieve very well because of very effective planning and skilled teaching, well matched to their individual needs. They have very confident and enthusiastic attitudes to mathematics and are proud of their work.
70. Overall, teaching and learning are good with some very good teaching in Post-16 where there is a fast pace and an effective level of challenge. Teachers have good knowledge of how to adapt activities for pupils and to ensure that pupils understand the routine and settle quickly and purposefully to the lesson. Teachers use signs, objects and practical activities very effectively and this enables pupils to make significant gains in their responses through purpose in their choices. Although ICT is used well in some lessons, more regular use is needed to boost and support learning in lessons. Teachers and assistants are not always confident in using ICT and this leads to wasted opportunities. Planning is very strong and detailed and teachers work very sensitively with pupils with the most complex learning and behavioural difficulties, using structured and sensory activities and ensuring the learning environment is meaningful and calm. All lessons include a final discussion which reinforces and celebrates pupils' learning. However, where teaching is less effective, not enough time is provided and occasionally this end of lesson session is not used well or is cut short. Most teachers and assistants plan and work very effectively together in skilled teaching teams. This ensures smooth-flowing lessons and a consistency of approach. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. This was where a teacher who was covering a lesson for another teacher decided not to use the class teacher's plan and occupied the pupils with little level of challenge.
71. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a very clear focus on development and improvement, and monitors and evaluates the provision for the subject very effectively. She also has appropriate plans within the school improvement plan. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are more confident in delivering the numeracy strategy to the pupils' wide range of learning needs. The improvements in planning, assessment and evaluation ensure that teachers develop more fully the breadth of pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. The introduction of the ASDAN transition course has been successful in Years 10 and 11 in developing aspects of practical mathematics and introducing the work-related curriculum in mathematics. Assessment is developing well but the school recognises that more work in this area is needed. The use of P scales and systems of moderation have started well but there is still some inconsistency in practice. Pupils' performance is tracked through their individual targets and these are becoming more precise. Resources have improved in quantity and quality and are good, particularly those for pupils with the most complex needs.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Teachers promote numeracy skills well in many lessons. All pupils have individual numeracy targets, which they are aware of and work to, with adult support. Opportunities are used well in religious education, PSHCE, English, and music to measure, count and match shapes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has carefully considered how planning can meet the changing needs of its pupils.
- Practical work and activities relevant to most pupils' needs help maintain pupils' interest and involvement.
- Some staff do not always plan adequately for pupils with the most needs and in some classes a large number of staff teaching the subject means that some work has been disjointed.
- Resources have suffered because of the need to move rooms.

Commentary

73. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The pupils enjoy the practical approach to science and in the best teaching the activities are motivating and challenge the pupils well. Together with the very recent introduction of new science planning (scheme of work), teachers carefully think about how activities are relevant and meet the varying needs of the pupils, especially those who have PMLD. Work now builds better on what pupils have learned previously and is planned appropriately from the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for pupils in Years 7 to 11. There is now a clear identification about what the most able, least able and intermediate groups of pupils are likely to achieve by the end of a series of lessons. Outcomes for these pupils are identified on most lesson plans. A weakness of the previous planning was that it was designed for pupils who were largely more able than the groups which are now entering the school.
74. Science is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11, although some aspects of the Post-16 programme also contain scientific elements. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 recognise that the bones in the body hold it up and compare the size and shape of their bones by pressing their skin and comparing them to the bones of adults. They also gain the idea that one animal feeds off another animal in a food chain. Pupils with PMLD use sensory materials to gain the idea, and objects of reference and sign also support their understanding well. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 know that magnets can attract objects while PMLD pupils experience their push and pull effects. By Year 11, pupils have experienced the full range of scientific aspects and higher attainers interpret some common everyday features using scientific explanations.
75. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some weaknesses which need addressing. On the whole, teachers plan their lessons soundly, although, on occasion, some still do not specify clearly enough what pupils are going to learn. Teaching is generally lively and holds the pupils' interest well. All staff work very hard to engage and involve the pupils. In most lessons, pupils work very hard, showing a real keenness for science. Teaching assistants manage the pupils very well, anticipating any difficulties they may have such as challenging behaviour. Teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory, however, where temporary, inexperienced staff have not been given specific guidance on including the pupils with the most needs. As a consequence, PMLD pupils spend time doing very little. Sometimes, equipment provided for them is unsuitable and does not meet their physical needs.

76. The subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator, who is a science specialist, has worked hard to identify appropriate planning for the diverse range of needs found in every class. She also recognises that teachers still have to develop the specialist scheme further, thinking very carefully about relevant activities for autistic pupils, those with PMLD and a minority with severe sensory needs. A good start has been made to this process. Ensuring continuity of staffing and that processes such as planning are systematically followed have not been easy given that the co-ordinator is also the headteacher and has had to manage significant change and upheaval in the last two years. Nevertheless, the work in the subject has been satisfactory and the provision has maintained its quality since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator recognises the weaknesses identified and the need for regular monitoring so that what is thought to be in place is actually being taught by all staff. An added difficulty is the large number of staff who teach the subject; there is more than one teacher in some classes and in one Year 7 and 8 class there are three. Some of the pupils' work has been fragmented because of this. Science is generally adequately resourced although some equipment has suffered because of the loss of the specialist room and the classes moving base so frequently. For instance, the school's full-size skeleton has lost some of its bones! The use of ICT has not improved because of the network being out of action for the last year. Software to support science teaching and learning is lacking.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Individual teachers work hard to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in ICT and to plan what they think they should be learning next.
- Staff make good use of ICT for developing early learning skills and in their own teaching by using the interactive whiteboard; occasionally, resources for pupils with PMLD do not meet their needs.
- There is no ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in ICT and subject planning does not help guide teachers' own planning.
- There is insufficient strategic thinking and planning with regard to the development of ICT.

Commentary

77. Even though there are weaknesses in the provision, the picture compared with the last inspection is much better; it was judged unsatisfactory at that time.
78. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Strengths only just outweigh weaknesses, however, because there is too much reliance on individual teachers to plan the work for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Despite this major weakness, pupils do generally adequately build on what they have learned before. This is because the teachers know the pupils well, discuss ideas with the previous teacher and ICT co-ordinator, and skilfully provide software from the good range that the school has to help develop pupils' skills, especially for the most disabled pupils. The main weakness of this approach is that the more able pupils are not always stretched sufficiently and, occasionally, they are given tasks which are too easy for them. Teaching is satisfactory in these years. Teachers are enthusiastic and motivate pupils well. They use the interactive whiteboard to good effect but the more able pupils sometimes spend too much time watching demonstrations and not enough time using the computer.
79. Although the school's planning (scheme of work) for pupils in Years 7 to 11 covers all aspects of the National Curriculum Programme of Study, it is of little use in helping teachers to work out what to teach next. For instance, it is possible to teach much the same thing in control technology work each year. Nor does the scheme recognise that the school has a wide range of pupils in each year group with planning identified for these different groups. The school does not have an ongoing record of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to help teachers plan more accurately what the next steps are. It has used a checklist of skills in the

past but at present no system has been put in place to replace it. Staff use the record which is part of the ASDAN award for ICT in Post-16.

80. The students' achievements are good in the Post-16 department. The Post-16 programme challenges pupils well and staff have put a lot of thought into how the award-bearing scheme can be made interesting and motivating. Teaching is generally good, and well-thought-out planning means that students' needs are met well. Students demonstrate confidence when using ICT equipment and their good level of skill shows they have been well taught. The most able are capable of performing basic tasks such as loading and saving their work and using simple features of word-processing and desktop publishing software. They use the Internet with support, although the text is sometimes too complex and the school does not have software to read the text for them. They are learning to use a digital video camera and to combine sound and vision to produce a recorded CD. However, some Post-16 groups are taught ICT skills separate from the main programme and at a much lower level than they demonstrate in the award-bearing course. This unchallenging work led to the teaching in one lesson being judged as unsatisfactory.
81. By contrast, the youngest pupils know that pressing a switch causes a response and staff use this well to get the pupils to solve simple problems and count and add numbers. Pupils with the most needs are at this level but for some there is no systematic programme to develop skills from, for instance, single switch to two switch operation or from touch screen selection to selection from objects scanned on the screen.
82. The staff's skills have improved since the last inspection. However, owing to the upheaval of moving around during building work and the fact that the computer network did not work for the last year school year, formal training has been limited and most has been provided through personal support by the school's co-ordinator and technician.
83. Teaching assistants provide valuable support when pupils are using computers, but at times during whole-class or large group lessons, they sit with little to do. Occasionally, too much is done for the pupils by the support staff and not enough is expected or organised for the pupils to do themselves.
84. The subject is not adequately led or managed. This is unsatisfactory. Sound day-to-day management ensures resources are at hand and equipment is working. However, although there is a three year plan for the subject, it lacks strategic thinking and is more about things that need to be done. For instance, much of the equipment is old and there is no clearly costed plan for renewal. Essential planning documents and policies are inadequate or do not exist. For instance, there is no Internet safety policy. There is no monitoring of teaching, learning or pupils' skills. Some furniture and specialist equipment do not always meet the needs of the most disabled pupils. In some lessons, for example, a few PMLD pupils were provided with switches they could not hold or access and some pupils cannot reach one of the school's interactive whiteboards.

The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. This is satisfactory in the circumstances. The school has a strong commitment to the use of ICT and uses it well to support the development of pupils' early learning skills. Staff make good use of the interactive whiteboards, recognising the motivating effect this has on the pupils and the way the software helps them to be involved in their learning. In addition, there is adequate use of recordable digital switches to provide pupils who are unable to talk with a way of producing greetings. The wider use of ICT to support learning in subjects such as geography, history or religious education is limited, although use is made of software in English and mathematics. All this is mainly because of the school's inability to develop this owing to the accommodation issues identified previously.

HUMANITIES

86. It was not possible to see any lessons in geography and history. As a result, no judgement can be made about provision in these subjects.
87. In **history**, Year 9 pupils have learned about life in Victorian times. Good photographic evidence shows them enjoying dressing as Victorians and, on visits to Fulham Palace and Gunnersbury museum, handling artefacts and looking at the exhibits. A range of good resources are used to bring history to life. In Year 11, when pupils learn about the Second World War, they watch visiting drama companies and clips of videos and listen to music relevant to the period. They handle a rich variety of artefacts, including a gas mask, and with support use ICT to investigate people's lives and times.
88. In **geography** the strong emphasis on the sensory curriculum has been successful in helping pupils understand the weather. A range of electronic resources including globes has fascinated younger pupils and enabled them to find countries and continents. Pupils in Year 11 have linked their study of Egypt in geography with that in history of the ancient Egyptians. Photographs show pupils identifying mummies and hieroglyphics in the British museum. Visits and visitors greatly enhance the curriculum.
89. Schemes of work have been carefully updated and adapted since the last inspection. Resources have been audited and there is a good supply of sensory and practical materials to meet a wide range of needs. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and updates colleagues on developments, but there is no monitoring of teaching. There is a satisfactory development plan and assessment is identified as an area for development.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and pupils achieve well; a wide range of resources are used to support the learning of pupils with the most complex needs.
- Pupils are interested in the lessons and learn effectively from each other.
- Assemblies, visits and visitors greatly enhance the provision in religious education.
- Good planning and organisation ensure that the locally Agreed Syllabus is followed.

Commentary

90. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. There is a broad curriculum with good opportunities which support the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. A range of visits to local places of worship and involvement in celebrations encourage a developing awareness of values and practices of the major faiths in a multi-cultural world. Visits from the local vicar, community faith leaders, governors and parents and visits to churches, Hindu and Sikh temples and mosques enrich the curriculum. These visits and visitors practically reinforce social and spiritual elements in the major faith groups of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism.
91. The emphasis in the curriculum on the importance of using the senses in practical ways in learning about religion is particularly relevant to pupils and students with severe and complex learning difficulties. Displays of photographs help pupils remember and recognise sequences and communicate their experiences which support their good progress. In Years 7 and 8 pupils learn about Christian rituals for thanking God. In one lesson, the teacher ensured there was a genuine feeling of spirituality by the soft lighting and religious music. Several artefacts were passed around and pupils were encouraged, with support, to look and feel carefully and recognise the object. Skilled and effective teaching enabled pupils to learn the sign for

Christian, prayer and God and to understand why and how both Christians and other faith groups wish to thank God.

92. In Years 10 and 11 pupils learn about Islam and being a Moslem. In one lesson, varied and practical experiences encouraged pupils. They watched the unfolding of a prayer mat and understood the rules for handling the Qu'ran. They took part in the ritual of washing and heard the *Muezzin* calling the faithful to prayer. Very good support and effective, skilled teaching enabled all pupils in the group to understand some of the rules and rituals associated with using the Qu'ran.
93. Post-16 students achieve well and learn effectively because teaching is clear, well-planned and based on thorough knowledge of the students. Students deepen their knowledge of world religions by practical activities and the use of sensory artefacts. Teachers use the smells, sound, video and textiles from the major religions and in one lesson seen the interactive whiteboard was very effectively used to present different aspects of Islam.
94. Teaching is consistently good. Planning is good and teachers ensure pupils have relevant learning targets, well matched to their individual needs. Teaching strategies and activities, assessment opportunities and effective resources in religious education are now more appropriate to all pupils and students. An effective part of the teaching is the very strong relationships throughout the school, which enable pupils to communicate openly and confidently in an atmosphere of trust. They are interested in the lessons and learn effectively from each other. They have a good respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. Pupils develop good self-esteem and have effective opportunities to reflect upon their learning and understanding of religious issues.
95. Leadership and management are good. The subject has improved well since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has clear plans for improving provision; he has good oversight of the department and is aware of strengths and weaknesses. At present, carefully annotated and dated end-of-module assessments record progress. The co-ordinator recognises that this needs to be linked to P scale recording. He has worked hard to develop and adapt the curriculum in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus so that all pupils and students, including those with PMLD, have relevant practical activities and useful resources. The subject is well resourced.

TECHNOLOGY, VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were not fully inspected and are not reported on in full. Music is reported in full.
97. The standard of work seen in **art and design** was high, especially the three-dimensional work. The curriculum is very broad. The high degree of expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator clearly rubs off on the pupils. All pupils' achievements are highly recognised and valued. The pupils' work is frequently entered for exhibitions and competitions. Pupils and staff are very proud of the quality of the work, especially when they win the events they enter. Some excellent Year 13 print work from block designs was on display. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was very good. The pupils worked intensively in an atmosphere which encouraged their ideas. The needs of pupils were very well met and very well supported through the high level of help provided by teaching assistants. They encouraged pupils and gave them very good guidance. They also enabled them to do as much for themselves as possible. A weakness, given the high level of performance in the subject, is the lack of an award-bearing course for pupils to follow.
98. Only three lessons were seen in **design and technology**, two of which were in food work. Food studies is a well-developed part of the subject, although the planning is based more on self-help, daily living activities and 'making' aspects for the older pupils than the design, making and evaluation of food products. Pupils made good progress in the lessons seen and they were very well supported by teaching assistants, who ensured that the pupils did as

much for themselves as possible. Symbols, signs and objects are generally used well to provide guidance for pupils, although occasionally too many symbols are displayed in instructions and pupils need adult help to cope with these. Good attention is given to safety and to links with science, such as discussing the changes in the state of foods being cooked. The planning for other aspects of design and technology is taken from a scheme which was designed for a different and more able population of pupils and has not yet been updated. Staff try their best to teach aspects which are relevant to pupils but this is not always successful. In the lesson observed, the work was more about science than design and technology. The loss of a design and technology workshop has not helped and staff are looking forward to the combined science / technology workshop in the new building. However, unlike other subjects, the school plans work from an earlier key stage and not from the programme for Years 7 to 11. This means that some, especially more able, pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the subject content.

99. Only one lesson was observed in **physical education**. It is not possible, therefore, to make judgements in relation to provision. However, discussions with staff, an examination of records and incidental observations of parts of lessons reveal the curriculum to be strong and highly relevant to pupils' needs. There is a clearly articulated policy and set of aims for this subject. The range of activities provided in physical education is good and there is good use made of community facilities such as nearby leisure pools, which compensate, somewhat, for the inadequacies in the school's own resources and accommodation. The building of the school's own hydrotherapy pool with its sophisticated interactive sound and light system, adds to its facilities. However it is not yet in use and is small and changing facilities are problematic for the largest pupils/students with more complex needs.
100. Pupils in all years work across a range of activities related to games skills and swimming. There is a close relationship between the physical activities planned and the opportunities for pupils to make progress in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, they improve their social skills through structured games involving passing and receiving a ball. Year 7 and Year 8 pupils follow up some of their mathematical work on shape, through movement in the hall. For some high dependency pupils the school provides a well organised 'mobilisation' programme. In these lessons, pupils work on a one-to-one basis with the teacher and follow an individual programme with specific targets. Records of pupils' achievement in relation to these targets show this to be very good and pupils follow these up in physical education lessons. In one part-observed lesson, for example, a pupil with very complex needs moved more freely along the floor, rolling, turning and sitting up by himself, more than he had ever done before. This is achieved with lots of excellent verbal encouragement and enthusiasm from a teaching assistant, who clearly enjoyed the pupil's successes as much as the pupil did.
101. Physical education is very well co-ordinated by the specialist teacher who had been very influential in developing the subject. He keeps clear records and there is good integration with pupils' physiotherapy programmes.
102. The accommodation and resources for physical education are unsatisfactory. The hall is a main route through the school and the acoustics are very poor. It has only limited equipment suitable for secondary pupils. Although all staff are careful to keep pupils safe, there are many distractions for pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **very good** and is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music pervades the whole life of the school and is used very effectively to help pupils engage with lessons and respond to others.
- Music is very well taught by an expert teacher and pupils respond very well indeed.
- A very good range of resources, visitors and visits enriches pupils' musical experiences and their spiritual, moral and social development.

Commentary

103. Music is taught by a specialist music teacher but songs and music-making also form part of pupils' everyday learning experiences. Songs and musical sounds are used very well to help pupils to understand situations, for example in greeting and farewell routines. Pupils with the most complex needs attend and calm well for these and show increased pleasure in sound and music-making activities. In their specialist lessons, careful planning and a very good understanding of the subject and pupils' needs ensure that pupils make small but very significant steps in their awareness of instruments, sound sources, sounds and their properties. As a result, the pupils achieve very well. Lower-attaining and younger pupils move rhythmically to beats and copy long and short sounds with support. By Years 10 and 11 higher-attaining pupils can use a simple notation to support their music-making. They conduct their friends' music-making carefully and with enthusiasm. Pupils know that different instruments are hit, shaken or plucked. They identify their favourite instrument and some can identify them by name. Teachers and teaching assistants support and celebrate pupils' music-making very well and even the more withdrawn pupils catch their enthusiasm. The curriculum for music is carefully thought-out and lessons planned so that pupils experience all elements. Pupils' responses are carefully documented and shared effectively with other staff and families.
104. Music is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and reflects very well on lessons and practice. A very good range of musical instruments and software and a dedicated music room support the subject very well. Community and musical groups and visits extend learning opportunities further alongside pupils' self-awareness. Their understanding of other cultures is supported by the range of experiences provided very well indeed. The subject has improved well since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students achieve very well in meeting their individual education plan (IEP) targets for PSHCE and for their personal development.
- Although teaching and learning in most lessons are good, there are weaknesses in planning and assessment.
- High priority is given to pupils' care and self-help skills, which promotes their personal development well.
- The subject is broad; it is taught through other subjects as well as in discrete lessons.
- Good use is made of the local community to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

105. Pupils and students make good progress in PSHCE in separate lessons, within other lessons and during social times in the school day. The very good relationships within the school support pupils well in making very good progress towards the targets in their IEPs. As a result, students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and students leave Post-16 education as confident and self-aware young adults.
106. Younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 are given structured support to meet workers in the canteen, greet the midday supervisors and develop skills of socialisation and choice during extended lunchtimes. Pupils are supported well according to their need and great care is taken to establish feeding routines and skills of eating and communication. More able pupils are taught how to select their own food and work to develop greater independence and self-help skills in clearing their place and helping each other with the trays.
107. Pupils continue to develop their individual personal and social skills well in other years. Pupils in a lesson in Year 9 went to the local shops to buy a selection of items for their food technology lesson. They reinforced social and independence skills and learned how to keep themselves safe, for example, when crossing the street. Year 10 pupils were observed investigating a range of male and female products for keeping clean. The very calm teaching approach and good use of music enabled pupils with potentially very challenging behaviour to settle, focus and learn well. They learned how to use the products appropriately, recognised the area of the body each should be used on and communicated this effectively.
108. Pupils and students in Years 10, 11 and at Post-16 learn to act in a responsible way and they develop very good relationships with the younger pupils. They learn to express their feelings and to communicate them to others. A 'Makaton peer tutor group', for pupils to support one another in signing, is highly successful in this area.
109. Pupils and students develop an increasing awareness of community and democracy, through their ASDAN courses, visits and visitors, participation in class discussions and the school council, and individual and group activities in raising money for charity.
110. Teaching and learning are generally good. Staff are very good role models and know their pupils very well. They have a good understanding of how to extend pupils' personal and social skills. They have appropriate plans for modifying challenging behaviour and there are sensitive and informative plans for encouraging independent personal skills involved in toileting, feeding and dressing. Continuous reminders about routines ensure that pupils and students apply their learning in different contexts. In effective lessons, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work at the end of activities and at the end-of-day sessions. This encourages reflection and reinforces learning. Occasionally, these sessions are not well planned so that there is inconsistency in achievement and pupils and students do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers maintain suitable records of what pupils know and understand in the subject. The school has started to use P levels, as part of each pupil's individual education plan, to identify the small gains that the pupils make.
111. The subject leader, although very new to the post, has a good grasp of the strengths and difficulties inherent in teaching the subject. His plan for development is good. He has audited citizenship in the curriculum and ensured that requirements are met. Although the curriculum is continually reviewed and developed, some opportunities are missed for evaluating their effectiveness by gathering feedback from pupils. The breadth of learning experiences is increased by links with the community and visits and visitors are used well. Since the last inspection, this area has remained strong and demonstrates sound improvement.

POST-16

The provision in Post-16 is **good** with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for students of all abilities and those with English as an additional language is good.
- The preparation of students for the transition to adult life is very good.
- Personal support and guidance for students is very good.

Commentary

112. All students achieve well, and some achieve very well, building on their previous good progress in the school. They make very good progress in their communication skills, and in literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. This is because the school offers a rich and relevant curriculum that matches students' needs very well. It is very well planned and teachers ensure that students of all abilities have access to a wide range of activities. Students are prepared very well for their future life and their achievements are recognised through appropriate and externally-validated accreditation. Much of the work at Post-16 is based on the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' and the 'Life and Living Skills' courses. The courses are supported and enriched by Young Enterprise activities, college and community links and work experience placements. Students have attractive, well-organised photographic evidence of their achievements and are confident to show their records and work in interviews at local colleges. Last year's Year 14 went on to successful college placements. There are good college links for many students. Link courses for students with the most profound and complex learning difficulties are provided at West Thames College.
113. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable about the students' needs and plan activities which are matched to meet and extend students' learning. The department has sustained the improvements praised at the last inspection and built upon them. There has been a good improvement in planning, in teaching and learning, and in the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills and independent living skills since the last inspection. Teachers are skilful at using the practical application of real-life situations to enable students to maximise progress. Examples of trips and outings to the local shops, leisure centre, swimming pool or college are used well to explain and reinforce signing, reading, counting and matching skills. Students are taught for some of their lessons in ability groups: this has enabled a strong and successful focus on achievement and skills. Students with the most complex learning difficulties learn very effectively through a sensory-based practical curriculum which appropriately involves work with switches and tactile materials to promote communication and personal and social development. For example, during a reading of an alternative version of *Romeo and Juliet*, students made the sound effects to show their recognition of the story and their understanding of the sequence of the plot. They recognised the rhythm and indicated the rhyming words. They used pre-recorded switch sounds of single words or sounds of astonishment or enthusiasm with accuracy and varying degrees of support. Some students used musical instruments very purposefully to denote fear, anger or fighting, and alarm clocks and taped music to denote a wedding. This was a most enjoyable session for all taking part and the students achieved well.
114. Students' work in the performing arts both in school and in the community is very good and further enhances their speaking, listening, numeracy and literacy skills. Mixed ability groups work closely with 'partners' (mainly ex-students) who are part of a local theatre company. In one very good session, led by a very skilful director and well supported by teaching assistants, the leavers' group in Year 14 took part in a dress rehearsal of a piece based on the *Miller's Tale* from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. They selected music from the Blues Brothers and all the performers chose their favourite, powerfully appropriate songs. The work with partners

was highly successful and the rehearsal went smoothly with each pair remembering their part. Both staff and the students were delighted with their achievement and strong friendships were formed in the group.

115. Students follow a 'Towards Independence', course which makes a very good contribution to their independent living skills. In one lesson, as part of the 'Everyday Living' module, students effectively learned how to ask for help from familiar people as well as from strangers. Outside agencies and the community are used effectively; for instance, in work experience placements and in visits to places of work and leisure. Most students, over their time in the Post-16 department, take part in a residential visit where they experience adventurous outdoor pursuits. The external accreditation framework provides good opportunities for learning objectives to be different for different abilities and the subsequent assessment is very good. Assessment information is specific to the objectives that have been taught and students have very good opportunities to evaluate their own performance and, with help, set themselves new targets. Students are set in ability groups for the majority of lessons and this aids the planning and assessment process.
116. Links with the careers service and the *Connexions* adviser support students understanding of the work of work. The school works hard to provide effective vocational opportunities. All students have experience of work through the ASDAN Towards Independence award and when appropriate placements are found, students complete a period of supported work experience. This academic year one student has been extremely successful in his unsupported work experience placement. The modular approach to the curriculum makes a very flexible framework that meets individual needs very well. For example, when the work experience is very successful, it is possible to extend it. There is a wide range of opportunities for students to work with others; for example, a performing arts course was run in conjunction with adults from the community. This was extremely successful and had a major impact on students' confidence.
117. Post-16 students take part in a range of Young Enterprise activities. Photographic evidence shows the pleasure of both delighted students and satisfied customers at the end of the process and the students' success in achieving awards in the regional competition. Students have made carefully prepared presentations, and raised money for local and African charities.
118. The co-ordinator manages the department very effectively and provides a rich and improving range of courses for students to follow. The particular strength of leadership and management is the vision that challenges students' potential.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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.*