

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. HUGH'S SCHOOL

Scunthorpe

LEA area: North Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 118146

Headteacher: Mr J C Darlington

Lead inspector: Dr Mick Megee

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th January 2005

Inspection number: 268643

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 students: 11-19
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 109

School address: Bushfield Road
Scunthorpe
Postcode: DN16 1NB

Telephone number: 01724 842960
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Rex Fearon

Date of previous inspection: 17th March 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Hugh's School is a special school for students with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties between the ages of 11 and 19 years, situated in a village on the southern edge of Scunthorpe. Two years ago the LEA reorganised its special school provision and closed the former special school of the same name. Just after, it opened the current school which moved off site during extensive building works. The accommodation changes were completed in November 2004 and the school moved back on to the site into the new buildings just before the inspection. There are currently 109 students: 78 boys and 31 girls. Overall, the students' socioeconomic backgrounds are well below average, and the number of students claiming free school meals is well above average. The majority of students are from white British backgrounds, with small minorities from other white or Bangladeshi backgrounds. There are three students who do not have English as their home language. The standards of students who enter the school are well below average overall, but they get higher as they move up the school, although they are still well below average by the time they leave. In addition to their learning difficulties, a minority of students have a history of social and behavioural difficulties, sensory impairment or complex difficulties like autism. In 2003-4, six students joined and five students left the school other than at the usual time. This is slightly more than average. The school has recently achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23629	Mick Megee	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, design and technology, French, music, special educational needs
11077	Janet Harrison	Lay inspector	
15600	Colin Richardson	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, religious education
16038	Jill Bavin	Team inspector	English, citizenship, personal, social and health education, English as an additional language, work-related learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Hugh's school is a good school with some very good features. In the short while since it has been open, the school has made rapid progress under the very good direction of the governors, headteacher and senior management team. Teaching and learning are good and the school provides good value for money. This is the first inspection of St. Hugh's in its current form.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The governors, headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership.
- Students' progress is significantly enhanced by the very good accommodation and resources.
- Teaching is of a good standard overall and enables students to achieve well.
- Students make slower but satisfactory progress in science, design and technology (DT), French and religious education (RE).
- Students' basic skills of writing, numeracy and ICT are not sufficiently well developed in all subjects.
- Students, including those with more complex needs, make very good progress towards their individual social targets because all staff make this a high priority.
- All students are very well supported and cared for.
- Students are proud of their school, greatly enjoy their lessons and behave well overall.
- The school has made very effective links with other schools and colleges, and other agencies.
- Parents are very happy with what the school does and feel very well supported.
- Opportunities for activities outside the school day are adequate but limited.

The new St Hugh's school was created two years ago following the LEA's reorganisation of its special school provision. A few of the staff including the current headteacher had worked in the previous special schools in the area, but most of the staff have been newly recruited. When they were appointed most of the new staff were unfamiliar with teaching students with special needs, especially those with more complex difficulties like autism. The school has had to move twice during re-building and was only able to move back shortly before the inspection took place. Despite these difficulties the headteacher, senior managers and governors, together with the staff, have successfully re-installed the students into their new school. In doing so, they have worked very hard to maintain a good quality of education for the students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Students' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good
Year 13	Good	Very good

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

Achievement is **good** overall for students of all ages, including those with additional special educational needs. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, students of different ages and backgrounds, or those with different levels of special educational needs. Achievement is satisfactory in science and French because some of the teaching is not as skilful as in other lessons. Achievement in DT is also satisfactory because there are few opportunities for students to make good progress in handling resistant materials. In RE, achievement is satisfactory because lessons are not long enough for students to consolidate what they have learned, and there are not enough suitable resources. In personal social and health education (PSHE) students achieve very well because of the very effective teaching. In English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), good teaching and learning lead to good achievement. Students achieve very well against their individual social targets. Year 11 students achieve well in the range of accredited coursework programmes they follow.

Students' personal qualities are **good**, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students are pleased with their school and their attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**, as are teaching and learning. Staff know the students well and work effectively as a team. Teaching and learning are particularly good in PSHE, and they are good in English, mathematics and ICT. In science, DT and RE, teaching is satisfactory. Students, especially those with additional complex needs, respond well to the staff, who maintain and cultivate very good relationships with them. Planning is also good but as yet opportunities for developing students' basic skills of writing, numeracy and ICT in all subjects are not well developed. Assessment is good overall, although marking is not yet as good as it could be.

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. The school provides a satisfactory range of support for learning outside the school day. The new school provides very good accommodation and resources for almost all subjects except DT and RE.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher and senior managers have done very well to maintain a good quality of education despite the ups and downs over the last year or so. At subject level, management is more uneven but it is good overall because of the dedication and enthusiasm of subject leaders. The governance of the school is very good. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school. They feel that their children are very happy at the school and they welcome the good teaching and support provided. Students are very positive about the school, and value the fact that the school listens to them and takes their views seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve achievement and the quality of provision in science, DT, French, and RE.
- Develop students' basic skills of writing, numeracy and ICT in all subjects.
- Provide further opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement overall is good, and there are no differences in achievement for boys and girls, older and younger students, or those with different backgrounds or levels of ability or different types of special educational need.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of a good standard overall and enables all students to achieve well.
- Students make slower but satisfactory progress in science, DT, French and RE.
- All students make very good progress towards their individual social targets because all staff make this a high priority.
- Students' progress is enhanced by the very good accommodation and resources.

Commentary

1. Students make good progress and achieve well in most subjects because of skilful planning, good leadership and a well thought-out curriculum. The very good relationships which exist throughout the school offer students a secure environment in which they grow in confidence, have the opportunity to safely make mistakes and learn well. There are 5 students over the age of 16 who all have profound and multiple learning difficulties and are taught well and appropriately in the purpose-built resource base. Good progress and achievement are made by these students, and by those with autism. This is because of the good teamwork between the staff who work with these students, and because the senior managers are very committed to developing those staff for whom this area of work is relatively new. The new accommodation and equipment provide a very pleasant environment for learning for all students, and set the tone for high expectations and good achievement.
2. Students, including those with sensory or more complex needs, make very good progress towards their individual social targets because all staff make this a high priority. Students have the chance to gain awards in a range of nationally accredited schemes including General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Entry Level certificates, Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Unit Awards, and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). There is no accredited programme for RE, which limits the opportunities for achievement. Overall, however, the range of programmes is appropriate to the breadth of ability and needs of the current population of students, but the senior managers are on the look-out for opportunities to expand and improve the range further. Students also have the opportunity for individual achievement through awards such as Junior Sports Leaders and St John's Ambulance. All 14 leavers last year gained awards. There are plans to increase the range further over the next year. The targets set for the school this year are challenging and relevant to the needs of the students, and the school looks set to achieve them.
3. Good progress and achievement is made by students in English, mathematics and ICT, and achievement is satisfactory in science. In English, students do well in speaking and listening and make good progress in reading. Staff consistently encourage students to express their views and to answer questions. Students' skills in writing are only satisfactory because lower

attaining students are not given long enough to practise making marks and develop the necessary early skills. A good, relevant programme of activities and skilful teaching helps students to achieve well in mathematics. In science achievement is only satisfactory because the long-term absence of the permanent coordinator means that many of the students are taught by temporary staff who do not have specialised subject knowledge. When students receive specialist teaching, their achievement is good. Students achieve well in ICT because the teachers are skilful, have good subject knowledge and the school has provided very good equipment and a very pleasant teaching room.

4. Students make very good progress and achieve very well in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Staff know the students very well and work very hard to help them grow into competent and caring adults. Achievement in DT and French is satisfactory. In both these subjects, the teaching is shared between a subject specialist and other staff who have not yet had time to develop their experience and skills. Achievement should be better when the planned staff development has taken place. Achievement in RE is only satisfactory because lessons are not long enough to allow students to consolidate their skills, and resources are limited.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance levels and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for moral and social development means that students increase their understanding of right and wrong and their sense of responsibility very well.
- Very strong relationships between staff and students support students' readiness to learn very effectively.
- Students normally behave well and are interested in their work.
- The school does not do as well as it might in giving students an appreciation of other cultures.
- There are rare occasions when students' behaviour is poor if their needs are not met in lessons.

Commentary

5. Inspection findings confirm parents' views that students thoroughly enjoy school and behave well overall. This is reflected in their good attendance figures, low number of exclusions and prompt arrival in lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.0	School data	0
National data	8.2	National data	1.8

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

6. Much of the school's success is the result of the very good relationships that staff share with students of all abilities. Understandably attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons reflect the quality of teaching. When students' needs are met extremely well

they behave impeccably. Most teaching is good and in these lessons students attend and participate well. When teaching is satisfactory rather than any stronger it is often because the pace slows a little. In these situations when students are waiting for a turn to respond to a question, or for the next direction, they become a little restless and momentarily lose concentration. On the few occasions when work is 'over their heads' and behaviour management is weak, behaviour becomes unsatisfactory or even poor. This happens most often when the lesson is being taught by inexperienced or temporary staff.

7. Provision for students' moral and social development is very strong. A significant contribution is the whole school behaviour management policy, which is highly structured, clear, constructive and, most importantly, understood and valued by students. The rewards and sanctions are applied fairly by both teachers and teaching assistants and this contributes significantly to students' strong sense of justice. It is to the school's credit that they have bent over backwards to ensure that students are treated fairly, having taken the School Council's past concerns on board and remedied them. One outcome of students' emerging sense of justice is that they feel strongly that if staff are allowed to wear jewellery, students should be too. Because of their impressively maturing self-confidence and ability to discuss matters reasonably they argue their case very convincingly. Behaviour around the school is very good. During the inspection there were countless examples of students showing each other consideration and support. In discussion with students about behaviour they also demonstrated a mature and sensitive understanding of the nature of both their own problems and those of others. Nevertheless students and staff recognise that behaviour in the yard at break-times is less reliable. This is an ongoing focus for continued development led by senior staff.

8. Students' spiritual development is good. All students are given good opportunities to reflect on wider issues such as their good fortune as compared with those who have suffered greatly in the recent tsunami. The extent to which the school successfully communicates the very clear message that each individual human being is unique and of equal worth is a key contributory factor in the good spiritual provision. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for those students who participate in extra-curricular activities to appreciate the arts, and activities that support students' understanding of their own culture are good overall. However, while students enjoy special music events such as working with an Indonesian percussion orchestra, preparation for the diversity of contemporary British society is satisfactory rather than any stronger. RE is not playing as strong a part as it could in increasing students' awareness of different faiths.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	102	17	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	4	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good, and supported by very good accommodation and resources. Pupils are very well looked after, guided and supported in their work and personal development. The school has good links with the community, and very good links with parents and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective, mainly because staff know and relate very well to the students.
- Not all staff are yet experienced in their subjects or with the range of special educational needs in the school.
- The teaching and learning of PSHE are very good but science, DT and RE, although satisfactory, are not taught as well.
- Teaching assistants are effective when supporting teachers in the classroom.
- Senior managers do very well in encouraging and assisting staff to develop their teaching to a high standard.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	6 (15 %)	21 (51%)	11 (27%)	2 (5%)	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.

- Teaching and learning are good overall but range from unsatisfactory to excellent. The teaching in PSHE is very effective and students learn very quickly. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics, and ICT are good throughout the school. Science, DT and RE, although satisfactory, are not taught as well. A number of teaching assistants have specific roles including teaching small groups and classes, and working in the special base rooms with for students with autism or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some are very new to these additional roles. In addition, a number of teachers in the school are new to their subjects or to meeting the range of needs of the students in the school. The senior managers within the school are providing well focused monitoring and have put very good plans in place for subsequent support and training. The school has not yet had sufficient time for these plans to be realised. But when they are, staff should rapidly increase their expertise and experience, and teaching and learning are likely to become increasingly effective.
- All staff use a common format for lesson plans. These have a good structure, with clear aims for each activity. The headteacher has arranged for all the staff to undertake intensive training on writing measurable lesson objectives and learning outcomes for students. This has been a very successful piece of training. Most lessons begin with a clear explanation of what students are expected to achieve and learn, and end with an assessment of whether they have been successful. This means that teachers and students have a good idea of what has been learned and what needs to be done next. Lesson plans do not yet include targets for other areas of development, especially for learning basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and using ICT. This means that opportunities for teaching these skills are sometimes missed.
- The common features of good lessons include the strong relationships between staff and students, the good teamwork between staff, and the fact that staff know the students very well. These features enable students to make good progress and to gain in confidence, especially

when answering questions or discussing topics. This is an important factor in the development of their communication skills. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers with individuals or groups as well as supporting whole class activities. This helps all students to learn quickly. Students learn well especially from well presented practical activities. In a food technology lesson, they loved designing and making a delicious pizza, and in science they learned well about electrical circuits by clipping components together and seeing what happened.

12. Less effective teaching occurs for a variety of reasons but the main reason is because the staff do not pace the lessons well, or pitch the activities at the wrong level. In most cases this was because of a lack of experience of working with students with such a wide range of learning difficulties. Less frequently, as in RE, the higher attaining students may not be sufficiently challenged. The quality of teaching and learning for students with additional behavioural, physical or communication difficulties is good overall. Individual education plans are good, are reviewed each term, and the targets are used well in lesson planning by all the teachers.
13. Assessment strategies are good overall. Most teaching assistants keep good records of students' improvement within lessons and teachers use these records to ensure that all students are fully included in future lessons. The headteacher has asked consultants from the LEA to undertake an extensive revision of its assessment strategies and this is already beginning to improve teachers' target-setting and assessment practice. With the changing profile of the school intake the senior managers are promoting the increasing use of 'Performance' levels – a special system of assessing students who have not yet reached Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The next stage will be to put this information into electronic form. The senior managers will be investigating and introducing a wider range of accreditation this year.
14. An examination of students' work showed inspectors that there are ongoing weaknesses in the feedback given to students on their work in most subjects. If work is marked at all, this is confined to ticks without an explanation to inform students of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In lessons, however, staff give good verbal feedback. The highest achievement is strongly celebrated in special assemblies, and this encourages students to give of their best.
15. All the staff recognise the commitment and contribution of the headteacher and the senior management team. They are rightly recognised as very effective and knowledgeable practitioners who are happy to give advice and to demonstrate good practice. They have engendered a strong desire within all the staff to make the teaching and learning as effective as they can be for the sake of the students. The inspection team was impressed by the way in which the commitment at the top to high standards and excellence was reflected in the classroom as well as among staff.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is good. It is relevant and carefully designed to meet individual needs. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for enrichment outside the school day. Accommodation and resources overall are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of relevant curricular opportunities that cater for the increasing complexity of students' needs.
- Provision for PSHE is very good, and the school's ethos provides very good opportunities for students' personal development.

- The curriculum programme for students aged 14 to 19 years is good, as are opportunities to take examinations or gain awards at the end of Year 11.
- College and post-school provision for students with more complex needs is not yet in place.
- Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory but limited.
- Very good accommodation and resources have a positive impact on students' learning.

Commentary

16. The curriculum for students offers them good opportunities to achieve well. In developing this curriculum, the school has done well to meet the individual needs of students having a wide range of special educational needs. The majority of students are placed into ability groups for English, mathematics and science, the placement of students being reviewed annually. Students with more complex needs, mainly students with profound multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and students on the autistic spectrum of disorder (ASD), have individual programmes of study. This includes the more formal curriculum but is also complemented by such provision as hydrotherapy, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy to provide for their complexity of needs. Students with a hearing or visual impairment have individual programmes related to speech and language and are well supported by senior teachers and the relevant multi-agency professionals. As a result the curriculum is very inclusive as it caters for the needs of all the students in the school. The school ensures that all requirements for teaching the National Curriculum and RE are met.
17. The school's provision for PSHE permeates all aspects of school life. Great emphasis is placed upon students' personal development and timetabled sessions are provided for students to discuss a range of issues covering key and social skills. For students with PMLD these sessions concentrate well on improving their quality of life through foot massage, foot spas, and relaxation beds.
18. Students in Years 10 and 11 have good routes for accreditation. These include the AQA Unit Awards and ASDAN Youth Challenge. Full GCSE courses are provided in English, mathematics, art and design, leisure and tourism, and, in September 2005, science and ICT. However there is, as yet, no accreditation for RE. The subject leader realises this and is investigating a suitable course. The development of appropriate accreditation has been greatly helped by the school being part of a collaborative group of secondary schools under the Pathfinder Programme. This has provided very good inclusion opportunities with local mainstream secondary schools. These include St Hugh's students attending a GCSE course in leisure and tourism at St Bedes School and Year 10 students from Huncliffe School mentoring Year 10 students at St Hugh's to obtain their 'passports' towards their ASDAN award in ICT. Links with local colleges of further education have also been strengthened with one college providing 'taster days' for students for the courses it provides.
19. For students in Years 12 to 14 the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets their needs well. New accommodation has provided the room to deliver a discrete curriculum devised to meet the needs of the students. Appropriate accreditation is provided through the ASDAN Transition Challenge "Working towards independence".
20. Good planning between subject leaders and teachers ensures a smooth transition of students between year groups or beyond school to work or college. For example, the leader for the PMLD provision attends the annual reviews of all pupils at the junior

school in Year 6 who will be transferring to the secondary school and tracks all such students from Year 9 onwards to inform transition planning. Very good links have been established with Connexions, local colleges of further education (FE) and adult services. However, college courses and post-school provision for students with PMLD are not available locally. The senior managers are very conscious of this and are in continuing dialogue with an FE college to provide an appropriate course and with adult services to provide suitable teaching in their premises.

21. The school provides good opportunities for students to participate in art through a range of activities such as resident artists, drama groups, local theatre visits, music festivals and students' work being exhibited in a local art gallery, all of which is effective in promoting the students' appreciation for the subject. However, opportunities for students to participate in sports and for learning outside the school day through extra-curricular clubs are only satisfactory with a limited range of activities provided during lunchtimes.
22. There is a good number and match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and individuals. Teachers have termly meetings for curriculum development and another for professional development. Support staff also have termly meetings to discuss current issues. There is a good induction programme for new staff, which also addresses training needs. Although there is no subject leader for creative arts and music the school is actively seeking to appoint a suitable person. The school's policy of appointing staff with subject expertise as subject leaders and training support staff has helped to raise expectations and broaden the curriculum. The school realises that working with students such as those at the school is a new experience for some staff and is successfully raising awareness through effective training which is provided by experienced staff within the school, such as the leader for PMLD provision. The senior managers are doing their utmost to ensure that the quality of education the school provides is of a high standard and that there are adequate staff to meet the needs of the students. As an example of this, during the inspection the headteacher heard that his representations to the LEA for extra staffing had resulted in three more teaching assistants and an extra teacher.
23. The new purpose-built site, which the school moved into in November 2004, provides a very warm welcoming environment. Wide corridors allow the easy passage of wheelchair users. Large and bright classrooms, some with attached rooms for students needing to be in a quiet environment, together with specialist accommodation for such subjects as ICT, art and design, PE, science, a hydrotherapy pool, which is also used by adult services, a library and specialist teaching areas for students with PMLD and ASD promote teaching and learning very well. The school has not yet equipped a specialist area for the teaching of resistant materials.
24. All subjects are very well resourced apart from RE, which has satisfactory resources, and DT, where resources for resistant materials are unsatisfactory; these relative weaknesses are holding back achievement. In particular the school has a modern computer suite, interactive whiteboards, and each teaching area has an up-to-date computer connected to the school system.

Care guidance and support

Students are very well cared for, supported and guided at the school. The health and safety provision for the students is good. The school has good procedures for taking students' views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are given very good personal and academic support, which enables them to learn with confidence.
- The procedures for child protection and welfare are very good.
- Health and safety procedures are effective.
- Written risk assessments for the new premises still await completion.
- Students know their views matter and this makes them feel valued.

Commentary

25. Nearly all parents are impressed with the arrangements for the care of their children and consider that they are treated equally and fairly. Students say that their teachers are helpful if they have problems with their work and that they are well looked after. This reassurance has a positive impact on their learning. There are very good induction procedures, which start with a 5-day visit in the summer term before admission. They find the senior managers and the headteacher reassuring and willing to spend time with them answering all their questions and worries. This helps to alleviate students' anxieties about starting school and iron out any practical difficulties such as transport arrangements. The effectiveness of induction is also evident in the way the school has recently seamlessly assimilated students with a wide range of needs such as autism and profound and multiple learning disabilities.
26. The school has very effective child protection procedures. Teaching and support staff are comprehensively informed about policy and procedures and keep appropriate records to monitor any welfare concerns they observe. The school is well maintained with a calm atmosphere. Day to day health and safety procedures and routines are effective, so that students feel secure and their individual medical needs are met. Students, including those from different backgrounds, are given very good support from the wide range of external support agencies who visit the school to help with individual students' welfare needs, and from their teaching assistants. The school premises are new and formal written risk assessments for the new facilities are still ongoing and incomplete.
27. The school behaviour policy is very effective, so that students get along together harmoniously in lessons and everyone is included in activities. Students particularly value "team-time", which helps to establish co-operative good values and reward good effort. Students are very pleased with the new adventure playground, which helps to promote constructive play at lunch times. However, several students would like to have more structured rules for the use of the outside play and quiet areas and the provision of more clubs during lunchtimes. The inspectors agree that this would help to reduce the small number of disputes or fallings out of friendships, as well as enhancing provision for the more vulnerable students at the school.
28. Students are given very good support and guidance through their pastoral contact time and the taught PSHE programme. Students' interpersonal skills are closely monitored and reviewed each term. Specific school projects are initiated - such as "learning how to be organised" - so that students can become more self-sufficient and appropriate students can integrate successfully into mainstream schooling. The individual annual reviews of students' progress are conducted sensitively and effectively so that students

and their parents or carers are thoroughly consulted and involved. This promotes a good sense of ownership in the targets set and helps to raise attainment.

29. The school actively seeks and values students' views. The School Council is well established and has a positive influence on school decision making. Currently they are discussing ways to improve lunchtimes and the quality of lunches. The active and willing involvement of students in the running of their school makes a good contribution to their personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good and effective links with parents. There are good links with the community and very good links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good partnerships established with parents help students to progress well.
- Students benefit socially and academically from the strong links with local schools and colleges.
- Post-16 links for those students with more complex needs are more limited.
- Effective links with the community enhance students' personal development.

Commentary

30. Parents are very pleased with the school. They say that their children like school, the teaching is good and the school is well managed. There was very little dissent from these positive views, although a few parents felt they would like homework more tailored to their own child's particular abilities and a few felt there could be a greater level of inclusion in the school for the post-16 students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The inspection team found that the school works very hard to ensure that all students are fully included, and that homework arrangements are effectively matched to students' capabilities. The school consults parents effectively through formal surveys and informal contact and responds positively to their views. Currently the school is working with parents to determine the type of workshops and courses they would find most helpful.
31. Contact between school and home is frequent and constructive. Parents like the home school diary, which provides good daily information. The school tries to make sure that it meets face to face with every parent at least twice a year. Parents are thoroughly involved in their children's annual reviews, which are professionally and sensitively conducted. The Friends of St Hugh's Association is well established and provides active support for the school with fund raising as well as providing a social support forum for parents. Several parents help in school, for example, with the hydrotherapy pool. The school is welcoming; parents remarked that they felt they could approach the school to discuss issues and were happy with the outcomes. During the inspection week the post-16 centre hosted a coffee morning for parents and support agency professionals. This provided a valuable opportunity for parents, teachers and the multi-agencies to share information in an informal setting.
32. Very successful links are established with local primary and secondary schools, which facilitate a smooth transfer for students and opportunities for some students to integrate into mainstream schooling. For example, 5 students are taking a dual GCSE in leisure and tourism

at a local secondary school and a group of Year 10 students work alongside their peers from another secondary school on an accredited programme of life skills. These projects work to the mutual advantage of both schools, not only in academic attainment but also in the development of social skills. There are close links with local colleges for vocational courses, work placements and post-16 advice. However, currently there is no established provision for college courses in the local area for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school and colleges are trying to develop these.

33. Community links are well developed, although not yet fully evaluated in terms of their impact upon students' learning. Local businesses are supportive of the school in providing work placements for students in Years 10 and 11. Students visit the local art gallery, cafes, museum and library to develop their independence. Students enjoy some excellent residential visits, including a visit to Lille to improve their French. A group of higher attaining Year 7 students has the opportunity to go to a study centre at the Scunthorpe football club where they enjoy innovative projects that are helping to increase their motivation, literacy and numeracy skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the school is very good and the management is good. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, and has created a very effective senior management team and a good management structure.
- Planning for the development of the school is very good.
- The governors provide very timely and effective support to the school.

Commentary

34. While teaching, learning and achievement are judged as good, leadership is judged as very good because of the exceptional drive and very effective planning shown by the most senior staff in the school. The headteacher and the senior management team are very committed to moving the new school forward to achieve very high standards and full inclusion. The senior management team carries out its monitoring and evaluation role with sensitivity and good judgement. Through their planning, they are determined that all students will make improvement in all areas of their academic and personal development. The headteacher delegates duties and tasks very effectively to the senior management team, making very good use of their individual strengths. In turn, the senior staff are striving hard to rapidly raise the quality of teaching and learning, especially with the staff who are relatively new to the school and, in many cases, to the range of difficulties the students offer. Staff value the support they get from the very top, take their responsibilities seriously and work to develop their own skills and to increase standards as a team.
35. The high quality of the leadership is evident in the way in which the school has responded to all the difficulties and disruptions of the last eighteen months with the changes of location, split site provision, assimilation of students with complex needs and redeployment and changes of staff. At the time of the inspection the new school building had been up and running for only a few weeks, and yet the inspection team found the school to be running like clockwork with contented, settled students and a cheerful, effective staff team. This has meant that the students have continued to achieve well despite the distractions and disturbance to their school life.

36. In spite of the pressing priorities of the recent time, the senior staff have still found time to introduce innovative measures for the good of the school. An example of this is the school's response to the weaknesses it had identified in its assessment system. By utilising Key Stage 3 consultants the senior managers have led a thorough whole-school revision of assessment procedures to the benefit of all staff with no financial outlay. The senior consultant reported to the inspection team how the headteacher had convinced the consultants' team to become involved, and how committed the senior staff had been to the extensive extra work required.
37. Management is judged as good. Subject coordinators work effectively to promote learning in their subjects and work hard to assist their less experienced colleagues to rapidly gain the required skills. They have yet to develop their expertise in providing opportunities for developing students' basic skills through their particular subjects, and the good training on assessment needs to be incorporated into their routine practice. The day-to-day running of the school is effective and smooth.
38. The school benefits from a very effective, committed and supportive team of governors who are dedicated to the well-being of the school and have given every assistance to the school during this demanding period. Governors are very well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and are fully involved in strategic planning and decision-making. They carry out their role as 'critical friend' very well, providing a high level of support and challenge for the senior management team. Financial reporting is done well, and the most recent audit found the school's systems to be in good shape.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,138,767	Balance from previous year	12,028
Total expenditure	1,119,340	Balance carried forward to the next	31,456
Expenditure per student	10,660		

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

No lessons of work-related learning (WRL) were on the timetable during the period of the inspection but students' work was sampled, teacher's plans were analysed and discussions were held with teachers and external staff.

39. The school is meticulous in planning to meet all aspects of WRL, and statutory requirements are met. The school has excellent links with the Connexions Adviser to the benefit of students who, for example, receive valuable interview experience. Preparation for informed choices begins in Year 9 when students meet the Connexions Advisor as well as beginning enterprise activities such as sandwich production through the food technology curriculum.
40. The vast majority of students benefit from carefully selected work experience and college placements. The school works hard and successfully with several local businesses to provide students with real choice for their work experience placement. Until very recently providing work experience for students with the most severe and complex needs has proved extremely difficult but the school has persevered and is in the process of developing links with Adult Resource Centres for these students.
41. A recent valuable curriculum initiative is a specific programme of work entitled, 'Preparation for Adult Life' (PAL) which focuses very specifically on choices at the age

of 16 with a heavy emphasis upon continuing education and training related to the world of work. These lessons start in Year 9. However, members of staff are very aware of the overlap between PSHE, citizenship and WRL and so they exploit all learning opportunities possible throughout various school activities with this in mind. For example, they place a high emphasis upon encouraging the maximum possible involvement of students in their annual reviews.

42. The co-ordination of both discreet WRL lessons and activities that support WRL is very good. In addition to the very careful planning, organisation and strong links with supportive agencies and businesses in the community, the school is reviewing and developing its WRL curriculum. This is a school that is far from complacent and constantly seeking to improve its provision, striving for ever increasing equal opportunities for students with ever more diverse needs.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4, AND FOR STUDENTS AT POST-16

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning lead to good achievement for all groups of students across the school.
- Staff are very skilled at encouraging students to communicate their ideas.
- There are missed opportunities to encourage students to write independently.
- The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

Commentary

43. Students' achievement in English is good overall for students of all ages because teachers plan carefully to meet individual needs and pitch the level of challenge for students skilfully. All students make good gains in communication, speaking and listening and in reading or pre-reading skills. There are no notable differences in achievement between girls and boys or groups of students with different needs in these elements of the subject. Achievement in writing is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of good achievement for more able students.
44. There are considerable strengths throughout the school in motivating students to communicate throughout the day and in all activities. The teaching of communication, speaking and listening is good. Strong relationships between staff and students play a significant part in motivating students to use and extend their communication skills. Staff are very good at using spoken language which does not patronise students but is not too complex for them. Consequently individual students often extend their understanding of language and communication impressively within a lesson. For instance, during the inspection one of the older students began to explore the idea of a joke during a 'sensory story' about football. Members of staff are also very good at exercising patience and courtesy by giving time for students to formulate their ideas and respond to questions or comments. The School Council is an impressive testimony to the school's successes in encouraging conversation and debate, both between students and between staff and students.
45. The school has rightly recognised that an area for development is to ensure that the use of written symbols is rationalised and taught consistently. There are occasions when different symbols are used to represent the same idea in different subjects, and occasions when too many written symbols are used, making communication unnecessarily complex. Senior staff recognise that this has the potential to confuse particular students. They are seeking to provide staff training to ensure that there is not only consistent teaching in different subjects, but also that the number of symbols used in any one sentence is modified to meet individual needs more effectively.

46. The teaching of reading is good so students learn well and their achievement is also enhanced by their access to a very good variety of reading material. However, parents are right to note that sometimes reading materials are not always matched well to age and ability. Students benefit from a good curriculum in English which skilfully balances teaching key skills with teaching through the use of literature. A significant strength in the teaching of reading is that staff have the confidence to respond flexibly to meeting individual needs. For example, teachers and assistants will modify plans to provide more work on matching letters and sounds as a result of assessing the needs of individual students. Nevertheless, when students are working in small groups within a lesson, reading materials are not always modified to suit students at earlier stages of reading.
47. Teaching and learning in writing are satisfactory overall. Once students are writing independently there are occasions when they have good opportunities to use their skills. In Year 7 students at all levels have well planned tasks that encourage the development of their writing skills, whatever their stage of development. However, support for students who are at very early stages of writing and making marks on paper is less consistent throughout the rest of the school. This is because copying text or having an adult scribe for a student happens far more than students having time to make their own marks with emerging letters. There are occasions when students are discouraged from taking the initiative to try to write themselves. The subject co-ordinator has accurately identified the need for a whole school approach to encouraging independent writing for these less skilled students.
48. The leadership and management of the subject are good overall and the co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the subject's strengths and relative weaknesses. She has been successful in enabling staff to understand that it is very important to promote students' desire to communicate. The impact of her recent priorities, such as developing assessment procedures, is already helping staff to meet students' needs effectively and enhance achievement. The focus for further development, to increase the use of individual targets on a daily basis and to develop a whole school approach to teaching writing, is well chosen.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. The development of students' communication, language and literacy skills across all subjects is good overall throughout the school. A key strength is the consistent encouragement of communication in every activity of the day. The co-ordinator is aware that there are inconsistencies in developing independent writing for students at the earlier stages of writing in all subjects and at all ages.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an effective curriculum, and good accommodation and resources.
- Students enjoy their lessons and achieve well when taught by the specialist teacher, but lessons taken by non-specialists are satisfactory.

Commentary

50. Achievement in French is satisfactory overall at present but is set to improve when all teachers receive planned training. By Year 9, students have compared their school with those in France, celebrated Christmas in the French language, and know how to order their favourite drinks and food. Students know the French names for rooms in their homes. Students in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to take units of accreditation or Entry Level Certificates according to their ability.
51. Although the lessons taken by the specialist coordinator are effective, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is because the teaching is shared with other staff who have not yet developed a strong expertise in French. In good lessons, the specialist teacher enlivens the atmosphere, for example by singing French greetings and action songs. Year 7 students enjoyed learning the French verbs for sitting, standing and lining up through such a song. By contrast, a Year 9 lesson taken by a teaching assistant was judged to be satisfactory because the teacher was unsure how to measure the progress the students had made, and relied too heavily on the coordinator's planning. This meant that the activities were not as challenging as they could have been. However, in all their lessons students like learning French and are proud of being able to speak another language.
52. Assessment is satisfactory overall but varies according to the skill of the teacher. An analysis of samples of work shows mostly well presented work which is a sign of the good expectations of the specialist. However, marking is confined to a series of ticks, with few comments that might guide the students to consider what to do next to improve.
53. The opportunities for students to develop their literacy and speaking and listening skills are successfully built into lessons. ICT is being used increasingly and the interactive whiteboard is an especially useful tool for exciting and engaging the students. Opportunities for numeracy are not yet well planned, although there were examples in the lessons seen of incidental learning of the time of day, days of the week and counting up to ten.
54. The school provides an interesting and appropriate curriculum for the students which contains a good range of activities and opportunities to make progress in French. It also provides a suitable range of accredited courses. Accommodation and resources are good. Although the achievement of students is satisfactory overall, the coordinator's leadership and management are judged as good because she has good subject knowledge and expertise and has worked hard to put everything in place for the new school. She provides a good role model for other teachers and organises an annual residential visit to Lille for Year 10 students to further raise the subject's profile within the school and to give the students real-life opportunities for making use of what they have learned. Given further experience and the planned training, the quality of teaching and achievement should rise quickly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The content and organisation of the curriculum, delivered through good teaching, ensure that all students achieve well.
- Staff work well as a team.
- Leadership is good, providing opportunities for inclusion and a range of accreditation.
- The effectiveness of assessment procedures is undermined by inconsistent marking.
- Mathematics is not yet consistently taught in other subjects.

Commentary

55. The subject curriculum has been adapted well to meet the wide range of individual needs of the students, particularly those with severe and complex needs and those students with autism. For the other students, annual test data is used well to ensure that students are correctly placed into one of the two ability sets. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school and are never less than satisfactory. Teachers have very good relationships with their students, know their abilities well and use this knowledge effectively in guiding their learning through direct questioning. Lessons are generally well planned with good pace, which allows time at the end to consolidate and test new learning. For example in a very good lesson on time, there was very detailed planning and activities were closely matched to the ability of the students. As a consequence at the end of the lesson students were able to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between seconds, minutes, and days through a very lively game of 'time bingo'. On a few occasions, this consolidation does not occur and students are left unsure of the progress they have made during the lesson. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers, generally supporting and enabling the learning of students with lower ability. This teamwork greatly helps students throughout the school to make good progress.
56. Students in Year 9 order a given sequence of numbers, recognise the written form of numbers, recognise obtuse and acute angles and calculate the perimeters of regular quadrilateral shapes. Work is matched well to ability. The higher attaining students calculate the perimeters of irregular quadrilaterals and add decimal numbers and some of the lower attaining students add single digit numbers and recognise the number of objects in a set. By Year 11 students correctly order a random sequence of numbers into ascending and descending order, add three digit and decimal numbers, divide by 10 and 100, interpret the information in bar charts and pictograms, recognise three-dimensional shapes and angles less than 180 degrees and draw shapes from given coordinates. Again, work is matched well to ability.
57. Students with more complex or profound learning difficulties, including those in the post-16 provision, achieve well as a result of the good teaching, mainly through a sensory programme that focuses very well on their needs, such as hand/eye co-ordination and spatial awareness. Students with autism are provided with a curriculum that is sympathetic to their learning difficulties and provides for them well, ranging from word-processing to understanding cause and effect.
58. The subject leader has ensured a range of accreditation courses are provided, ranging from the AQA units of accreditation to the full GCSE course. These meet the individual needs of students well. 'Study United', a New Opportunities Funding (NOF) initiative with Scunthorpe FA, and led by a seconded teacher, provides opportunities for only the more able Year 7 students to boost their learning in mathematics. However, the subject leader has a vision to improve inclusion by encouraging less able students from local mainstream secondary schools into lessons. Although procedures for formal and summative assessment are good these are not always practised. The marking of

students' work is inconsistent and very few guiding or encouraging comments are made by teachers. Consequently, although merit points are given for progress made at the end of lessons, students have little feedback or input to their progress over time.

59. Although the 'Learning System' program is used to support the learning of some students, the use of ICT to support both teaching and learning in the subject is underdeveloped. However, the proposed provision of an interactive whiteboard into the main classroom used for teaching the subject will facilitate whole class teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Although the inspection team saw several instances of the use of mathematics in other subjects, such as data handling in ICT and the use of bar graphs in science, the planned use of mathematics into all teachers' medium term subject planning, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11, is largely underdeveloped. This unnecessarily limits the opportunities for students to practise and demonstrate their learning in the subject. The school realises this and has included the planning in the school improvement plan.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Temporary staffing difficulties are an obstacle to more rapid development in science.
- Teaching by the specialist teacher is good and students in these lessons make good progress.
- Where science is taught by non-specialist teachers, achievement is lower.
- The new accommodation and resources support students' learning very well.
- The temporary subject leader provides good leadership.
- Marking is not consistently of a good standard.

Commentary

61. The long-term ill-health of the permanent coordinator has meant that half the students are being taught by temporary supply teachers who do not have specialist knowledge of science and often do not manage difficult behaviour successfully. Students' achievement overall is satisfactory and reflects the quality of the teaching. Older students have the opportunity to gain an entry level certificate in science, and last year there were good results with most of the candidates obtaining passes at the higher grade. Until now, higher attaining students have not been offered the chance to take a GCSE in the subject, but this opportunity will be introduced this year. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls, or of students of different abilities and age.
62. The quality of teaching and learning varies from unsatisfactory to good and on the whole teaching and learning are satisfactory. An examination of the work in students' books showed that there has been good coverage of the elements of science, and that students are developing knowledge and skills as they go up through the school. However, much of the work was not marked, or if it was marked there was only a tick with little useful guidance. A common weakness in science lessons is that there are very few planned opportunities for students to improve their basic skills in literacy, numeracy or ICT.
63. In lessons where the teaching is good, the specialist teacher produces resources of good quality which excite the interest and amusement of the students. For example, in one lesson on constructing electrical circuits the students were delighted to be given custom-made

workbooks in which there was a cartoon depicting a day in the life of the science teacher and a colleague. The enthusiasm of the specialist teacher for the subject is infectious, and students find their questions and comments taken seriously and answered at length with interesting asides and details. Where the subject is not taught by the specialist, the teacher may not be able to explain the scientific ideas at the level of the students, or inject the right amount of pace into the activities. This may lead to the students becoming restless, unengaged, and difficult to manage. As a consequence, students are not learning as much as they could in these lessons.

64. As a response to the long-term sickness of the permanent coordinator, the school has asked the newly appointed specialist to take on the coordinator's job. He demonstrates good leadership and has made a good start by identifying weaknesses in the subject and putting remedial plans in place. He has reviewed the science curriculum and has played a major role in ensuring that the accommodation and resources were in place for the students soon after the school took over the building.
65. Accommodation in science is very good, with a spacious and well equipped laboratory. The completion of risk assessments and a full audit of resources are next on the list of tasks, but there is clearly a very wide range of resources that will meet the needs for the immediate future. More resources will be made available later on this year if the need is demonstrated.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources and accommodation are very good and provide good teaching and learning opportunities throughout the school.
- An appropriate curriculum, delivered through good teaching, ensures that all students enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- Staff work well together, providing effective teams.
- Leadership is good, with increased accreditation and inclusion initiatives.

- Management is good, but marking and assessment are inconsistent.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is inconsistent and requires formal planning in other subjects.

Commentary

66. A very well resourced networked computer suite supports the whole class teaching of discrete ICT skills. Additionally, each teaching area, three of which have interactive whiteboards, has a computer linked to the school network. When used in teaching, the interactive whiteboards were observed to make teaching points more visual and relevant to the students, many of whom have difficulties in handling abstract ideas.
67. The subject curriculum has been adapted well to meet the diverse needs and achievement levels of the students, which range from P2 (performance level) to National Curriculum level 5. The subject teaching, mainly undertaken by the subject leader, but also to a lesser extent by another teacher, is never less than good and on occasions very good. Students learn well as a result. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and both teachers have good skills and knowledge in the subject and are able to resolve students' problems alongside them by the effective use of direct questioning. The teachers' very good relationships with their students further motivate the students to learn. For example, students showed their skills and pride in their achievements in using the interactive whiteboard when selected to demonstrate their skills in navigating around a new program. Lessons are generally well paced with time at the end for students to demonstrate their work. However, sometimes poor pace leaves insufficient time for this and as a consequence it is unclear whether all the students have achieved the lesson's objectives.
68. Teaching assistants have been given training in the use of the various ICT programs and were observed to provide good support to students, particularly those of lower ability, working well with teachers as a team. Students enjoy their work and the challenges set. They work well both as a group and independently. For students with more severe and complex learning difficulties, including those students in the post-16 provision, teachers and staff effectively use light and sound to stimulate their students. Students with autism are provided with ICT applications that meet their needs well. Consequently, students of all abilities are achieving well throughout the school.
69. Students of all ages achieve well. In Year 9 students are beginning to learn how to insert images into PowerPoint. In word processing they are using Word Art to change the size and type of font and to search for appropriate images on the internet. They then use 'copy' and 'paste' to combine them with text. By Year 11 students show increasing confidence and skills, inserting digitised photographs of themselves, editing text for particular audiences, saving, retrieving and editing data, and performing simple searches. Students with autism are learning basic skills in word processing. Students with more complex needs have an emerging understanding of cause and effect, using switches to activate toys and other devices.
70. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is a major figure in promoting and supporting a new inclusion initiative as part of the work for the ASDAN bronze and silver awards. Year 10 lower attaining students from a local mainstream secondary school will mentor Year 10 students at St Hugh's, helping them in their ASDAN work using ICT. This scheme offers very good opportunities for students to visit the mainstream school for some sessions. The subject leader intends to provide a full GCSE course for the higher attaining students, commencing September 2005. This will ensure that students of all ability levels are provided with appropriate accreditation for their work. Although assessment procedures are in place some features of them need improving. A scrutiny of students' work showed that work is not normally marked and there is an almost complete absence of comments. Both teachers of ICT use different assessment procedures, and this makes it more difficult to accurately judge what students know and can do. A few staff do not routinely use additional communication aids, particularly for students with more severe and complex learning difficulties. The

appointment of a full time technician has allowed the subject leader to concentrate on raising standards in the subject.

ICT across the curriculum

71. The subject leader provides training to staff on new applications of ICT. However, very little use of ICT to support subject teaching and learning was observed during the period of the inspection and the planning of such use of ICT is underdeveloped. This means that teachers have to make on the spot decisions as to how ICT could support their subject teaching, both in the classroom and in the ICT suite. With everything else going on in the lesson, opportunities are inevitably missed.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in RE is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links between RE and PSHE.
- The subject is related well to students' own experiences, which makes it more relevant and interesting to them.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because learning opportunities are limited by short lessons, and higher ability students not always sufficiently challenged.
- There is not yet any accreditation for the subject.
- Whilst ICT is used well, other resources are limited.

Commentary

72. One of the strengths of RE is that it is closely linked to students' own experiences and made relevant to their needs. It also illustrates the good links between RE and the students' personal and social development. For example, in a Year 8 lesson about places which are special, as an introduction to temples, students explored personal and social issues well by giving examples of places that were special to them and why. Having such an involvement in the lesson motivated the students' learning and they took part in discussions well.
73. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their strong relationships with their students to good effect in guiding their learning through questions. Lessons are generally well planned and managed. However, the shortness of the lessons, 30 minutes, sometimes results in insufficient time given to tasks, particularly for the higher ability students, that allow students to show what they have learned in the form of written work and which can be used for assessment. It also means that lesson timing is that much more important and on several occasions there was insufficient time at the end of lessons to consolidate students' learning. For these reasons teaching, learning and achievement are judged to be no better than satisfactory. The curriculum for students with more complex and profound learning difficulties and for those with autism is well differentiated and taught by the specialist staff.
74. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject curriculum follows the locally agreed syllabus that ensures coverage of knowledge and issues of the main faiths. Links are being built with local churches and the subject leader has a good vision of holding a cross-curricular day based upon the different religions. Currently

there is no accreditation for the subject although the subject leader is considering the ASDAN bronze award. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory. Although the main teaching area has an interactive whiteboard and good use is made of this to put learning objectives into a form that the students relate to well, the use of artefacts and pictures that depict various beliefs is largely underdeveloped.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in DT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning and assessment of students' achievements do not include the handling of resistant materials.
- Teaching by the specialist is good but less experienced staff are not sufficiently skilful in what they provide.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory.
- Students' listening, speaking and literacy skills are well developed through the subject.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning in the subject.

Commentary

75. Students' files and teachers' planning for all aspects of the subject include some well presented designs and writing for their projects. Younger students up to Year 9 design and make healthy snacks and pencil cases, and use computer programs to aid their designing and making. Older students in Years 10 and 11 are working towards entry level certificates and units of accreditation in food handling, bread making, and other related food topics. The school's results show that students are increasingly successful year by year. However, students' achievement is judged to be only satisfactory because there have been too few opportunities for them to work with resistant materials like wood or metal. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls or in the progress made by students of different capabilities. The new accommodation has included a space for this work, but the school has decided not to bring this into operation until next year. The long term scheme does not include enough activities for this element, although food technology is well covered.
76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but range from unsatisfactory to good. Staff have established good routines and rules for safe working practices in the well equipped food technology room. The specialist in food technology provides lessons which capture the interest of the students and give them good opportunities to develop basic cookery skills. Parents reported their delight when their children come home and ask if they would like them to cook dinner. Expectations are high and many activities are challenging, and the specialist ensures that there is a strong focus on design in the lessons. Students respond well to the style of the teacher and in her lessons there was a calm but focused atmosphere in which students worked well, both on their own or alongside a partner. Assessment procedures are good for the limited curriculum available, and students' work is regularly marked with helpful comments.
77. Where lessons are taken by less experienced teaching assistants, the activities may be undemanding or pointless. In a Year 8 lesson, students were beginning a project to design a bag. They spent a long time looking at their own bags, and then were given

catalogues and scissors and told to cut out pictures of bags and stick them onto a piece of paper. This was already well within the capability of all the students and they did not learn much from the task. This activity lasted for over half an hour, and one student said he was bored after fifteen minutes.

78. There is a good contribution to the development of students' literacy through, for example, the learning and writing of key words and lists of materials. Less experienced staff try to introduce symbolised information to assist students' understanding but the symbols may be too small and too numerous to be helpful. The development of students' speaking and listening skills is well promoted. Teachers ensure that students listen attentively to instructions and make self-assured responses to questions, which are used well to draw out their ideas. Numeracy is developed through activities such as measuring and weighing out ingredients, but could be further developed by including opportunities in the lesson plans. Opportunities to make use of computers to assist design or for research were rarely taken in the lessons seen.
79. Students enjoy their DT lessons, and take pride in the results of their work. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by a committed, skilled and enthusiastic coordinator who recognises the weaknesses, especially in terms of resistant materials, and has developed plans to remedy the problems. There are very good resources for food technology but those for working with wood or metal are very limited, and so resources are judged unsatisfactory overall.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Music and art and design were sampled.

80. In a good and enjoyable lesson in **art and design**, Year 8 students were asked to make a piece of art with a surprise in it. The teacher excited the interest of the students by showing them how a children's story – the Hungry Caterpillar – was made more eye-catching by using visual surprises. The students were quickly led into the practical part of the lesson and worked well on their own or in pairs, talking about what ideas they had and assembling the materials they needed. The teacher moved quietly around, giving appreciated advice on techniques like how to cut out a hole with scissors by piercing and enlarging a small hole. The lesson finished with a 'show and tell' session where each student proudly displayed their efforts, which were well made and caused laughter as the surprise was revealed. These included a lizard hidden in a mountain lake, a lion in a low-fat yoghurt pot, and a toothbrush in a can of worms.
81. In a **music** lesson taught by a teaching assistant, the planning was provided by the subject coordinator. Year 8 students were shown a series of famous pictures by artists like Munch and Frink, and were asked to use the keyboards to make a creative response to the pictures. This was a tall order for most of the students because they had very few skills in playing music and could not really determine in advance or control their choice of sound. The students initially enjoyed experimenting with the instruments but the activity went on too long and they became bored. The assistant explained that she had not been asked to go beyond what was planned and so did not make the necessary adjustments to the activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education is reported in full and citizenship was sampled because there were no lessons on the timetable during the period of the inspection.

82. **Citizenship** is very carefully planned in conjunction with personal, social and health education and other subjects. Meticulous plans are very closely linked to assessment records of students' achievements. Consequently, the school demonstrates the extent to which its work successfully enhances students' self-confidence, sense of responsibility and abilities to forge constructive relationships throughout all its activities.
83. There are numerous ways in which the school prepares students very effectively for an active role in society and these include special events such as 'Citizenship week'. The level of students' participation and understanding is assiduously recorded in records of individual students' achievement, which are backed up with identified sources of evidence. Students make very good gains in relation to their abilities. For example, students gradually increase their participation in school events such as assemblies or trips out; they become involved in fund raising and charity events or they increase their involvement in discussions at the School Council. Various programmes of work support students' very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles. These include specific work on healthy food through the food technology curriculum; an understanding of health and road safety when travelling in the environment beyond the school; and individual work on caring for one's own health and hygiene.

Personal, social and health education

Provision for PSHE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make very good gains in self-confidence, independence and social skills.
- Teaching is very good because of a very comprehensive and detailed knowledge of students' needs.
- The comprehensive curriculum is very well organised and includes valuable extra-curricular activities such as residential experiences.
- The subject is led and managed very dynamically with considerable knowledge and expertise.

Commentary

84. Provision for students' personal and social development is very good because of a shared understanding from all staff that this is one of the most important aspects of their work and that it underpins all other learning. This means that there is a strong and shared commitment to developing students' personal and social skills through every activity and every exchange. This process is helped by the warm and secure relationships that students enjoy with staff, and in turn students become increasingly eager to develop independence and take responsibility for themselves and others. Consequently, throughout the school students of all abilities make very good gains in their personal and social skills.
85. Teaching and learning are very good overall in this area of work. Individual education plans emphasise the specific targets for learning related to this area of work. Because of very good systems for assessing what students know, understand and can do, teachers and teaching assistants know students extremely well and adjust every interaction and 'demand' according to the individual student's needs. High quality relationships enable staff to successfully impose high expectations of students' responses and participation. For the most part students respond positively to these

demands and take pride in their growing skills, whether in representing their peers on the School Council, in making an independent journey outside school for the first time or identifying a toothbrush and knowing what it is for.

86. During the inspection there were several occasions when students demonstrated their growing self-confidence and responsibility. For example, students volunteered to help inspectors find their way around the school and students with extreme needs used basic signs to initiate communication with familiar staff as they moved around the school. Although the teaching is very good overall, there were one or two lessons seen in which the pace and expectations were rather mundane, and were judged to be no better than satisfactory. Elsewhere, however, teaching was excellent when students with the most severe and complex needs were aroused to an impressive level of enjoyment, anticipation and focus. In other lessons individual students' needs were well met either through entirely individual programmes working on health and hygiene or by different group work for students of different abilities.
87. A key strength of the provision lies in the extremely well organised and comprehensive curriculum. Every class has a well planned and structured programme of time with pastoral tutors to develop those personal and social skills that are linked with emotional development and a growing awareness of one's own feelings and the feelings of others. There is a structured programme of individual and small group work with subject teachers and teaching assistants to focus upon those personal and social skills linked to health and hygiene. There is a well thought out teaching programme to develop students' independent mobility and travelling skills. There are very well planned opportunities for students to mature on residential trips both in the UK and abroad. Curriculum plans meticulously cross-reference PSHE with other subjects that are closely related, such as citizenship. The value of such a well organised system is that no element of this huge and vital area of work is missed and the school is in a very strong position to both meet and evaluate students' entitlement.
88. The subject is led with considerable skill, passion and expertise. The high quality leadership has ensured that this subject quite rightly underpins every aspect of school life and students' learning. Similarly, the strong leadership and management of the subject mean that it is constantly reviewed and developed. Recent initiatives, including for example increased systems of accreditation, have been developed without the loss of existing provision, which is no mean feat. Monitoring and reviewing the value of the school's work provide the co-ordinator with a very good understanding of the subject's strengths and areas for development and this always translates into action. The assessment procedures to track students' personal development are second to none.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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*