

INSPECTION REPORT

TRELOAR SCHOOL

Alton, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116636

Headteacher: Neil Clark

Lead inspector: Hilary Gannaway

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd September 2004

Inspection number: 268662

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:	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils:	5 -16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	141
School address:	Upper Froyle Alton Hampshire
Postcode:	GU34 4LA
Telephone number:	01420 526400
Fax number:	01420 526426
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Lt. Gen. Sir Hew Pike KCB DSO MBE
Date of previous inspection:	10/05/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Treloar is a non-maintained residential special school. It is run by the Treloar Trust as is the separate further education college which is located nearby. At present, places are wholly funded by local education authorities, although substantial fund raising is also used to provide facilities for pupils. Pupils can attend daily, or on a residential basis, staying at weekends or as weekly boarders. The school takes pupils between the ages of five and 16, although, this year there are no pupils in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils are in Years 7 to 11 with only one class for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The school admits pupils from all over England and sometimes takes pupils from abroad. Consequently, pupils have a wide range of socio economic backgrounds. Some come from areas of considerable deprivation while 12 are looked after children in local authority care. Thirty seven are day pupils and 63 of the 141 pupils are girls. The largest group of pupils are from white backgrounds with 11 being of various minority ethnic heritages. Twenty five pupils are new to the school this term.

All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs for physical disability. Pupils' ability is very wide ranging from those pupils with severe learning difficulties to those who are above average. There are an increasing number of pupils entering the school with very complex and multiple needs. The school runs a Function Language and Movement Education class which is based on a modified version of conductive education. The school's involvement in national initiatives includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Healthy Schools Initiative. The school has achieved the Sportsmark Gold award and Investor in People status. The school has low pupil and staff mobility. There is an extensive range of therapy and medical facilities. Therapy is integral to all work and has a very high profile.

Accommodation is in five separate boarding houses organised according to pupils' age. No pupils board until they are seven years of age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21527	Hilary Gannaway	Lead inspector	French Citizenship
32676	Nick Power	Lay inspector	
27826	Andrew Parsons	Team inspector	Science History Special educational needs
16198	Carol Etherington	Team inspector	English Geography Music
31246	Jon Sharpe	Team Inspector	Mathematics Physical education
10678	Margaret Paull	Team Inspector	Art and design Religious education Personal, social and health education
21529	Greg Sorrell	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school with some very good features. Good leadership is supported by a staff committed to ensuring every pupil has access to all school activities. Pupils achieve very well by the time they leave school because of consistently good, and sometimes very good, teaching and a very strong emphasis on personal development. Teachers, therapists, learning support assistants and care staff all work very effectively together to ensure that pupils' physical difficulties impede their learning as little as possible. As a result, the school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership has created exceptionally successful multi-disciplinary teams that integrate therapy advice into many activities with beneficial effects on all aspects of the pupils' daily life.
- Learning is very successfully enhanced by the excellent range of supplementary activities provided in the school and residential setting.
- Very good relationships and detailed knowledge of pupils' needs by teachers have a positive effect on pupils' achievement and attitudes to work.
- Boarding provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and learning.
- The wide range of courses, awards and certificates, matched to pupils' needs, successfully aids the very good achievement pupils make by the time they leave school.
- Personal development is very good, raises pupil self esteem, and thoroughly prepares pupils for life after school.
- There is insufficient focus on long term subject development.
- Objectives in the school development plan are not always specific enough to ensure progress can be evaluated and performance accurately measured.

Improvement since the last inspection in May 1999 is good. The senior management team has been successfully reorganised so that a senior member of staff oversees the curriculum and a student support manager has been appointed. The latter has very effectively ensured more co-ordinated multi-disciplinary working to support pupils' many, and often complex, physical and learning needs. Curriculum development overall is more securely linked to school development planning. Subject co-ordinators now suitably monitor their subjects but their development planning is inconsistent. Monitoring and evaluation has improved, although there is still more to do to ensure it is as rigorous as it could be. There has been a very good improvement in the training and deployment of learning support assistants.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils enter the school with a very wide range of attainment from well below that of others for their age to a level at, and above, the national average. They progress well and, while **pupils' achievement is good overall**, it is very good for pupils by the end of Year 11. This is because of knowledgeable teaching, the wide range of accreditation suitable for all pupils and the cumulative

effect of therapy and care. Pupils with complex and additional needs in Years 3 to 6 make a good start in all subjects because of very good cross curricular planning and teaching which comprehensively takes all their needs into account. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) because of a suitable range of carefully thought out activities. Achievement is very good in physical education due to very strong specialist teaching and in personal, social and health education (PSHE) because of the wide ranging activities available. Pupils who need them achieve well when they use communication aids because these aids are matched to individual needs and communication is strongly promoted across the curriculum. Pupils taking GCSE attain results comparable with national averages.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils like coming to school and are considerate of each others needs, reflecting the school's ethos. Attendance is good and punctuality satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good.

Teachers and learning support assistants know pupils well and work very effectively together to make sure all pupils are involved in their learning. This helps pupils to feel valued and gives them confidence to participate and learn. However, an occasional lack of suitable planning, and a narrow range of teaching methods, means that opportunities are sometimes lost to build on previous work. Assessment is effective and based on a good knowledge of what pupils have achieved. Staff in the school and residential provision care for pupils very well and provide an exceptional range of activities to support all aspects of pupils' development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good. Statutory requirements are met and governors have a good overview. Good leadership by the headteacher and senior managers has, in a school with a great many staff, created very effective teams that are committed to ensuring that pupils make effective progress. Monitoring and evaluation have improved but still lacks some rigour in the measurement and analysis of performance. The school is managed well and staff training is a particular strength.

PARENTS AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and state that their children enjoy attending. They consider staff help their children become more mature. Pupils are pleased with the voice the school council gives them.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

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

- Ensure that there is a focus on a coordinated approach to long-term subject development with clear targets for improving subjects.
- Provide clear and measurable success criteria for school development planning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

For most pupils, standards are well below average compared to those for pupils of the same age. All pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and those with complex needs, achieve well from Years 3 to 9 and by the time they leave in Year 11 they achieve very well. Higher achieving pupils capable of GCSE attain at, and sometimes above, national averages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in PSHE and physical education and well in mathematics, science and English.
- Provision for, and use of, alternative and augmented communication and ICT, aid pupils' access to the curriculum and very effectively supports their achievement.
- A comprehensive range of improved accreditation, matched to pupils' needs, ensure they achieve very well by the time they leave school.
- The development of a team approach to pupil target setting is beginning to be effective.
- There are not enough planned opportunities to use mathematics to support achievement in subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

1. Since the last inspection, pupils with a more complex range of difficulties have entered the school. The school now caters for a very wide range of needs from severe and complex to pupils who gain five GCSEs at A* to C. The school has worked hard with training, changes to the curriculum, and by implementing a wider range of accreditation to meet pupils' diverse needs. As a result, the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 and all other pupils with complex and additional needs is improving because work is effectively matched to needs. Comprehensive, individual assessment is used to decide on those aids and therapies which will help pupils gain access to learning. This has contributed a great deal to pupils' good achievement.

2. Pupils achieve very well in PSHE because there are many opportunities in lessons, throughout the day and in the residential setting for pupils to gain relevant skills. This is due to very effective teamwork that ensures pupils' personal development is a priority. As a result, pupils gain a perspective on personal development that may be very different from their own experiences and show very good awareness of wider issues than just their own. By the time they are in Years 10 and 11, they are well prepared for thinking about the world of work and life beyond school. In physical education, high achievement is the result of a wide range of very well planned activities that pupils of all abilities are able to experience. These interesting and highly motivating physical activities are taught very well and have a very positive effect on self-esteem and pupils' understanding of what is possible.

3. There is good achievement overall in all aspects of English. This is because pupils in Years 3 to 6 with a complex range of needs make a good start due to very effective teaching. Staff place an emphasis on developing the basic skills of pupils in Years 7 to 9 through the addition of specific literacy lessons. As a result, many achieve very well by the end of their time at the school. In mathematics, starter activities at the beginning of lessons are used effectively to focus pupils' attention while the use of ICT successfully aids pupils in gaining relevant skills such as how to display information effectively. In science the practical nature of the tasks keeps pupils interested

and wanting to learn. In both mathematics and science good achievement is effectively aided by learning support assistants.

4. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit greatly from an increasingly effective range of awards and certificates in a wide range of subjects. These are carefully planned to be appropriate to their age and needs and there is flexibility for pupils to take more than one type of accreditation. This is a strength and consequently pupils gain in confidence, are motivated and achieve very well. Every pupil, from those with severe communication difficulties who complete the City and Guilds course, to those completing National Skills Profile and Accreditation for Learning and Life modules, ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) bronze award, Entry Level Certificates and GCSE in a range of subjects, gain a very good range of accreditation.

5. The school has recently introduced a process by which all the different adults involved with a particular pupil meet together to frame a key target or 'goal'. This goal is relevant to all aspects of the pupil's life in school. All staff in the school and the residential provision now reinforce the same key message. This then improves the pupils' ability to access all that the school has on offer and is beginning to aid and reinforce achievement. Curriculum targets also support achievement in different subjects and, although the use of these is inconsistent in places, there are examples of very good practice throughout all stages.

6. For about a third of pupils, alternative means of communication are essential if they are going to communicate, learn and make progress. The school considers this a priority and uses a wide variety of different forms of alternative and augmented communication. All pupils are carefully assessed to ascertain the most suitable for them whether it be synthesisers using digital speech or other forms of programmable communication aids so pupils have the best possible chance to communicate and achieve as well as they can.

7. Although opportunities for communication across the curriculum are strong they are less so in mathematics. Mathematical skills are rarely planned in to other subjects on a consistent basis, particularly for secondary age pupils, so they get few opportunities to reinforce skills and concepts gained. The school is looking to improve this and has produced a policy which is beginning to have an impact.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attendance of day students is good and punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal qualities are well developed as is the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- During their time in school, pupils develop into mature, thoughtful and sensible individuals, who feel able to express views.
- Pupils enjoy school life very much and support each other well.
- Improvement in pupils' attitudes results from very good relationships where all pupils are seen as individuals.
- There has been a good improvement in personal development since the last inspection.

Commentary

8. The school's strategies for developing pupils' attitudes and behaviour work very well. They have led to an improvement in attitudes since the last inspection and are a positive influence on the progress pupils make. The school places its pupils at the centre of its work and treats them with respect and thoughtfulness at all times. Every member of the extensive school staff has a very positive attitude to special needs. The whole-hearted celebration of every single pupil's different strengths and successes, in every aspect of their lives, is at the heart of the school's approach. It

serves to embody the values and attitudes that underpin the very good relationships between staff and pupils.

9. All staff are good role models and pupils are pleased about the way they are valued. The school has a chaplain who works hard to promote self-esteem and personal development and pupils appreciate this. Any incidences of antisocial behaviour are quickly addressed by staff, and pupils are confident that issues will be dealt with fairly and effectively. As a result, they begin to understand the effect of their actions on others and show respect for their feelings. Pupils work hard to gain merit points and enjoy celebrating their success. The many opportunities they are given to state their opinions mean that many pupils, particularly the more able, are articulate, confident and reasoned in expressing views. They particularly enjoy talking and discussing issues with visitors.

10. Pupils like coming to school and those who board like the experience. This is because they are rarely uninterested as the school offers an exceptionally wide range of extra activities. They are well attended and pupils take pleasure in them. Pupils are considerate of others at all times and do what they can to help each other. For example, at lunch time pupils understand each other's needs very well and will often assist in ways that make life easier for others. They are careful as they make their way round school so they do not bump into each other and often wait politely for those in front, who may be slower in their wheelchair, to move. However, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in lessons, such as helping to give out equipment, where this is possible, are sometimes missed.

11. Pupils' good attendance is effectively monitored and there are facilities for those who may be in the medical centre to have lessons, if appropriate, so they miss as little work as possible. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.1	School data	0.1
National data	10.5	National data	0.4

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

12. Improved provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development has very effectively supported pupils' personal development. Pupils themselves give very positive feedback on their own feelings of self worth, confidence, and looking forward positively to the future. They increasingly develop self-knowledge as well as their role and responsibility toward the school community as a whole, and they will debate and argue their point successfully and sensibly, taking time to listen to each other. They are enthusiastic about their school council and take elections very seriously, canvassing support and actively participating. The citizenship, PSHE and religious education programmes, which are now well thought out and co-ordinated effectively, all make a seamless and very good contribution to this success. These lessons help to give pupils a very clear idea of right and wrong and include work on a range of moral and social issues. Together with assemblies and form meetings, this all contributes to a spiritual element within the school that celebrates joy and success as well as giving pupils time to reflect on hardship or distress in others. There is good appreciation within the school of different cultures and needs and the richness and diversity of these cultures, not just through their traditions and customs but also through current events and their implications for a multi-cultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. All staff work very effectively together to make sure pupils have the right resources to help them access learning. Teaching is good because staff know pupils well and expect them to work hard. This helps pupils' self-esteem and gives them

confidence to participate in lessons and learn. There are a good range of National Curriculum and religious education experiences matched to pupils' ages and needs. Staff in the school and residential provision care for pupils very well and provide an exceptional range of supplementary activities.

Teaching and Learning

The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils learn well because they are supported by the strong emphasis on personal development and the effectiveness of therapy and care. Overall, assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The way teachers and therapists work together, and the use of learning support staff, ensures pupils have every chance to have their needs met.
- Teaching is most successful where there are very good relationships, teachers have good specialist knowledge and there are a varied range of activities.
- There are times when work is not planned well enough.
- Although there are some very good examples of assessment, it is not always used as effectively as it could be to inform planning.

Commentary

13. Teaching is good overall and similar to that at the last inspection, however, teaching has improved for pupils in Years 3 to 6 where it is very good. This is due to comprehensive planning to meet these young pupils' individual, and often very complex, needs. Lessons are successfully supported by a range of very active tasks which keep pupils interested. There are highly effective working arrangements with learning support assistants so pupils are constantly challenged. For example, when beginning to programme a roamer, in a lesson on logo, the lesson began with every pupil mimicking the actions in their wheel chairs very ably supported by assistants. This meant that all pupils had the best possible chance to succeed in their often very small steps of learning.

14. The way teachers and teaching assistants work very successfully together to make sure that all pupils take a full part in every lesson is an improvement that the school has worked hard to bring about. Staff go to great lengths to make sure that they check with the pupils at every stage in their questioning and recording to make sure they understand. When moving to activities, staff are very careful to communicate at every stage with pupils, especially those with little spoken language, so the pupils can decide how they wish to work. Consequently, staff do only what the pupil indicates to them to do, giving them a range of choices to ensure they are comfortable and, therefore, able to concentrate on learning. This positively supports the beginnings of independence. Some subjects, such as science, provide additional guidance for teaching assistants. The emphasis on "their brains, your hands" adds even further to the quality of provision for the pupils in those subjects. This is because it helps the assistants to refine their interventions, whatever the extent of their own subject knowledge, and promotes respect for pupils' own achievement.

15. Teaching and therapeutic staff know pupils very well and work together with great effectiveness. This ensures that pupils access the curriculum in the way that suits them best, whether it is via the use of symbols, different forms of ICT or alternative means of communication to improving pupils' clarity of speech. The school makes good use of the advice of therapist to refine classroom organisation when necessary. The learning of all pupils benefits very considerably from the range of these interventions and the sensitivity with which they are implemented. Physical difficulties are well supported and learning time is maximised.

16. In most lessons, very good relationships and good expectations of what pupils can do mean pupils concentrate, show enthusiasm and behave very well while working. Very good specialist knowledge and planning in subjects such as physical education, means that pupils are challenged to

achieve their full potential. This is because the activities are carefully organised to match each pupil's physical needs. Good planning and subject knowledge in mathematics helps to focus pupils on number skills and in science on key vocabulary. In English, the best lessons are those where learning objectives are made clear, questioning is used to check pupils understand and pupils review their learning. Teachers of pupils with more complex and additional needs and the Function Language and Movement Education (FLAME) class make a considerable effort to include all pupils in learning. This is often achieved in a cross-curricular way through a range of multi-sensory work which reinforces their gains effectively.

17. There are occasions, however, when a lack of suitable planning, where there are few references to matching tasks to individual needs, and a narrow range of teaching methods means that introductions go on for too long. Consequently, sometimes, pupils get less chance to take part in practical activities such as those in science and ICT, or work at levels that challenge them, as occasionally happens in English. In some lessons there are few opportunities for pupils to communicate and work with others, for example, through working in small groups. This results in a slower pace, a lack of variety in lesson organisation and some missed opportunities to keep pupils interested and on task.

18. Assessment systems and records are good across the school and have improved because they are based on secure knowledge and understanding of pupils' achievements. Assessment is very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and for pupils with complex and additional needs. In these areas assessment opportunities are a component part of all lesson plans and teaching staff record with care the very small changes in pupils' learning that they observe. This very good work is a model for others and supports the new school policy on formative assessment. Teachers and learning support assistants have developed this policy in order to ensure that staff, throughout the school, not only capture more of the pupils' responses but that the pupils know what they need to do in order to improve further. However, this good practice is not yet reflected everywhere. In some subjects there are still occasions when assessment is not used to inform planning and pupils' next steps in learning as well as it could be. The assessment of needs by the different therapeutic teams supports assessment of teaching and learning very well. It results in improved pupil access to the curriculum and enables them to make the clear contributions to lessons that can be assessed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 79 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (6%)	10 (13 %)	44 (56%)	20 (25 %)	0 (0 %)	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.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum and enhances pupils' experiences. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole school curriculum planning and monitoring has improved since the last inspection.
- Older pupils follow a very good range of courses which lead to recognised external accreditation.
- There is very good provision for pupils with more complex and additional needs.
- The extensive range of activities provided in the school and residential setting are a strength.
- The match of support staff to the curriculum is excellent and therapeutic intervention supports entitlement well.
- There is insufficient focus on individual subject development and improvement.

Commentary

19. A rich variety of learning activities and opportunities help pupils to learn well. Pupils have access to the National Curriculum, including religious education, and additional learning experiences to meet their wide range of needs. Improvement in the way the curriculum more precisely meets needs has been assisted by a senior member of staff now being responsible for overseeing the whole curriculum and through more careful monitoring of teaching, therapy and planning. This has helped ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are comprehensively covered and the school has a suitable idea of where further improvements are needed. Any overall improvements are now incorporated into a separate section on the school development plan. Teachers and therapists plan so that therapy work in the class supports the curriculum well. Other sessions, not in class, are carefully monitored by class teachers to ensure pupils are not regularly missing the same lessons.

20. Although the range of therapeutic interventions does, at times, have some impact on pupils' entitlement to a full academic curriculum, all members of the teaching staff are very skilled at helping pupils to catch up with what they miss in lessons. However, the availability of such additional therapeutic support is absolutely central to what makes the school distinctive and so well able to deal with the whole pupil. Entitlement in this wider sense is very good indeed.

21. Although there has been improvement in subject co-ordination, with staff monitoring their subject more effectively than at the last inspection, subject development varies. Some subject co-ordinators have plans highlighting areas for improvement but others do not. As a result, apart from literacy, the school has not been as quick to develop new ideas or make improvements in subjects as it could have, for example by looking in depth at the national strategies or by providing a long-term view of subject development.

22. Subject co-ordinators have, however, worked successfully on improving accreditation. The curriculum includes a very good range of courses leading to recognised accreditation. These courses allow the highest attaining pupils to achieve GCSE passes in up to eight subjects, with options offered from which pupils can choose. Entry Level Certificates, ASDAN courses, the National Skills Profile and Accreditation for Life and Learning are offered to pupils attaining lower levels. These courses offer access to a very well planned and appropriate curriculum with many opportunities for pupils to become independent learners and apply learning in different situations. As a result, all pupils are able to work towards awards and certificates.

23. The development of the curriculum for pupils with complex and additional needs has benefited greatly from the enthusiasm and expertise of particular teachers. The way that they have started to spread good practice within the school, rewritten schemes of work and integrated subjects together is exemplary and provides a very effective in-house model for further curriculum development. The FLAME programme provides opportunities for some pupils with physical and learning difficulties to develop the skills necessary to access the learning and social opportunities offered by the school. This is undertaken through a programme that includes a modified form of conductive education.

24. The wide range of supplementary activities that broaden pupils' learning experiences make an important contribution to their personal and social development. An excellent programme of sporting activities is offered to pupils. A good number achieve high standards and go on to represent the school at regional and national events. Staff and community volunteers give generously of their time to ensure activities are offered to capture each young person's interest. Instrumental music tuition, annual productions, cinema trips and the school's own youth club are popular events. Residential experiences; for example, to an outdoor adventure activity centre in Cornwall and to a school outside Paris, contribute both to pupils' learning and to their personal development. The Education for Life programme provides excellent support for pupils' learning outside school hours and is enjoyed by both day and residential pupils. This helps to improve their self-esteem and self-confidence.

25. There is a generous number of well qualified support staff who are most effectively deployed to ensure pupils' learning and personal needs are fully met. The range of support available within the school from speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists together with the advice of the rehabilitation engineering team provides excellent additional resources for all pupils. A small number of rooms, such as the music room, are too small for their intended purpose and this inhibits some practical learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school gives its pupils very good support, advice and guidance. Care and welfare is very effectively provided for and the school routinely seeks, values and acts on pupils' views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Medical, educational and care staff work exceptionally well together to enhance and support pupils' learning and personal development.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and have trusting relations with staff.
- Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to express their views.

Commentary

26. As at the time of the last inspection, this is a very effective area of the school. All staff appreciate the importance of education and strive to ensure that pupils' time in school is as productive as possible. Medical, educational and care staff are all involved in planning the support and care necessary for the pupils to ensure that the impact of medical and care concerns on pupils' education is minimised. Pupils spend less time travelling to medical appointments and assessments and have more time in lessons because the on-site support and facilities provided by these staff are exceptional. The on site Rehabilitation Engineering department ensures that the design, modification and maintenance of equipment takes place promptly and expertly. The school's chaplaincy service helps to support the emotional and spiritual needs of the pupils and school community very well. This multidisciplinary approach to health, care and educational needs is an excellent feature of the school.

27. The school is fully committed to supporting every single pupil as well as it can. It uses all the different kinds of therapeutic provision available on site to clarify needs, refine programmes and provide additional support. Therapists have very clear procedures in place that determine the levels of support that different individuals and classes require. The continuing development of multi-disciplinary working has beneficial effects throughout every aspect of the whole school. This is because of the way that it treats pupils as whole persons whose needs cover every aspect of their day to day living. Team working to spread good practice, and to refine individual programmes, also models the good practice that is essential when the needs of the pupils are so complex and multi-faceted. Their highly skilled regular assessments, monitoring and interventions cover all aspects of the pupils' experience. This enables the school to recognise and deal with every pupil's needs very effectively and efficiently. Pupils appreciate this and have confidence that staff will do the best for them. The yearly cycle of different assessments and annual reviews is very well established and fully comprehensive in its approach. Overall, parents consider care is very good and seamless for their children.

28. The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety are effective. Risk assessments are appropriate and thorough and cover all aspects of school life. Child protection arrangements are very good. All staff receive regular training on a planned basis. Accidents and incidents are regularly analysed and action taken to remedy the root causes of any problems identified. Pupils state they feel safe, and very well looked after by all staff.

29. The school takes pupils' views seriously. They are involved in their Annual Reviews and like being consulted over issues such as the new dining facilities. The school council effectively seeks

the views of pupils and involves them in school developments. Pupils are confident that they are listened to at all times and know who to approach if they have any concerns.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's has very good links with parents. Links with the community are good and those with other establishments satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- The school communicates with parents very well.
- Although there are a range of links with other schools and colleges, formal links with mainstream schools are more limited at the present time.

Commentary

30. The very good links with parents reflect those of the previous inspection. Parents value enormously the work of the school. Overall, they are very happy with what is offered and consider it to be the best school for their children to attend. They are actively involved in their children's Annual Reviews and have many opportunities to comment. They particularly value the multi-disciplinary approach to meeting their children's needs and the care and support shown by all staff.

31. Parents are well informed about the work of the school through newsletters and consultation afternoons. Annual reports are thorough and helpful. Parents learn about their children's progress towards achieving their individual targets on a regular basis. There are also clear procedures for keeping parents involved in the ongoing assessment of their children's needs so that they are, for example, fully consulted about the effectiveness of any changes contemplated to the different communication systems in use. Although the school employs many staff, parents consider the school to be very approachable and open. The school's open door policy and proactive approach to supporting pupils and parents means that parents, even though many live some distance away, can be actively involved in their children's education.

32. The school collaborates with other schools in musical and dramatic performances as well as participating actively in many sporting competitions. Contact at primary school level is regular, through emails as well as visits. Currently, the school is exploring the possibility of a pupil following an art course at a mainstream secondary school, and groups of pupils have also visited a local school to read stories to younger pupils there. As a non-maintained school, opportunities for sharing resources and planning with other schools are more limited but the school is actively planning to secure and extend its links in this way. There are, presently, also few formal links where secondary pupils can work alongside those from mainstream, although the school is looking to set some up.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school are good. Governors are effective in their role. Leadership by the headteacher and senior managers is good and by other key staff is satisfactory. The school is well managed overall with some aspects being very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong commitment to ensure that all pupils have the best possible support through multidisciplinary working so that they can effectively access learning and be included in all activities.
- While leadership by senior managers is good, there is inconsistency in the way subjects are led and developed.

- Governors have a good understanding of the school through their frequent monitoring visits.
- While monitoring and evaluation has improved, objectives in the school development plan are not specific enough to measure progress.
- There are a range of very effective teams who work together very well.
- Opportunities for staff training are very good and there are effective systems in place for reviewing the performance of all staff.

Commentary

33. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. This is because the school, under the leadership of the headteacher, has strengthened the role of the senior management team. This has been accomplished by ensuring there is a senior member of staff overseeing the curriculum and by appointing a student support manager who oversees care and therapy. The management team represent all areas of the school. Between them they have a good understanding of the school's needs and work and plan together effectively to raise standards. However, although subject leadership has improved, with the use of monitoring and peer observations, there is inconsistency in subject development planning. Targets for improvement in existing plans are insufficiently focused on subject improvement and raising standards and there is a lack of measurable success criteria by which to gauge progress. As a result, it is difficult to see the direction some subjects are going over a period of time, whether there are common issues they could work together on, and how they plan to further raise standards and accurately evaluate developments.

34. The school has Investors in People status and overall extensive professional development supports all staff very well. For example, staff have a comprehensive professional development record and take part in individual performance reviews where targets are set. All training is geared to ensuring that it is relevant to the school and to the member of staff's professional needs. Effective performance management for teachers ensures that they are well placed to identify and gain skills needed to work, for example, with pupils with a more complex range of needs. Teachers are responsible for reviewing the performance of learning support assistants. Learning support assistants are very well supported through comprehensive induction procedures where they have a mentor, through access to National Vocational Qualifications which are assessed by other learning support assistants and by other in-house training such as that by therapists. As a result, support assistants are very effectively deployed to assist teachers and support pupils' individual needs. Overall, training contributes very effectively to staff working successfully together in the classroom.

35. The governance of the school has improved since the last inspection due to careful monitoring of all aspects of the school, including the residential provision. This has given governors a good idea of where improvements are needed and they act quickly to fill any gaps identified by themselves or other external monitoring. It has also helped them gain an overview which is aiding them to increasingly understand school priorities and shaping their strategic view of where the school needs to go next. Although there are a good range of relevant committees, it is only recently that governors have set up a separate curriculum and pupil progress committee and more needs to be done by governors to ensure they effectively monitor this area.

36. Despite the high number of staff, and complex nature of the school, communication is effective due to the use of email and team briefings. Minutes of a range of meetings, including management meetings, are shared by team leaders with their teams and staff are encouraged to make suggestions and comments which are relayed to the headteacher. This helps staff to know what is going on and feel involved and valued. As a result, most teams are highly effective with the managers of the different therapy teams and the teaching assistants co-ordinating their teams very well.

37. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the way forward for the school given the present emphasis on inclusion. Increasing monitoring and evaluation undertaken has helped but does, on occasions such as in the evaluation of school development planning, lack rigour. There is a suitable development plan which is helping to raise standards and is carefully monitored by governors. However, although in conversation the strategic overview is clear, the general nature of

the plan makes it difficult to see the direction the school is taking. The school has recently started to use success criteria but some objectives are a lot more specific than others. Priorities established are not always clearly linked to improvements in the quality of education and achievements of pupils. Overall, objectives are not always specific enough to ensure progress towards them can be tracked or evaluated so that the school can measure its success accurately and so know how it is performing.

Financial information for the year April [year] to March [year]

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	6913002
Total expenditure	6778523
Expenditure per pupil	46112

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	178707
Balance carried forward to the next	313186

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

WORK RELATED LEARNING (WRL)

The provision for work related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum prepares pupils very well for life after school.
- Despite a lack of work experience, there are a wide range of work related activities for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

38. The school considers WRL to be an important part of pupils' education. From Year 7 onwards a very well planned personal, social and health education programme which includes careers education is taught. The very good careers programme helps to develop an understanding of the world of work and prepare pupils for their life after school so that by the time pupils are in Years 10 and 11 they have a good basis for further progress. For lower attaining pupils, work related learning plays a large part in their National Skills Profile, Accreditation for Life and Learning and ASDAN modules in Years 10 and 11. For all pupils, PSHE and citizenship support this aspect well. While it is difficult to provide work experience, the school provides a great many activities, carefully matched to needs, both on and off site so pupils can gain a good idea of working life. This is effectively coordinated, well taught and pupils achieve well. For example, in a Year 11 lesson where the teaching was good, pupils were beginning to suggest practical ideas for a mini enterprise, listing the advantages and disadvantages. In a Year 10 class pupils were completing work on how they would behave when going out to places such as hospitals, the local town and garden centres, while preparing for their community visits to see people at work. In another Year 11 class, pupils were preparing for a working day in a familiar environment by recognising what they need to bring to school. Pupils enjoy these activities and see the relevance of doing them. Their understanding is boosted by a range of work related visitors such as the fire brigade and police, as well as visits to places of work.

39. Pupils who have completed their GCSE courses join workshops led by successful people with disabilities and this helps to challenge their ideas of what they can achieve. The Education for Life programme run on Saturday mornings for residential and day pupils supports work related learning very effectively. Transition arrangements are particularly strong. Pupils visit further education college open days and also view videos of specialist colleges they may wish to go to. Almost all pupils move into further education at the end of Year 11 and they and their parents are

very well supported by key school staff throughout this transition. The very effective link with Treloar College means that many pupils go there.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

The residential provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision makes a very good contribution to residential pupils' academic achievement.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision are very good and has the pupils' welfare at its heart.
- The quality of relationships between care staff and residential pupils and between pupils themselves is very good.
- There are good links with parents.
- An excellent range of after school activities promote pupils' personal and social development well.

Commentary

40. For those pupils who board, academic achievements are very well supported by the provision of homework clubs after school. Good use is made of the school's facilities, notably by the use of computers to study English, mathematics, science and ICT. These sessions are most effective when supported by staff with good subject knowledge who focus on relevant curricular topics and homework. Day pupils sometimes take advantage of this additional support which has a positive impact on their academic achievement. Recently, the academic needs of pupils have received a higher profile by the inclusion of broad academic targets in care plans. Care staff are integrally involved in reviewing the pupils' progress in meeting their targets.

41. The residential provision is very well managed and effectively linked to school developments through the multi-disciplinary team work and by the student support manager being a member of the senior management team. It provides well for the pupils' welfare and social development. The most recent care standards report arrived at similar overall judgements and all issues have either been addressed or are in the process of being so. The head of care role is very effectively carried out by the student support manager who liaises with parents, senior management team, teachers, heads of house and therapists. The governing body also has a very good overview of provision as a result of relevant experience of its membership. The school provides very good support to care staff seeking additional qualifications related to their roles. Lines of responsibility, accountability and health and safety issues are well understood as a result of regular communication such as the 'handovers', multi-disciplinary meetings and thorough documentation. Staff are vigilant in their care of pupils when in the residential accommodation and there is now an effective signing in and out procedure for visitors. However, given the layout of some houses, staff need to remain vigilant at all times and ensure security is frequently checked.

42. Effective links with parents are secured via regular telephone calls, email and reports. The closeness of this relationship was demonstrated well by phone calls to parents reporting how well the pupils were settling in after the summer holiday. Pupils' access to the telephone is also very good. Induction interviews and home visits are offered to ensure a smooth transition to residential schooling. Parental satisfaction is evident in their interview and questionnaire responses. Access to medical and therapy expertise is excellent and contributes immensely to the overall provision. All staff have a suitable understanding of child protection procedures. The freshly cooked food ensures that all pupils have a nutritious diet relevant to their needs. Meal times also form a valuable part of the pupils' care plans where staff offer suitable support whilst encouraging independence.

43. The relationships between residential pupils and care staff are very good. The pupils feel respected and know they have someone to talk to should they experience problems. The staff are good role models and do their best to see that the residential experience is a balance between guaranteeing their welfare as well as promoting their personal development. The staff use the residential accommodation to good effect and suitable space exists for additional study, although there is little current access to computers in the houses.

44. A key feature of the after-school provision is the degree of choice given to pupils that enables them to express preferences and develop interests beyond the school curriculum. After school activities, include study support and an excellent range of leisure and recreational pursuits such as music, art, sport, scouting, youth club and craft. Some pupils take part in well organised activities on Saturday mornings that support their development of independence. Occasionally in the evenings, pupils use amenities in the local community such as leisure centres and cinemas. These trips have a very positive impact upon their personal and social development.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2,3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on their good achievement at the earlier stages and many achieve very well in nationally accredited courses.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Although English and literacy are taught separately, there are close links between the two subjects.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Assessment does not always consistently inform teachers' planning for individual students.
- Subject development planning is insufficiently precise.

Commentary

45. All pupils between Years 3 and 9 achieve well in English and literacy due to a good emphasis on basic skills and well organised literacy lessons matched to their needs. There is no evidence of differences in achievement between girls and boys and pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those with particularly complex needs. The good progress that students make up to Year 9 stands them in good stead for their final two years at Treloar. This cumulative progress and the clear emphasis all staff place on developing pupils' basic skills result in them having very good achievement by the end of their time at the school. Pupils joining the school in later years also have success. Where their placements at other schools have not allowed them to achieve their full potential, they do well because of the variety of therapies and medical support available on site. They also have access to the extended curriculum that the school provides for day and residential pupils. The school provides a good range of accredited courses in English and drama, including GCSE in language and literature, Entry Level, ASDAN and the National Skills Profile. This ensures students of differing abilities successfully attain national recognition of their achievements at the appropriate level with some pupils achieving good grades in GCSE.

46. In the great majority of lessons observed the teaching was of good quality, with some that were very good or excellent. However, in some lessons the teaching was only satisfactory. The teaching of pupils aged up to Year 6 is very good and results in good achievement for all, despite a huge range of abilities and very complex learning difficulties. The teaching here is very successful because a variety of innovative approaches are used and work links subjects together to support learning. For example, in a lesson based on the text *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*, teaching and support staff used drama by helping pupils to act out the story. Pupils experienced what it was like at the seaside through interacting with the high quality display and props. Other effective teaching has clear introductions, where teachers share the learning objectives with students. Questioning is used well to establish whether they have understood the main teaching points, and the best lessons end with a plenary session that encourages students to review their learning. In the less effective lessons, work is not as well planned to ensure that individual pupils and small groups are working at levels that challenge them to build on, and extend, prior learning. Activities are enjoyable but do not always fully promote the stated learning objectives, and opportunities to record students' progress are missed.

47. Treloar has opted to teach English and literacy separately and there are two different subject leaders. However, the two subject co-ordinators liaise well and meet regularly, sharing many common aims for future developments. Both provide good leadership and management of their subjects. Because basic literacy skills are taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 in carefully chosen ability groups, this allows teachers to focus on the targets identified in students' individual education plans and pupils work on skills they need to access work across the curriculum. Work on the required texts in English lessons can then also receive a clear focus. Many of the teachers of English also teach literacy and this provides further consistency of approach.

48. There have been many improvements in provision for both English and literacy since the last inspection. The schemes of work have been updated and give useful guidance to those teachers who are not English specialists. Opportunities to use ICT to support learning have been identified. The school library has been re-furnished and restocked, and now provides an effective support for learning in English and other subjects. It is timetabled for classes, with other sessions available for teachers to book. The good range of literature texts, identified for study in each year group, makes a strong contribution to students' cultural development. Resources have been improved for both English and literacy, with both subject leaders gathering together boxes of resources for different texts, with versions for students of different needs. For example, props and artefacts are provided for students needing a more practical or multi-sensory approach to their literature.

49. The monitoring of teaching and learning through observing lessons has improved but is not yet sufficiently focussed on identifying and sharing the very good and excellent practice seen at times during the inspection. The need for further development of formative assessment has been correctly identified in both areas, as not all teachers are using the outcomes of ongoing assessment to plan work for the next steps of learning for all pupils. In common with many other subjects, the development planning in English and literacy does not identify success criteria for its objectives.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers of many other subjects place a strong emphasis on developing students' communication skills. For example, in mathematics, science, and geography, teachers use and explain key subject-specific vocabulary. Discussion and debate are used to further students' understanding of issues in PSHE and religious education. Drama also supports learning, for example the use of role-play in history. Symbols help those who struggle with reading and writing. Many pupils use word processing to record their work and to draft and redraft their writing. Overall, communication skills and literacy are well developed across the curriculum. The sharing of students' academic targets more widely across the school is already an identified focus, and this would help to promote their reading and writing skills more effectively and consistently.

French

51. French was only sampled during the inspection. Three lessons were observed and it is not, therefore, possible to form judgements about provision or teaching and learning on the strength of this evidence for a school of this size. However, a selection of moderated work was sampled, planning and teacher records were looked at, and discussion took place with the coordinator.

52. There are suitable schemes of work which are matched to the ability of pupils and carefully planned so that pupils constantly build on their previous work. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were mainly satisfactory but good for a Year 10 GCSE class. This was because the pupils were very enthusiastic, there was good use of time, activities challenged them and they made good progress and achieved well. In all lessons, pupils, including those with communication aids, are keen to communicate and build up a vocabulary. However, occasionally not enough opportunities are taken by staff to ensure pupils take as active a part in lessons as possible, and resources are not always appropriate. As a result, some pupils do not always make the gains they could. However, for higher attaining pupils, achievement is very good with four gaining a grade C passes in GCSE last school year. There are also opportunities for other pupils to take the Entry Level Certificate.

53. French is effectively enhanced by a range of activities. It makes a good contribution to cultural development, through the French Café held at Christmas, visits, such as a day trip to Calais, and the yearly exchange with pupils from a similar school just outside Paris.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching ensures pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- There is a very good range of accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- There is good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in many lessons.
- There is no development plan for mathematics.

Commentary

54. Achievement is similar to that at the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because teachers and learning support staff work very effectively together to ensure all pupils are fully engaged in the learning activities. This is managed through well planned lessons which include activities planned to meet the wide range of individual needs. Lessons are interesting, learning activities engage pupils and very good use is made of appropriate resources.

55. Pupils in the Year 3 to 6 class begin to develop their understanding of number through tasks effectively organised to support their small steps of learning. Some count to and recognise numbers to 20 and can calculate a number 'one more than'. They explore solid shapes and can select either a cylinder or cuboid when asked. In a lesson in which ICT was used very well to introduce logo, pupils indicated movement in terms of 'forward', 'backward' and 'turn'. They all concentrated while controlling a programmable device which moved in different directions, using simple commands.

56. In Years 7 to 11, teachers build upon the pupils' knowledge of number operations. They use ICT to display information they have collected in bar and pie chart form, reinforcing and consolidating work in a variety of ways. They use their knowledge of number to calculate the cost of a shopping list and they demonstrate their understanding of calendar facts such as the number of days in a month and year. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 are able to solve simultaneous equations using a graphical method. All pupils achieve some form of external accreditation in mathematics and number, often achieving very well. Many of the highest attaining pupils gain a GCSE grade, several at grade A* - C, while others are successful in the Entry Level Certificate. Lower attaining pupils, with more complex additional needs, have their mathematical achievement accredited through the National Skills Profile and Assessment for Life and Learning scheme.

57. Lessons are consistently well planned and resources are used very effectively to support learning. Activities at the beginning of lessons are used to focus the pupils' attention and reinforce number skills. For example, in one class pupils enthusiastically chanted their times tables and demonstrated real enjoyment, while in another, pupils enjoyed the competitive nature of a quiz which tested their knowledge of the calendar. Where teaching was most effective pupils benefited from clear explanations and good demonstrations and they responded very well to the challenging activities.

58. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Although the subject co-ordinator provides effective support for class teachers, at present there is no strategic plan for subject development with clear targets for improvement and measurable outcomes. As a result mathematics and numeracy are not consistently used outside of mathematics lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. In order to improve this the mathematics co-ordinator has produced a policy on numeracy across the curriculum which is beginning to have some effect on the development of numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in a literacy lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6 every opportunity to reinforce counting skills was taken and in a secondary history lesson pupils manipulated population and military statistics in the Great War.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and particularly good at the end of Year 11.
- Staff are knowledgeable and work well with learning support assistants to make sure pupils learn effectively
- Developmental planning for the subject needs strengthening.

Commentary

60. Pupils make good incremental gains across the school in their knowledge and understanding of science. These gains enable all pupils to undertake accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 and many of them achieve a range of very good results, particularly in GCSE double science.

61. In Years 3 to 6, science very effectively forms part of larger topics. The use of simple language supports the development of key ideas. In this way the use of 'hot' and 'cold' rather than 'temperature' reinforces their everyday life skills. As they move through Years 7 to 9, pupils cover a wide range of topics while doing investigations. Good support gives pupils the help they need to carry out and record investigations so that by Year 9 higher attaining pupils make sensible predictions about what will happen, for example when they change an electrical circuit. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow accredited courses organised to meet their wide range of needs. These include double science GCSE for the highest attaining pupils. Pupils use their earlier knowledge to good effect and lower attaining pupils at the start of Year 10 quickly understand about cells as building blocks. They then show real pleasure when they can use a microscope to see the cells that they, through the well-judged support of their learning support assistants, have stained.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons well. They make sure key words are used and review them at the beginning of lessons so pupils have a good basis for what comes next. Confident subject knowledge means that practical work is well prepared, health and safety issues are pointed out and pupils are challenged appropriately. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, but purposeful, way that engages pupils' attention. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and there is a great deal of good incidental learning. There is a strong emphasis on carrying out experiments and this means that older, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of prediction and fair testing as well as appropriate specialist language. Learning support assistants intervene very carefully so that they check with pupils at every stage before connecting leads, making slides or recording ideas. This effectively supports learning, particularly in practical activities. The teaching of science to pupils with complex and additional needs, however, is sometimes overly formal and is somewhat at odds with approaches elsewhere in the school. This means that they do not always achieve as well as they could.

63. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. There are now sound systems for assessment but the use of that assessment to inform the next steps in teaching is underdeveloped as is the recording of the pupils' contributions to lessons. All members of staff reinforce pupils' literacy and their personal and social skills well. The subject has made satisfactory improvement on all the issues identified by the last inspection. Despite the commitment of the staff, the lack of a strong departmental development plan that captures all their informal ideas and initiatives, sets success criteria and links change to curriculum development elsewhere in the school, limits the growth of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and often better where teachers have good knowledge of the programs or resources being used.
- The pupils' use of ICT to access the curriculum is very good.
- Planning, assessment and co-ordination of the subject for the whole school is under-developed.
- The provision of computers and programs is very good.

Commentary

64. Pupils generally achieve well because staff and assistants are familiar with most programs. However, additional training needs have been identified to ensure that all staff can maximise the potential of programs that use symbols and word banks to develop subject specific vocabulary.

65. When the teachers' knowledge of programs and the skills needed to use them is most secure then achievement is better. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 effectively began to learn to program a Roamer because the teacher had identified key skills and given pupils many small-step opportunities to develop their understanding. In this lesson, very effective use was made of symbols to communicate the direction and amount of turn required so that all understood the task and responded well. The pupils received regular feedback and positive encouragement that ensured they achieved very well. In all year groups, pupils present information via word processing and there is some evidence that previous work has addressed data handling. Occasionally, there are examples of pupils' achievement that is well beyond the requirements of lessons, such as conditional formatting within a database. Older pupils achieve relevant accreditation in a number of examinations and programmes of study including GCSE and Entry Level Certificates.

66. In a number of lessons, teachers' introductions were overlong and, as a result, the time for practical activity was reduced and pupils did not have the chance to reinforce skills. Good use is, however, made of data projectors that enable the pupils to focus upon specific skills, although sometimes opportunities are missed as teachers do not yet feel they have sufficient technical competence to use these. Most teachers prepare resources well making effective use of word-processing to produce worksheets. However, the use of interactive whiteboards as a resource is at an early stage. Learning support assistants, when well briefed, make a strong contribution to pupils' achievement. After school activities, such as 'email and internet clubs', enrich the curriculum well.

67. The pupils use ICT very effectively to access the curriculum and many know where to save work for later editing. They are familiar with their own computers that are set up for their individual needs. The pupils use a range of devices including keyboards, joysticks and switches to input data or respond to prompts. A number of pupils use free-standing communication aids to communicate which assists teachers and teaching assistants to facilitate their learning. The vast majority of pupils show great determination to complete given tasks despite some experiencing extreme physical difficulty.

68. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The staff work extremely hard to provide the best provision for the pupils. The drive to improve is evident, although it currently lacks co-ordination and is being managed at present on a temporary, but satisfactory, basis. Teachers' planning identifies how they intend to include ICT in their own teaching, but there is currently no whole school planning to ensure that all lessons support pupils' achievement in this way. Although teachers demonstrate an awareness of the pupils' needs, a lack of precise documented assessment to inform planning leads to some pupils covering aspects with which they are already familiar, notably higher attaining pupils' use of word-processing. A well-established ICT forum offers good technical support for the subject's development, although its focus is primarily about resources rather than curriculum planning and development. The recently proposed action plan to address planning and a whole school programme of study is a welcome development. Staff already make good use of relevant exhibitions and on-line forums to seek appropriate resources and support for learning and assessment.

69. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' needs in terms of computers, input devices, programs and digital cameras. These are very well maintained and liaison between the technical staff, teachers and occupational therapists is very effective. This close working relationship results in pupils being able to access reliable computers and the curriculum most effectively. Increasingly, teachers are using data projectors to good effect, although there are currently too few available to achieve maximum benefit.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. This is good overall due to due to staff individual planning rather than a whole school overview. A wide range of programs are available, notably those that support literacy and communication by use of symbols and word banks. Other programs, including support for numeracy and the use of the Internet, are well used in subjects such as history and geography. Some aspects of ICT are used effectively in all subjects, for example word processing for drafting and redrafting written work. In design and technology, pupils work in pairs to design safety posters for the workshop and some pupils achieve good results using computers to assist in the design and making of key fobs. Digital cameras are used to good effect, particularly in art where image manipulation produces exciting results. Some pupils have a good understanding of using search engines and CD ROM's to find out information about a range of topics.

HUMANITIES

71. The humanities subjects, geography and history, were sampled during this inspection. It was, therefore, not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of provision, or on the level of improvement since the last inspection. However, a suitable selection of planning and work were scrutinised and a discussion took place with the coordinator.

72. Three **geography** lessons were observed; these were all in Years 7 to 9 and in two of which the teaching was good. In a lively lesson, pupils in Year 7 learned about aerial photography and used grid-references to identify geographical features on a simple map. Older students learned about rivers and their place in the water cycle, through using a diagram and watching a video clip. The third class was seen starting a new unit on the geography and culture of France, with their learning supported by the use of ICT. All teachers put a strong emphasis on developing students' communication skills, and in ensuring that they understood key geographical vocabulary. Learning support assistants made a strong contribution by working with individuals to ensure that they understood the activities and could access the equipment and use the resources. In the more effective lessons, teachers reviewed what had been learned in previous lessons and built well on students' prior learning. However, in the lesson where the teaching was less effective, some opportunities were missed to check on students' understanding by breaking off at key times in the lesson to ask questions and to reinforce teaching points.

73. Work seen in lessons and in an analysis of a sample of students' work files and records suggests that their achievement is at least satisfactory, with some groups making good progress.

Some students go on to study geography in Years 10 and 11, for example on GCSE or Entry Level courses. Planning for pupils in Year 3 to 6 shows that, for younger pupils, learning in geography is linked to other subject areas. For example, they study the seaside whilst reading a literacy text on *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. Evidence from a whole-school Geography Action Week shows that valuable learning opportunities are provided to students of all ages and abilities.

74. Since the last inspection, a subject coordinator has been appointed who has already reviewed the schemes of work. This is to ensure that there are clear guidelines for what should be taught in geography, and how it should be taught to students of different abilities, including those with very complex needs. Each unit includes suggested visits and fieldwork opportunities, and clearly identifies where ICT can be used to support students' learning, for example referring teachers to suitable web sites. The coordinator has ensured that teaching resources are centrally stored in easily accessible 'topic boxes' that include books, maps and atlases, worksheets and artefacts. An assessment sheet, that will help teachers to record and track students' achievements in the subject, has been developed and is currently being piloted. These are some very good features of leadership and management. However, there are some areas for development. For example, monitoring of the subject is mainly informal. The subject leader has not been given opportunities to observe lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, even though some non-specialists are timetabled to teach the subject. Although she has a clear vision for how the subject could be improved, for example by the addition of an annual residential fieldwork trip, the subject development plan does not show clearly how this will be implemented.

75. The curriculum for **history** ensures that, as pupils move up through the school, they are given good opportunities to experience a wide range and variety of topics that follow areas of the National Curriculum. Although the number of lessons observed was insufficient to make judgements about teaching and learning, the scrutiny of work and planning folders shows that history makes a good contribution to the development of topics that address key skills. Members of staff facilitate different ways of enabling pupils to take part in role play so that the pupils experience history in ways that overcome many of their physical and communication difficulties. The youngest pupils in the school learn to handle artefacts with care and develop an increasing awareness of the changing nature of society over time. The response of pupils in Years 7 to 9 to changes in medicine shows some strong personal involvement based on their wider experiences. By the time that they reach Years 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils interrogate population data about the First World War using ICT. These pupils go on to achieve passes at GCSE. The numbers of pupils doing so fluctuate because, even with the very skilled support of the schools teaching assistants, not all pupils are able to cope with the additional reading and writing that the subject demands.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well due to good teaching, however, there is sometimes a lack of pace in lessons
- Religious education makes a very positive contribution to the multi-cultural aspects of pupils' lives.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

76. Teaching, although variable, is generally effective because staff take the differing needs of pupils into account. Some pupils need to have work considerably adapted to help them learn effectively. This is often achieved in a useful or imaginative way. For example, a Year 7 pupils' programme included the topic 'Accused of being a Christian'. The implications of this fairly abstract concept were brought to pupils through use of artefacts, food, and a doll who 'is a Christian'. The uniqueness of her as a person is explained to pupils through bringing the doll to 'life'. The use of

other subjects are evident in lessons, including a particularly good and entertaining lesson for younger pupils which led up to the symbol of the cross slowly emerging from the familiar geometric shapes in mathematics or the language signs in everyday life.

77. Teaching is always careful and sensitive, although the pace is sometimes too slow and not all aspects of the lesson are completed in the time. There are instances when some opportunities for encouraging pupils in group discussion are lost because each one has to wait their turn to take part. However, some very good teaching was also seen, including one lesson, where an excellent debate developed among some Year 10 pupils, who were discussing the 'life questions' they had been asked to bring to this lesson. Pupils were able to articulate and discuss such deep issues as 'What is the meaning of life?', 'Why are there atom bombs?', or 'Is there heaven and hell?', showing awareness and respect for each others' concerns and views. Lessons such as this contribute very effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

78. Multi-cultural aspects are addressed in a wide and interesting variety of ways. Apart from many outings and visits to mosques and other places of worship, pupils learn from parents and other visitors to the school about other cultures and their religious faiths. Different religions are studied, always starting from the viewpoint of pupils and how this relates to their own lives and values. When they have thought about these, they then learn how different faiths have things in common that are understood through different sets of rules or interpretations

79. Leadership and management is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection with curriculum planning based on the Local Agreed Syllabus. Learning targets for each pupil are planned according to their needs, and assessment consists of target sheets so pupils know what is expected plus self-assessment at the end of each study topic. These are then checked by the co-ordinator to make sure that pupils understand what has been taught. The co-ordinator liaises with the chaplain and the co-ordinator for pupils in Years 3 to 6 about their teaching programmes.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

80. No judgement on provision in design and technology was made because this was not a focus for the inspection. Examination of planning, pupils' records and displays, together with the observation of a small number of lessons in design technology and food technology show that pupils have opportunities to experience different aspects of this subject as well as complete work for GCSE. In lessons observed, the main focus was on identification of hazards in food areas and the safe handling of tools in design technology. The staff placed good emphasis upon "hands on" experiences where the pupils learned to use hobs safely. Skills, such as food preparation, are planned for, and assist the pupils to become as independent as possible. Independent living skills are also well supported by some of the residential areas where the pupils can prepare drinks and snacks after school. In design and technology, the pupils use a variety of materials including wood and metal to make structures. They also make products such as clock surrounds using vacuum pressing techniques. A strong feature of the subject is computer assisted design and manufacture where the pupils use acrylic to make key fobs that are of very good quality. The subject is well led and managed and specialist facilities are very good for design technology. The planned refurbishment for food technology should improve the provision considerably.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

81. Art and design and music were only sampled during this inspection. It was not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of provision in these subjects, or on the level of improvement since the last inspection. However, a suitable selection of planning and work were sampled and discussions held with coordinators.

82. From the evidence available in **art and design** it is clear that teachers make a considerable effort to include all pupils in all aspects of art, teaching them a wide range of skills often through work in other subjects. This is especially so for pupils with complex needs who need a multi-sensory approach where aspects of painting or printing may be related to physical actions or concepts such as making shapes with their bodies. In one lesson with younger pupils, they were provided with very appropriate opportunities to make seascapes relating to a visit to the seaside earlier. The technique of wash enabled every pupil to produce individually different swirls for waves. Their efforts were encouraged and enhanced by the atmosphere created by good choice of musical accompaniment and the teacher's own commentary. Pride and joy was evident not only on pupils' faces regarding their own work at the end but also in each others' very different efforts. The co-ordinator is well qualified for the role, and there are art displays around the school that show good quality collaborative work by pupils as well as individual efforts using a variety of media and computer graphics. The teachers' planning in art and design is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study with appropriate courses including a GCSE level course followed in Years 10 and 11. Although the art room is rather small, and in classrooms paper size is sometimes limited by work surface available, art is a subject that is clearly stimulating and enjoyable for all the pupils in the school.

83. Three lessons were observed in **music**, two with pupils in Years 7 to 9, and one with the oldest pupils in the school. Some of these older pupils are following a GCSE course. In two of the lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory and in one the teaching was good. In the most effective lesson, pupils in Year 8 were studying the work of Haydn and learning about how he structured his orchestral work. They joined enthusiastically in conducting as they listened to an excerpt, and asked relevant questions of the teacher. However, in all of the lessons, pupils struggled to recall the more difficult music terminology. Because opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to review their own performances and those of their peers, they have too few chances to use the terms themselves to help reinforce the subject-specific vocabulary.

84. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. One is a specialist in supporting pupils in using the Soundbeam. This helps pupils to produce different sounds by moving themselves in a variety of directions in front of an ultrasonic beam. Other learning support staff help students to overcome physical difficulties in accessing the equipment or in communicating their responses to the teacher.

85. The music room is too small for some of the classes, and restricts the kind of activities that can be offered. For example, the older students had to shuffle round and regroup many times in their lesson to allow individuals access to the Soundbeam. However, the school has already identified this unsatisfactory situation, and there are plans to move the department to new accommodation in the next three years. The new subject leader has only been in post a year, but has already started to upgrade the schemes of work for each year group. He is also developing an assessment system to record students' achievement. More instruments have been purchased, and there is a wider range of ICT software programs to enable those with restricted movement to perform and compose their own music.

86. The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to have individual tuition in a range of musical instruments, and by extra-curricular activities including a choir, a Soundbeam group, and an African drumming club. The music and drama departments work closely together to put on public performances, and pupils get the chance to see others perform through trips to musical theatre and visits from professional musicians. These combine to ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective teaching ensures pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils have access to a broad curriculum which meets their needs very effectively.
- There is an extensive range of after school activities through which the department plays a key role in the extended curriculum.

Commentary

87. At the time of the last inspection pupils' achievement was good. Pupils now achieve very well because of the very wide range of activities that are very well planned. As a result, pupils of all abilities are able to experience a wide range of interesting activities. However, at present, pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have access to swimming sessions, because of a lack of life savers, although the school is trying hard to make this available. Lessons are carefully planned so younger pupils develop their responses to sounds and direction as an introduction to movement games. By Year 11 pupils in health related fitness lessons are able to achieve to their full potential as the activities are carefully matched to each pupil's physical needs.

88. Pupils achieve very good standards in physical education and many compete regionally, nationally and at the highest levels in a wide range of sports such as Boccia, swimming and athletics. In 2004 over 30 per cent of Year 11 gained a GCSE A* - C grade and over 40 per cent gained a level 2 or better in the Entry Level Certificate. Physical education plays a key role in the extended curriculum and after school activities. Pupils gain much enjoyment from their participation in activities such as fitness, exercise and swimming. As a result, the subject makes a significant contribution to their social and personal development.

89. Improved teaching since the last inspection ensures there are high expectations of pupils and plan challenging activities. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Teachers give very good guidance to pupils as to how they can improve their performance. In a Year 10 baseball lesson, for example, all pupils improved their technique and understanding of the game as a result of the teacher's skilful interventions. Learning support staff ensure all pupils benefit from the lesson activities. They work very well with teaching staff and take responsibility for small group activities in the lessons.

90. The coordinator provides strong subject leadership. The school has recently achieved the Sportsmark Gold award and the department has established several very effective links with regional and national sports organisations.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities throughout the day, and in lessons, means that pupils achieve very well.
- PSHCE throughout the school is now comprehensively organised and planned.
- Opportunities for personal learning and experiences through links with mainstream schools are not yet fully established.
- Citizenship is well planned within the personal, social and health education curriculum and through work in a range of other subjects.
- There is a well planned sex education programme.

Commentary

91. Teaching and learning is very good because every chance is taken during the school day to support pupils' PSHCE around school, in the dining room and during breaks and evenings in houses.

In lessons, activities are well thought out and learning support assistants are effectively used to assist pupils in gaining a wide range of relevant skills such as how to discuss and listen to the views of others. The success of the lessons is in large part due to appropriate, well-planned content and very good relationships between staff and pupils, at all ages. Examples include a pupil describing the teacher as a 'best friend', and the ability of pupils to describe their feelings freely, whether because they were proud of themselves, or because they recognised the value of friendship. Personal, social, and health education also includes periods of reflection when pupils can think about others in less fortunate circumstances. As a result, they show very good and sympathetic awareness of wider issues than those with which they are personally most concerned. The ASDAN, National Skills Profile and Assessment for Life and Learning courses are all planned to augment this subject so that by Year 11, pupils are well prepared for thinking about careers, the world of work and life after school.

92. There are further opportunities to support pupils' PSHCE through the many visits and programmes. However, despite logistical problems, stronger and more regular links are needed to build up opportunities for learning and friendships within the mainstream education community.

93. The school's sex education policy is now fully up to date in the light of current legislation. No pupils are excluded from these programmes. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce resources in the form of symbol mats or boards and games. This is to help younger pupils, or those with more severe sensory or language problems, to communicate their emotions, ideas and feelings about any aspect of personal development in a safe and discreet way. Exploring issues relating to religion, ethnicity and sex education also helps pupils to gain a perspective on personal development that may be very different from their own experiences.

94. Primary age pupils begin to gain an understanding of citizenship through the many activities where they have the chance to make choices. For older pupils, there is a comprehensive programme matched to age which includes themes such as rights and responsibilities, democracy and law, rules, crime and the community. This is reinforced by a very practical approach which helps pupils' understanding. For example, the school holds elections for the school council and head boy and head girl, complete with a returning officer, in which all pupils have the opportunity to vote. Courses such as the community skills programme and Education for Life, where pupils discuss sensible rules and how to behave in different situations, supplement this work well and citizenship has a positive impact on social, moral and cultural development. Pupils now have the chance to take a short course GCSE in citizenship.

95. Leadership and management are very good with the biggest improvement being that there is now a comprehensive programme running throughout the school. This is a good improvement on the last inspection when there was a lack of continuity and coordination for older pupils. It is now carefully adapted to include citizenship and careers. Overall, it is very well planned and focussed as well as pervasive, embracing all aspects of pupils' lives at the school including their families, in a positive and highly valuable way.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

