

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BIRTENSHAW HALL SCHOOL**

Bromley Cross, Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105280

Headteacher: Mr. C D Jamieson

Lead inspector: Mrs. Sue Aldridge

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2004

Inspection number: 271598

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: 3 –19  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll; 18

School address: Darwen Road  
Bromley Cross  
Bolton  
Postcode: BL7 9AB

Telephone number: 01204 304230  
Fax number: 01204 597995

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Dr. S L McKinlay  
governors:

Date of previous 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2000  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Birtenshaw Hall caters for pupils with physical difficulties and learning difficulties; most pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties, and their attainment on entry to the school is very low. Since the school was last inspected, pupil numbers have fallen, and the residential accommodation has been registered as a Children's Home; most pupils are in residence for 52 weeks each year, and they need high levels of care. Pupils come to the school from as far afield as London. Although the school is approved for pupils from 3 to 19, most pupils are in Years 7 to 14; one pupil has recently been admitted in Year 5. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, and most are white; no pupils are from families where English is a second language, and none are asylum seekers or refugees. Sixteen pupils are in public care, and overall, pupils' economic circumstances are average. The school is not involved in any local or national initiatives, and it has one link with a local college, and one with a high school, though the latter is at an early stage of development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	Lead inspector	English; religious education, design and technology; modern foreign language; music.
9511	Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Science; personal, social, health and citizenship education; geography, history.
17546	Chris Wonfor	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; art; physical education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.** Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and so are pupils' achievements. Pupils trust staff and co-operate well with those who teach and support them; attendance is very good. High standards of care are provided in the school and the residence, which is now registered as a Children's Home. However, there are serious weaknesses in leadership and management, which have resulted in too little educational development since the last inspection. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils over sixteen achieve well, but those in Years 7 to 11 do not achieve well enough in mathematics.
- There are several good features of teaching, but weaknesses in planning and assessment adversely affect pupils' achievement.
- Good numbers of support staff, strong relationships between staff and pupils, and effective teamwork all contribute to good learning in lessons and very good quality care arrangements.
- Although the school meets pupils' most important needs, and the broad requirements of the National Curriculum, plans do not exist for a few National Curriculum subjects.
- Staff have not kept up to date with relevant developments in education.
- The school's finances are not well targeted to support improvements.
- There are no procedures for evaluating the school's effectiveness, and too little assessment information to contribute to self-evaluation. As a result, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness is over generous.

**There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection.** Staff have worked successfully to develop residential provision so that pupils can be accommodated for 52 weeks each year, and the provision has been registered as a Children's Home. The provision for pupils over sixteen has improved and is now good; pupils leave school well prepared for the next step, and with externally recognised accreditation. However, school improvement planning has not developed well enough. The format of the plan is better, but it extends over one year only, and developments are not all costed. Funds are given to subject leaders, but allocations are not based on planned development needs. Furthermore, curriculum planning in Years 7 to 11 has not improved enough; there is too little planning to guide teachers in preparing their lessons, and this increases their workload. There is no overall curriculum policy, identifying what sort of curriculum the school intends to provide, and planning does not demonstrate how the school meets the requirement to provide the National Curriculum, so it is difficult for governors to say whether requirements are met or not. However, members of the governors' curriculum committee do now monitor teaching and learning. The school has fewer links with other schools than it did at the time of the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

Year 11	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
Year 13	<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b>

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

**Overall, achievement is satisfactory.** Half of the pupils, who are over sixteen, achieve well; planning for these pupils is good. In the key skill of communication, achievement is satisfactory. Overall, achievement in mathematics is satisfactory, although pupils in Years 7 to 11 do not achieve well enough because they are given a narrow range of learning experiences. Achievement in science, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education is satisfactory. **Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory,** and so is the curriculum, which meets pupils' most important needs, including high levels of care; it prepares them well for life after school. The curriculum is enriched well, and pupils in residence have a busy social life. Arrangements to secure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good, and pupils are well supported by a team of therapists. Staff maintain good links with parents and with the local community, which is frequently used for teaching and learning.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** The work of governors is satisfactory, but leadership by the headteacher is unsatisfactory. Although the residential provision is well led and managed, curriculum leadership is unsatisfactory. Leadership by other key staff is satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about what the school and residence provide for pupils. They feel welcome when they visit, and are kept informed about what pupils have been doing through newsletters, home/school books and photographic records of pupils' achievements. However, the prospectus and the reports that they are sent do not contain all the required information. Pupils clearly feel secure and happy in the school.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- ensure that staff take account of the most recent developments in planning and assessing the curriculum for pupils with complex needs;
- develop a clear curriculum policy that shows what the school intends to provide and establishes priorities for the pupils;
- develop plans for the full range of National Curriculum subjects and PSHE;
- develop assessment procedures that identify the small gains that pupils make in all subjects, and introduce the use of P levels;
- develop procedures that enable the school to systematically review and evaluate the provision;

- develop a school improvement plan that shows developments over a period greater than one year and identifies the cost implications;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that requirements are met in mathematics in Years 7 to 11;
- ensure that the pupils' progress reports, the governors' annual report and the prospectus contain all the information required by law.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory** overall. The standards that pupils reach are **well below average** because of the nature and extent of their learning difficulties.

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

- Pupils over sixteen achieve well.
- The achievements of pupils in Years 7 to 11 are satisfactory overall, but pupils do not achieve well enough in mathematics.
- In Years 7 to 11, achievement is adversely affected by weaknesses in planning and assessment.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most pupils now enter the school because they need high levels of care in a residential setting; most have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A few with mainly physical difficulties, and less pronounced learning difficulties, are generally over sixteen.

2. Since the last inspection, when the achievements of more able pupils over sixteen were unsatisfactory, there have been several improvements to the curriculum provided for this age group which have led to higher standards and better achievement. More challenging activities are now provided, and all pupils leave with nationally recognised accreditation. The school has set targets for this group, expressed in terms of the number of accredited units that they should achieve. These measures have been successful, and pupils now achieve well. Pupils of all abilities leave with a good number of units, across all curriculum areas, accredited by AQA (Accreditation and Qualifications Alliance), and the most skilled pupils achieve Towards Independence, accredited by ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), including modules entitled Everyday living, Popular culture, Myself and Others and Personal Safety. From September 2003 to July 2004, eleven pupils over 16 achieved a total of 115 such accredited units.

3. In Years 7 to 11, pupils achieve satisfactorily in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Very few pupils have recognisable speech, and a minority of pupils communicate intentionally. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress towards their communication targets, and several other pupils successfully use electronic communication aids to make themselves understood. However, a small number of other pupils, who come to the school able to make and understand some signs, do not build on this skill because staff do not routinely sign or teach pupils to make signs. There is limited use of symbols too, and a small number of pupils would benefit from learning to use these to communicate. As a result, not all pupils leave the school able to make themselves understood, although they understand well enough what others say. All pupils enjoy a suitable range of literature, and a small number recognise words, such as their names, or simple sentences. A similarly small number use computers to write, either by word processing, or by using software that generates words and symbols. They also sign their

names, and complete simple forms. The most able need little support, because they have suitably adapted computers and keyboards; others need adult support, and they copy write.

4. Pupils over sixteen achieve well in mathematics; they acquire skills in managing money, and telling the time, for instance. They achieve externally accredited modules. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 do not achieve well enough because they are provided with too narrow a range of learning experiences. There is no planning to guide teachers in preparing their lessons in these years, and pupils experience mostly sequencing activities and a little number work; other aspects of mathematics are neglected, such as data handling, and so learning opportunities are lost. In addition, assessment of mathematics is weak in Years 7 to 11; teachers do not identify what pupils know, understand and do, or what they need to revisit or move on to in order to progress.

5. In science and religious education, there is planning to guide teachers in preparing their lessons, but weaknesses in assessment limit pupils' achievements, which are satisfactory. In information and communication technology (ICT), there is no overall plan to guide teachers and ensure that pupils do not miss out or repeat topics, and assessment does not help teachers to identify what pupils can and can't do. Nonetheless, pupils have a satisfactory range of experiences and their achievements are satisfactory.

6. Since the last inspection, weaknesses identified in planning and assessment have not been addressed. The school does not have sufficient assessment information to enable it to target its resources in order to raise achievement either. As a result, pupils' achievements have not been raised enough.

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

Attendance is **very good**; punctuality is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is **good**; their cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide good role models for pupils and form positive relationships with them.
- Although there are pupils with challenging behaviour, very good staff intervention ensures that other pupils are not distressed by this.
- The subjects of art and music do not contribute to pupils' cultural awareness as well as they should.

### **Commentary**

7. The pupils have continued to display positive attitudes towards school. They try hard to do as well as they can, and co-operate well with the adults that support them; this helps them to achieve well in lessons. They clearly trust the adults in the school, and feel secure in their company. This is because staff provide good role models in terms of making relationships and respecting each other, resulting in good relationships at all levels. These good relationships contribute to an environment in which pupils are respected and shown consideration. There are a few pupils who display challenging behaviour but staff work well to consistently reinforce good behaviour. They also intervene promptly to ensure

that occasional outbursts do not result in distress to other pupils; because they know pupils well, they are often able to head off outbursts before they happen. Parents agree that their children are treated fairly and are not bullied. All the parents completing the questionnaire stated that their children are happy in school.

8. Pupils' personal development is good because it is promoted well through the atmosphere and life of the school and residential setting, as well as through the subjects of the curriculum. Development of communication skills underpins pupils' good social development. There are many visits out into the local community, and pupils over sixteen all have experience of work, as well as an opportunity to experience college life through a link. Spiritual and moral awareness are promoted well through religious education and assemblies. Pupils show an interest in helping others less fortunate than they are, by raising money for Children in Need, for instance. Relaxation experiences, such as massage and sensory stimulation offer pupils opportunities for quiet reflection. Although the development of pupils' cultural understanding is satisfactory, the subjects of art and music do not contribute to this as well as they might. In art, pupils do not look at the work of well known artists, and in music there is no planning to show how staff will ensure that pupils will listen to and appreciate music from other countries and cultures.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.85%	School data	0%

9. Attendance is very good and has improved steadily over the last three years. Absence is caused entirely by circumstances outside the school's control, mainly as a direct consequence of the pupils' medical conditions.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and so is the school's curriculum. Pupils' receive high quality care welfare and support, and the school works well in partnership with parents.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching is **satisfactory**; it is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11, and good in Years 12 to 14. Assessment is **unsatisfactory** overall, and in Years 7 to 11; it is good in Years 12 to 14.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although inspectors saw mostly good classroom teaching, underlying weaknesses in staff skills, planning and assessment detract from this.
- Staff pay good attention to pupils' care and comfort, so that pupils are ready to learn.
- Good numbers of support staff ensure that pupils are engaged very well throughout lessons.

- Teachers make effective use of sensory methods and resources to elicit a range of responses from pupils, but too few teachers use symbols and signing to encourage pupils' communication

## Commentary

10. Across the school, the quality of classroom interactions between staff and pupils is particularly good. Staff make suitable use of information that arrives with pupils, and quickly get to know them, their likes and dislikes, their methods of communicating and the best ways of managing those with behavioural difficulties. They build up a good rapport with pupils, who trust them. At the start of lessons, staff ensure that pupils are comfortably positioned, which helps to prepare them for learning. Care needs are attended to discreetly and with regard for pupils' dignity. For instance, during a music lesson, one pupil was supported well by two adults so that food could be given through a tube; the pupil was covered with a blanket, and one adult dealt with the feed whilst another helped to involve the pupil in lesson activities. Because the staffing levels are high, each pupil is well supported by an adult throughout each lesson. Support staff are clear about their roles in lessons, and adults work well as a team. As a result, pupils are stimulated and engaged very well.

11. The resources that staff use are effective in capturing pupils' interest, and in stimulating and eliciting responses from pupils. Sensory methods are used particularly well to help pupils understand and recall characters and events in stories, poems and plays. In a drama lesson for pupils over 16, a short play entitled *Air Sea Rescue* was acted out by having pupils select and use the correct 'prop' at the right moment. Introductory music set each different scene well, and enabled pupils to anticipate the action that followed. Pupils were able to select from a range the resources that they felt were most suitable. For instance, an ocean drum, a rain stick, a bottle half filled with water, and crinkly paper were available to produce the sound of 'stormy seas'. Pupils entered into the spirit well; they practised and then performed their play, each taking a part and each clearly enjoying the performance. Through the activity, they consolidated their knowledge of the story line and the sequence of events. A similarly successful lesson saw younger pupils enjoying the story of *Lofty, the great nature trail detective*. A series of resources, including music, tactile objects, smells and even a sweet (taste of bee's honey) brought the story to life. Pupils responded with smiles, vocalisation, blinking, reaching out, and making eye contact with adults; these responses were recorded by an adult.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	16	2	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.*

12. Since the school was last inspected, staff have not kept abreast of developments in education, and there has not been enough improvement in teaching and learning as a result. There is a lack of awareness of how symbols can be used to encourage pupils' communication, and few staff are able to sign. A few pupils would benefit from these strategies. At the last inspection, there was criticism of the school's planning. This has been improved for pupils over 16, and at this stage, planning is good. However, for those that

are younger, the quality of teaching is affected because only a minimal amount of planning is in place. There is nothing to guide teachers in planning either design and technology or physical education activities. In some subjects there is an overview to try and ensure that teachers do not miss out or repeat topics unnecessarily. The broad plan leaves teachers to add more detail themselves, which they do in isolation rather than as a group, and this increases their workload. No attempt has been made to implement the recent QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 2001) guidance on planning the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. These booklets are in the school, but have not been used.

13. At Post 16, the procedures associated with external accreditation provide a framework for both planning and assessment, and these are both good. For younger pupils, assessment, using IEP (individual education plan) targets, is satisfactory in the key areas of communication and personal, social and health education. Staff use records and their own good knowledge of pupils to set clear, time-related targets for pupils, and they identify strategies for helping pupils to achieve these. Particularly detailed records are kept of pupils' responses during intensive interaction sessions, and these provide good evidence of progress towards targets set. The expertise of a speech therapist is used to assess pupils' needs in relation to communication aids.

14. Because subjects are not planned in enough detail, teachers are still setting targets for pupils in every subject, which is discouraged in the Code of Practice for SEN (DfES 2001). The targets that teachers set are often not about learning, but about the experiences that pupils will have. When these targets are evaluated, all are inevitably recorded as achieved, but no concrete information is recorded about what pupils have gained from the experience. There is very little use of the national system of assessing pupils' attainments using levels that fall below National Curriculum Level 1 (P levels). Staff do not make enough use of the different levels of response that can be assessed for pupils with PMLD, such as *encounter* and *awareness*, and which might demonstrate small gains; neither do they record progress by showing an increasing number of contexts in which a similar response is made. The result of this is that the school cannot quantify the value that it adds for each pupil below 16, and this is unsatisfactory. Assessment was identified as a key issue at the last inspection, and in the inspection of 1996; there has not been enough improvement in this vital aspect of the school's work.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory**, there are **good** opportunities for enrichment. Resources are **good**, and the accommodation is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision to meet pupils' special educational needs is good.
- The lack of curriculum overview and management restricts pupils' achievements.
- The provision for post 16 pupils is good and pupils approaching school-leaving age have good preparation for the next stage.
- The school does not have a formal programme for personal, social and health education.
- There is a good number of support staff who contribute well to pupil's learning, and resources are good.

## **Commentary**

15. The school has addressed the criticism in the previous report and now provides an appropriate provision for sex education based on pupils' individual needs. A strong emphasis is placed on providing for pupils' individual special needs and the school does this well; all pupils have individual timetables. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and hydrotherapy programmes are provided where they are prescribed on pupils' statements. The level of care provided, both in and out of the classrooms, is impressive. However in focusing strongly on pupils' priority needs, namely their physical and communication needs, the school has allowed some subjects to lose their identity. Pupils are provided with experiences, but the school does not make explicit how these are intended to be taught in a way that allows pupils to build on their learning over time. For instance, in physical education, pupils go swimming, take part in wheelchair dancing, in spatial awareness sessions, and some go horse riding, but it is not clear from the school's documents that this is what the school intends as physical education.

16. Pupils in Years 12 to 14 benefit from a good modular programme, which is accredited and is highly relevant to their needs. The school has successfully developed a good range of accredited courses specifically preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. All pupils have an experience of the world of work and the good links with Connexions and other agencies ensures a smooth transition from the school. The well-established link with the local college continues to provide satisfying experiences for pupils to work at art and craft activities along with pupils from other schools.

17. The school is generously staffed with sufficient support staff for pupils to benefit from individual attention throughout the school day. Good numbers of support staff help to ensure that pupils are engaged during lessons. Teachers and support staff work very much as a team and it is clearly evident that pupils' well being and physical care is of the highest priority. The multi-sensory approach provides pupils with a wide range of appropriate experiences. All staff are alert to even minimal responses from pupils, they constantly interact and encourage pupils to engage in the experiences provided. They support pupils well, help them to have access to the curriculum and provide for their care and welfare.

18. The majority of pupils are in residence and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum. These include a variety of educational trips to local supermarkets, leisure centres and places of local interest such as Worsley canal and the Reebok Stadium. These visits widen pupils' experiences and raise their awareness of the community around them. Some of the pupils join in the activities linked with the district scout group and learn to enjoy the company of pupils from other schools. Art, music and

drama add a further dimension to the taught curriculum. For instance, older pupils recently went to a karaoke night in the local community.

19. Energy and money have been directed towards improving the residential accommodation, which is now good. Pupils in Years 12 to 14 have their own common room where they have snacks and have good opportunities to extend their self-help skills, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Otherwise the school's accommodation has improved little since the last inspection.

The building is not sufficiently adapted to the special needs of the pupils. For instance, there is no tracking in classrooms to assist with hoisting pupils who require lifting. Although they are of reasonable size, classrooms have limited storage space or room for manoeuvring wheel chairs or side liers. Though teachers do their very best to make their rooms attractive and interesting, the lack of storage makes the rooms look cluttered. The darkroom and multi-sensory room are used effectively to stimulate and encourage pupils to explore and control the lights and sounds but there are no subject specialist rooms, and the assembly hall doubles up for therapy and as a dining room.

Learning resources are good: A recent development has been the enhancement of the hydrotherapy pool with light and sound systems to stimulate and interest pupils during therapy. In classrooms and around school a wide range of equipment provides support for pupils' physical needs. Communication aids such as Big Macs and adapted computer keyboards are readily available and contribute to pupils' progress by enabling them to participate.

20. Whilst the school has addressed the weaknesses of the Post 16 curriculum identified at the last inspection, provision for certain subjects in Years 7 to 11 has not improved enough. Whilst there is a reasonable balance of subjects on timetables, the school cannot demonstrate through its planning or recording that certain subjects are being taught, or that subject requirements are being met. In mathematics, certain areas are neglected in Years 7 to 11, and requirements are not met.

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

As at the time of the last inspection, staff provide **very well** for the care, welfare, health and safety of their pupils. Support, advice and guidance are **good**. There is **satisfactory** involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils receive very good care and support for their personal development.
- Excellent relationships exist between staff and pupils
- Good links with other professionals contribute to pupils' well being
- There is no formal process for gathering pupils' views.

### **Commentary**

21. Staff are genuinely concerned for the welfare of the pupils in their care. Personal care is carried out sensitively and staff ensure that pupils' dignity is maintained at all times. Parents are made aware of all incidents through the home-school diary. There are satisfactory arrangements for child protection, and arrangements have recently been made

for all staff to receive up to date training in the near future in line with the recommendations of the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) report.

22. Relationships between all staff and pupils are extremely positive. Both the school and residential care staff know the needs of each pupil, and they familiarise themselves with the targets set in the individual plans. Ancillary staff also treat pupils with respect and do all they can to help them. Pupils show a strong trust in the adults in the school, and there is always someone they can turn to for advice or guidance. Although formal monitoring using assessment information is not a feature of the school, pupils' needs are reviewed well through annual reviews, and staff act well on recommendations made.

23. There is a physiotherapist, occupational therapist and speech and language therapist on the staff or employed by other agencies to work with pupils at the school. These staff ensure that the pupils receive regular therapy which contributes to their well being and progress. In addition to working with pupils, the therapists train teaching and support staff to deliver the programmes they have set up. This ensures pupils receive regular therapy. Pupils comfort is high priority and at the start of each session staff check that pupils are at ease and receptive to learning. Secure arrangements are in place for the administration of pupils' medication.

24. Pupils are given every opportunity to make choices relating to their personal needs, whether this involves choosing a partner in wheelchair dancing or deciding what type of drink to have at break time. There is no formal process of gathering their views about whole school events, but numbers are small, and staff are alert to establishing pupils' preferences. Flexibility allows for pupils' individual wishes to be considered. For instance, one pupil is keen to be a disc jockey, so he has the opportunity to experience working at a local market radio station once a week.

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

The school has established **good** links with parents and the community. There are **satisfactory** links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Statutory information for parents does not meet legal requirements.
- Good links with the local community help to promote pupils' personal development.

### **Commentary**

25. The school serves a very wide geographical area and the majority of pupils reside in the school throughout the year, so there is very little opportunity for parents to have casual, informal contact with the teachers. Pupils home-school diaries are used very well, providing an account of the pupils' life at school and home. If required, a photo copy is sent to parents whose children stay in the residential unit. The termly newsletter compiled of pupils' articles gives a graphic account of the terms events, and older pupils write home weekly to give an account of their busy social lives. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time; at the parents' meeting parents said that they felt they must have been regarded as 'the parents from hell' because of the number of times they either visited or



contacted the school after their son first joined the school, but they described how they were always made welcome. This helped to build their confidence in the care that is provided. Bonfire night was very well attended by parents, family and friends who live within travelling distance.

26. The school provides good opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress, together with individual educational plans, at the Annual Reviews. The pupils' records of achievement provide parents with a pictorial record of their child's achievements during the academic year. However, annual progress reports do not meet requirements as they do not report National Curriculum levels to parents in Years 9 and 11.

27. The prospectus and governors' annual report do not contain the required information to meet legal requirements. The prospectus omits information on the school's affiliation, its SEN policy and attendance figures. The governors' annual report does not mention the school's admissions policy, a statement on school security, the success of the school's SEN policy, its arrangements in respect of disability, including accessibility, and attendance figures.

28. The school has good links with the local community. The school makes good use of local employers to provide pupils with an experience of the world of work. A hectic schedule of visits makes for a busy social life in the Children's Home. At the weekend, the pupils visit the local *Girls and Lads* club and the Scouts take part in district events. The pupils enjoy their weekly riding lessons at the nearby riding stables. The school also ensures that necessary links are maintained with pupils' home communities, such as with Social Services.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Leadership by the headteacher is **unsatisfactory**. Other key staff provide **satisfactory** leadership. Management of the school is **unsatisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The governing body provides a suitable challenge for senior managers, but some statutory requirements are not met.
- The school does not review or monitor pupils' performance; There is a lack of strategic planning and the cost implications of developments are not always shown.
- Induction procedures for staff are good.
- Financial control is appropriate for day to day management but the principles of best value are not used to ensure that funds are spent wisely.

## **Commentary**

29. There are strong aspects of the headteachers' leadership. In his dealings with pupils and staff he provides a good role model, and he has successfully developed teamwork in the school, and supported well the developments in the residential setting. There is a caring ethos in the school. However, there has been too little educational direction since the last inspection. Not enough account has been taken of national developments, particularly in curriculum planning and assessment. As a result of this, the teaching of pupils under 16 has not improved enough since the last inspection, and the school does not have sufficient information on how well pupils are achieving or progressing to enable it to evaluate its success.

30. The governing body, mainly through its curriculum sub-committee, have a good understanding of the needs of those pupils aged 16 and above. They have helped to shape the curriculum by introducing an accredited award scheme with relevant modules in communication, mathematics, ICT skills and leisure activities. They visit the school to observe lessons and modify curriculum documents with key members of staff. However, there is no mechanism for holding the school to account in respect of meeting National Curriculum requirements. There is no clear curriculum policy setting out benchmarks that governors can check, or complete plans showing how the school intends teachers to teach all National Curriculum subjects.

31. The governing body has recently made the decision to separate the duties of headteacher and residential manager and they are currently recruiting to achieve this. Governors do challenge senior managers; most recently it believed the school's targets were too general, so targets were sent back for senior managers to amend. The governing body has done much to support the changes to the residential aspect of the school. Individually many governors are supportive of the school, but collectively they do not plan or discuss in sufficient depth how the school is performing and what must happen in order for it to improve.

32. There have been considerable changes to the school. Pupil numbers have fallen and teachers have left; this has left key curriculum areas, such as mathematics and ICT without leaders. For the last two terms, the headteacher has taught half of the week and has little time to review or monitor pupils' learning. His monitoring of teaching has had little impact on improving standards, because underlying weaknesses have gone unchecked, despite having been identified as key issues at the last inspection.

33. Induction procedures are good and new staff are given a clear introduction to how the school works and functions. New staff are introduced to policies including health and

safety requirements. Their progress is reviewed after one month and again after six months. No new teaching staff have been appointed, but many new support workers do offer pupils a great deal of one to one support and care. Staff are involved in performance management and appraisal and some specific training needs have been identified, such as specialised training for autistic pupils who attended in the recent past.

34. Strategic planning is unsatisfactory. The school improvement plan does not reflect national priorities, identify the school's own priorities or provide a picture of how the provision is intended to develop in the longer term. For instance, governors intend to build a new residential building so that pupil numbers can increase, but the school development plan does not mention this long-term goal. 35. Although there is a rolling programme of subject review, subject leaders do not write subject development plans based upon a detailed audit, which show how they intend to move their areas forward. Cost implications of developments are not always shown, even where estimates would be helpful in planning expenditure.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1139608
Total expenditure	1185251
Expenditure per pupil	56440

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-93333
Balance carried forward to the next year	-45643

36. Day to day financial administration is effective and the business manager closely monitors the school's finances. What is of great concern is the large sum of money that continues to be paid to consultants pursuing funds for a new residential building estimated to cost £1.9 million. Minutes from the governing body's finance sub-committee show that the school has been employing fund raisers at a cost of £3,000 per month for the last two years. The school has seen very little financial return for this outlay to date, and governors have not evaluated the effectiveness of this expenditure in relation to other possible ways of improving pupils' achievements. Funds are delegated to subjects, areas and key staff, such as therapists. However this money is often distributed on a historical basis, rather than being allocated according to development priorities. The business manager and governors do seek alternative quotes for goods and services, but evaluating what educational impact their spending has on pupils' learning is very limited. Application of best value principles is unsatisfactory.

**OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

**What is the effectiveness of residential provision and work related learning ?**

**Residential provision**

37. The residential provision was not a particular focus for the inspection because of the recent CSCI inspection. However, inspectors looked at improvements since the last inspection and judged them to be good; suitable actions are being taken to ensure that standards are met.

38. There is a high standard of care in a family environment and a good range of evening and week-end activities for the pupils, including those on the school's site and expeditions further afield suitable for all abilities and ages. Residential accommodation has improved since the school was last inspected, and there is a good range of equipment to assist in meeting the considerable care needs that pupils have. The provision is well led and managed.

### **Work related learning**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All pupils in Years 12 to 14 are given work related experiences.
- The high level of staffing ensures pupils receive appropriate support as they experience the world of work.

## Commentary

39. Work -related learning (WRL) is well established for the older pupils. The school aims to support pupils in learning through work experience. For many pupils this is a major personal challenge and the school carefully considers the most appropriate placements in relation to pupils' existing skills and interests and prepares them well. It is difficult to find placements for students who use a wheelchair, but successful links have been established with local providers. Photographs in pupils' folders and records of achievement are testimony to the wide range of experiences provided and the positive impact on pupils' self esteem and personal development. An example of a successful placement is one of the present pupils, who having had experience at the local radio station is now following a vocational course in life skills through broadcasting, leading to an Open College certificate. The school is proactive in creating 'work' opportunities such as running a stall at the local market for pupils to enjoy supervised experiences.

40. The school has good links with Connexions. The officers support the school and pupils by attending review meetings and advising about the next stage. Underpinning this advice are the accredited modules based on the world of work. The modules provide a structure so pupils can learn skills such as letter writing and form filling and investigate the retail industry. They expand their knowledge when they also formally question a range of adults about their work to find out what different jobs entail.

41. The area of learning is the mainstay of the provision for pupils in Years 12 to 14 and is managed well. No WRL lessons were seen but pupils' folders indicate they achieve well in this area of learning. They are well motivated and benefit from the high level of support provided to ensure they get the most from the practical experiences.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3, 4 and 5**

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

##### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Although there are many good features of teaching, teachers do not make use of a wide enough range of strategies for developing communication skills.
- Assessment at Post 16 is good, but the school does not have enough assessment information for younger pupils to enable it to evaluate the effectiveness of provision.
- All pupils over 16 develop equally well their reading and writing skills but, by the time they leave school, a few do not have a suitable means of communicating with those who do not know them well.

##### **Commentary**

42. Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening, reading and writing are satisfactory overall, and this is associated with teaching and learning that are satisfactory overall.

43. Most pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties; they have no speech and rarely communicate intentionally. Staff know them well; they set suitable targets for them and keep detailed records of their responses; records show that pupils make good progress against these targets. For instance, they steadily increase the consistency of responses, the amount of eye-contact, and show greater anticipation of stimuli; they also increase the time they will maintain interaction with an adult.

44. Of those pupils who have speech or who communicate intentionally in other ways, most develop a suitable means of communicating with others by the time they leave school. Intervention by the speech therapist ensures that good use is made of electronic communication aids, and staff in classrooms make effective use of devices that enable pupils to activate short recordings by pressing a switch. However, staff do not build well enough on the signing skills that a few pupils bring with them when they arrive at the school. Very few staff are fluent signers, and use of signing is patchy. As a result, a few pupils develop signs that only have meaning to themselves and staff at the school. These are not helpful in communicating with those that do not know them well. There is limited use also of symbols with text; the speech therapist has tried such strategies with a few pupils, but as symbols are not widely used in classes, this has not been successful. Key staff do not know enough about the potential of communication systems using symbols and text. As a result, a few pupils at 19 do not have a means of making themselves understood by those who do not know them well.

45. Pupils experience a reasonable range of literature, although there is no overview to guide teachers so that they can be sure to include certain texts and not repeat others unnecessarily, neither is there any reference to National Curriculum or National Literacy

Strategy texts for pupils of different age groups. There is no access to sensory experiences of Shakespeare's plays for instance.

46. There are several strengths of teaching and learning. In all lessons, there are sufficient staff for pupils to each have an adult working with them. Staff ensure that pupils are comfortably positioned and that they are ready to learn. In one lesson, for instance, staff quickly recognised that a pupil was thirsty; they provided a drink, and the pupil then settled to listen to a story. Staff make most effective use of sensory approaches to help pupils understand characters and sequences of events in stories and poems. Resources include real objects and those that represent characters, as well as sounds and smells. These are skilfully used to stimulate pupils, and are successful in eliciting a good range of responses. For instance, pupils may vocalise, reach out to objects, smile or turn towards the object. In the best lessons, staff record in detail the responses that pupils make.

47. A small number of pupils develop satisfactorily their skills in reading and writing. For instance, they recognise single letters, words and sentences. Teachers are careful to ensure that these pupils are challenged, and there are plenty of reading schemes and texts for teachers and pupils to choose from. Older pupils enjoy looking at the daily newspaper, and with adult support, they word-process their own writing and learn to sign their names, complete forms and write short reports.

48. Assessment for pupils over 16 is good, as they work steadily towards accredited units; this could usefully be developed for younger pupils. A weakness of assessment generally, is the fact that staff do not use available systems for summarising the achievements of pupils who reach levels below National Curriculum Level 1. As a result, the school has no means of evaluating the effectiveness of its provision, and management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

49. Leadership of English is satisfactory and so is improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has ensured that the school's provision is suitably matched to the majority of needs of the present pupil population.

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

50. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to consolidate their communication skills across the curriculum. Staff all know pupils well enough to recognise how best they communicate basic needs, pleasure or displeasure, and they use this knowledge sensibly, such as to enable pupils to show what they know or understand. For example, in a religious education lesson, a member of staff asked a pupil to indicate 'yes' and 'no' responses to questions by touching the adult's left or right hand.

### **Modern foreign language**

51. The school no longer teaches a modern foreign language, as it did for a small number of pupils at the last inspection. However, it has not disappplied pupils from this subject, and does not have a written rationale for not teaching the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory** overall. It is **good** for pupils older than 16 but **unsatisfactory** for those in Years 7 to 11.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils aged 16 and over is good and makes a positive contribution to developing their independence skills.
- Provision for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is not effectively planned, and the assessment and recording of pupil's achievements are inconsistent.
- The subject is not well led and managed.

### Commentary

52. Achievement in mathematics has not improved enough since the previous inspection. For pupils over 16, achievement has improved, but for younger pupils, achievement has deteriorated. Plans to utilise the National Numeracy Strategy and develop a suitable scheme of work have not materialised. This has left teachers with little direction and support in their planning, especially to ensure they are covering all aspects of mathematics and meeting pupils' needs. However, at Post 16 an accredited course has provided staff with a detailed syllabus complete with a number of well planned modules aimed at extending pupils' learning as they move towards adulthood.

53. At Post 16, teachers present exciting and often challenging lessons and all pupils are enabled to participate at their own levels because of effective team work between teachers and support staff who understand pupils' different needs and abilities. In addition, a variety of communication techniques are used, including switches and a few ICT programs enabling pupils to understand what is going on and what is expected of them. Older pupils are taught well and enjoy their mathematics which is often practically based. Work on time and money management allows pupils the opportunity to use these skills during other modules such as shopping or swimming. Some pupils are able to tell the time using both digital and analogue systems, including the 24 hour clock. Again this is put to good use during practical activities out of school, such as swimming and during their residential time. Occasionally opportunities are missed to extend pupils learning. In a registration period with the oldest pupils, one pupil was working with a 3D puzzle. Each time the pupil successfully matched a shape the teacher simply said *choose another one*, instead of reinforcing their learning by naming the shapes.

54. In Years 7 to 11, planning is left to individual teachers and is based entirely around pupils' IEPs. This does not allow teachers to evaluate or plan what pupils have learnt or what they intend to achieve over a given period of time. There is no planning cycle to ensure all aspects of mathematics are taught, and that some areas are not unnecessarily repeated. Teachers also plan in isolation and do not know what their colleagues have covered. Assessment opportunities are also weak so it is very difficult for staff to evaluate what pupils have achieved. Much of the mathematics with this group of pupils is taught through a multi-sensory approach and covers basic sequencing skills and occasionally some number work. Areas such as data handling are not covered, and whilst it is reasonable for these pupils that this should receive less emphasis, it is unsatisfactory to exclude such aspects altogether, as requirements are not met. Often, the sensory approach is effective and provides opportunities for pupils to respond by anticipating the next activity in a given



sequence such as air blowing on their face. However, this is often repeated several times and pupils are not sufficiently challenged with new learning opportunities.

55. The mathematics co-ordinator recently left the school and has not been replaced. There is a distinct lack of co-ordination for mathematics as there is no one for staff to talk to for advice and guidance. The policy was briefly updated last month, October, but it says very little about those pupils with the most complex needs. The previous policy is dated June 2000 and bears little resemblance to the type of pupils the school now caters for. There is no strategic planning to improve standards by evaluating teaching and learning throughout the school. What good practice is taking place is not shared with colleagues. The lack of monitoring procedures means that assessment records are not maintained consistently and the small gains in knowledge and understanding that pupils acquire are often not acknowledged or built upon.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily across other subjects, but this is often not recorded and valuable information on pupils' achievements is being lost. For example, some mathematics tasks are planned through physical education activities such as *spatial awareness through independent exploration playing in the ball pool* but mathematics is not mentioned in the planning. In a science lesson, a support worker reinforced the number thrown on a *squeaky dice* by clapping the thrown number on a pupils' body to reinforce the number concept. The pupil was able to participate in the game, but this activity was neither planned nor recorded. In a registration lesson, one pupil used the concept keyboard to count the number of pupils in the class. Again the activity was not planned and the pupil's achievements not recorded.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject manager has collated exemplars and resources to provide the basis for the scheme of work
- The school maintains the strong emphasis on investigation and exploration.
- There are no procedures for monitoring and evaluating the provision.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped, not informing staff sufficiently about pupils' achievement and levels of attainment.

### **Commentary**

57. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection; a scheme of work and topic overview has been introduced, and wide range of resources is available to interest and motivate pupils. The subject manager has worked conscientiously to produce a relevant and accessible programme of work based on science topics such as 'Ourselves and Other Animals',

'Electricity and Magnetism' and 'Forces'. The topics are cyclical and the subject manager ensures that all pupils get their entitlement despite being in mixed age classes. Management of the subject is satisfactory.

58. Teaching seen during the inspection was good. Both classes were working on the same module 'Earth and Beyond' Teachers had taken care to provide stimulating lessons giving pupils good sensory experiences, simulating thunder, twinkling stars and raindrops. The high number of support staff worked effectively with individual pupils encouraging participation and responding supportively to pupils' reactions. In both classes teachers made good use of the opportunity to reinforce counting with all the pupils and to provide extended experiences for more able pupils. Pupils achieved well in these lessons. A further example of links with other subjects were seen when one class made 'planets' in their art lesson expanding their sensory experience and reinforcing the names of the planets linked to the stars and night-time experience in the science lesson. The focus on sensory exploration and investigation contributes well to pupils' spiritual development. At all times pupils' attitudes are good, they are encouraged by the very good relationships they have with adults and the caring ethos of the school community.

59. Despite the good teaching seen in lessons, teaching overall is satisfactory because aspects of effective teaching are nevertheless missing. The school has not yet produced assessment procedures to identify the small gains pupils make within the subject. As a result teachers do not have a precise idea of pupils' achievement, so planning is too general, resulting in lost opportunities for pupils to increase their scientific knowledge and understanding.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is used effectively to develop the skills of pupils over 16.
- There is no routine monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leadership and management are ineffective.

### **Commentary**

60. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory; ICT is not taught as a discrete subject, although at Post 16 it is often used alongside communication and other modules to reinforce learning. Many older pupils use their word processing skills to write accounts of activities such as swimming for their modules or letters home to their families. Others have produced coloured posters, complete with imported text and pictures for events at the school such as a bonfire party or a Children in Need coffee morning. Some pupils need support from care assistants, but are very pleased and justifiably proud of their completed work, especially when it is displayed in the classroom or corridor. Pupils use a variety of adapted equipment

to access keyboards and monitors and switches are used extensively throughout the school.

61. Pupils of all ages use control technology through different switches to manage their environment. For instance, they control light and sound switches in the dark room; and use specially adapted waterproof switches in the hydrotherapy pool. Older pupils appreciate the applications of modern technology when they become familiar with bar codes and scanners through their work *investigating the retail industry*. Others have an understanding of TV and videos and are aware of how information technology affects everyday life.

62. Some teachers are confident about using ICT, although the school did make use of national training in ICT for four teaching staff. There are few examples of software programs for different subjects or internet-linked computers to extend pupils' learning opportunities. The school has a digital camera which is used adequately. A new interactive whiteboard has also recently been purchased, and training in its use was provided by the supplier; further training is planned for the future.

63. There is no designated co-ordinator and so leadership and management are ineffective. Where good practice is taking place there are no procedures for this to be shared as a learning experience for all staff. There has been no audit of staff skills or identification of further training needs. When new equipment and resources are bought, such as the interactive white board, there is nobody available to demonstrate this and provide guidance for staff, so that they can begin to use the new equipment straight away. This is inefficient and does little to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

64. The curriculum lacks effective planning to ensure that, over time, all aspects of information technology are covered, although this is more effective at Post 16 than lower down the school. The policy is out of date and offers very little guidance to staff. Currently, teaching is not monitored and although there were plans in 2003 to review the subject there is no evidence to suggest this was completed or that any outcomes of such a review have been acted upon to improve the provision.

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

65. There are satisfactory opportunities overall, with the best provision at Post 16. In Years 7 to 11, teachers do not routinely identify opportunities in their planning for other subjects. What does take place often happens as the result of an individual member of staff using their initiative. However, there is sound use of ICT to support pupils' communication, including electronic communication aids and the use of software to generate symbols and text. Switches are used to allow pupils of all ages to communicate such as during registration. Other switches are used to control light and sound in the multi-sensory rooms and during hydrotherapy in the pool. Older pupils at Post 16 have used a drawing program to create basic art work; one pupil drew an ambulance, while others experimented with colour and shape, for instance.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- A suitable long-term plan helps to ensure that pupils do not repeat or miss out topics, but assessment does not identify what pupils have learned.
- Although the satisfactory quality of provision has been maintained, minor recommendations made at the last inspection have not been acted upon.

#### **Commentary**

66. Pupils' achievements in religious education (RE) are satisfactory; this is associated with satisfactory teaching and learning, as well as a suitable curriculum. A clear policy identifies how the subject should be taught, and how it supports pupils' spiritual development; the policy is implemented faithfully by teachers.

67. A long-term plan shows which topics pupils should be taught, and the cyclical arrangement ensures that pupils learn about religions as well as learning from them. There is a strong emphasis on Christianity. Younger pupils start by learning about Old Testament stories. Good use is made of sensory methods here, as pupils work together, and with adult support, to construct books that tell these stories; the illustrations make effective use of differently coloured and textured materials, which pupils can see and explore with their hands. Later, pupils learn about other religions through visits and celebrations of festivals associated with religions such as Islam and Judaism. The school makes use of an artefacts loan service to bring different religions to life. The oldest pupils learn about religion and beliefs in a social context. For instance, pupils over 16 were learning about the work of CAFOD (Catholic Association for Overseas Development) during the inspection. Pupils considered fair and unfair practices in work situations, then went on to see a video about the work of CAFOD. Through this, they were able to see some of the less fortunate people of the world being supported by this organisation. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for them to really explore the subject, as the lesson was too short. Length of lessons was an issue identified at the last inspection, but it has not been addressed.

68. When teachers plan their lessons, they do not identify learning outcomes, but simply specify, as targets, what experiences pupils will have. The targets are then evaluated as having been met. This is unsatisfactory, as teachers are not identifying what pupils know, understand or do, and even how pupils have responded to the experiences they have been given. As a result, the school has no assessment information for RE, or any means of evaluating the success of the RE curriculum. Assessment of RE was an issue identified at the last inspection, but it has not yet been addressed, and there has been too little improvement since then. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

#### **Geography and history**

69. These subjects were not a focus for this inspection, and no lessons were being taught during the inspection period. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows they

encounter a wide range of experiences within the local environment, experiencing different environments and becoming aware of old and new. Both subjects are promoted well through a good range of out of school visits.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

70. The subject was not a focus for this inspection, and too little evidence was available for secure judgements to be made on standards and provision. Design and technology does not appear on all class timetables, and on others it is combined with art, as art and craft. There are no plans to guide teachers in preparing their lessons, to ensure that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding, or to demonstrate how the school ensures that National Curriculum requirements are met. This was a criticism at the last inspection. Pupils' records of achievement show that they have, in the past, had a reasonable range of experiences, but a new teacher arriving at the school would not know what pupils had covered or achieved, and they would not know in sufficient detail what to teach next either.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

71. This subject was not a particular focus for this inspection, and too little evidence was gathered to make valid judgements on the provision, teaching, learning or achievement. Art has a high profile throughout the school and there are many good pieces of pupils' work, thoughtfully displayed, which brighten up the whole school. Pupils of all ages enjoy their art work and are learning to recognise colours, tones and textures. Pupils with the most complex needs enjoy feeling the texture and smell of paint, and are helped to hold brushes, sponges for printing, and crayons, to make patterns on paper. Adults help pupils and actively encourage them to make choices about which colours and materials to use and where to place them. There are very few opportunities for pupils to consider the work of other artists and this detracts from pupils' cultural development.

### **Music**

72. This subject was not a focus for this inspection, and too little evidence was available for judgements to be made on standards and provision. One music lesson was seen for pupils in Years 7 to 11, and in this lesson, teaching and learning were good. There were good opportunities for pupils to listen, perform together and as an accompaniment. All were included because good staffing levels helped to ensure that pupils were engaged throughout the session. Staff encouraged pupils' communication skills well during the lesson. Not all pupils receive their entitlement to music though, as several miss this session to go pony riding.

73. Pupils' records show that a suitable range of activities is provided, and music is used well in the school to create an ambience, or to introduce sessions. This way, pupils do have opportunities to listen to a range of different sorts of music, although this is not evident from planning, as plans to guide teachers in preparing their lessons do not exist.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

74. The subject was not a particular focus for this inspection, and it does not appear on class timetables as physical education. Very little is planned or recorded about pupils'

progress in physical education. Much of the information in their records of achievement is actually about what pupils have experienced, were encouraged to do, or how much they enjoyed it rather than what they actually achieved. Many of the physical experiences pupils receive at the school are therapy based activities, although some activities such as swimming do take place. Very few pupils are taught how to swim, but they do develop water confidence, although there is no planning to show teachers how to build on pupils' skills. Leisure activities take place for older pupils aged 16 and above and for those in residence. Activities such as ten pin bowling and *new age curling* are very much enjoyed by pupils. The school does have some athletics resources but these were only observed in a photograph of a history project on the Olympics. Outdoor facilities around the school are limited, and although the hall is a reasonable size, it has many purposes. Older pupils use a local leisure centre, which brings them into contact with the public.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Personal and social education underpins the whole curriculum.
- Achievement in PSHE for pupils in Years 12 to 14 is good.
- There is no formal curriculum to provide a structure to the provision.
- The management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

75. Though some discrete lessons appear on the timetable the teaching of PSHE and citizenship are predominantly taught through other subjects and activities, and teaching is satisfactory. The school policy states the principle aim of the programme for PSHE to be the development of pupils' independence skills. In all lessons pupils are set targets linked to the objectives on their statements of special educational needs. These targets are largely to do with experiences and skills: for example to make choices, show preferences, to turn-take or communicate intentionally. Teachers and support staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of pupils' personal and social needs. This explains to an extent why provision is satisfactory despite a lack of formal planning, specific objectives and rigorous monitoring. Staff rely on their knowledge of individual pupils and respond to their needs instinctively. However the lack of a formal programme planned with specific objectives means there are lost opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 11 to achieve well and extend their skills.

76. Pupils in Years 12 to 14 achieve well in PSHE. This is because the school has developed a modular approach to an accredited curriculum that provides criteria for successful achievement. This scheme gives teachers and support staff clear guidance about what pupils should achieve so everyone knows what will be the next stage of learning. Snack-time is used effectively for pupils to choose food and drink, to move independently around the school and to play their part in the group by washing up afterwards. Units of work based on 'Myself and Others' 'Getting Ready To Go out' and 'Meal Preparation' are all relevant and form part of the provision for these older pupils.

77. The citizenship element of the curriculum meets requirements. The school aims to develop pupils' self-awareness and to understand their immediate world, the wider world and their relationship with those who share it. The very good use of visits into the community and visitors such as the police give pupils an increasing understanding of the roles of individuals within the community. At lunchtime older pupils show their increasing responsibility by setting the table and waiting patiently for their meal.

78. Good use is made of the community so all pupils in Years 12 to 14 gain an experience of the world of work. A good link with the local college provides a valuable learning experience for pupils and photographs indicate how much pupils enjoy this regular link.

79. The overall management of the PSHE and citizenship is unsatisfactory. This is because the subject has not been sufficiently developed since the last inspection. The programme of work has not been formalised or reviewed and there is a lack of stringent monitoring so the school is unable to judge how well they meet pupils' needs in this subject.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

*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.*