

INSPECTION REPORT

SHERINGHAM WOODFIELDS

Sheringham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121258

Headteacher: Ms Diane Whitham

Lead inspector: Dr D Alan Dobbins

Dates of inspection: 11th - 13th April 2005

Inspection number: 273547

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Community special
Age range of pupils: 2 - 19
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 60
School address: Holt Road
Sheringham
Norfolk
Postcode: NR26 8ND
Telephone number: (01263) 820 520
Fax number: (01263) 850 521
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs Sandy Francis
governors:
Date of previous April 2000
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sheringham Woodfields School is part of the provision of the County of Norfolk Local Education Authority for pupils from two to 19 years with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties and, increasingly, pupils with autistic tendencies. The agreed number of places is 90, although only 60 pupils are currently on roll. The difference is because the school relocated in September 2003 to new purpose-built accommodation on the shared campus of a mainstream primary and mainstream secondary school, with a capacity much greater than was the case in the previous building. The sixth form moved in September 2002. Foundation Stage children joined the nursery in September 2004. The number of pupils is increasing steadily toward the agreed maximum. Forty-one pupils are boys and 19 are girls. Most pupils are White British. One pupil is learning English as an additional language and there are no traveller children. Six pupils are dual registered with mainstream schools and 20 pupils take some of their lessons in the mainstream primary and secondary schools that are co-located on the campus. The school helps support ten children in mainstream schools through its provision for outreach. Because of their learning difficulties, the attainment of many pupils on entry is below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The school gained Investor in People status in 2003 and the Artsmark in 2004. Two new assistant headteachers joined the staff on the first day of the inspection to complete the senior management team. The last inspection was in April 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27424	Dr D Alan Dobbins	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
21899	Gillian Lawson	Team inspector	English Citizenship Geography History French
3055	Clive Tombs	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education
16227	Jim Phillips	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Sheringham Woodfields is a good and developing school. Since relocating to excellent accommodation, the very good leadership of the headteacher, who has been supported very well by senior staff, has resulted in the speedy establishment of routines and procedures that ensure the school is calm, ordered and very well organised. The curriculum is wide ranging and relevant and includes good opportunities to take lessons with pupils in the co-located mainstream schools. Good quality teaching and advice means that pupils make good progress in their learning. The school provides good value for money.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- The excellent accommodation and the location on a campus shared with primary and secondary schools.
- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher that has contributed significantly to the school's very good beginning.
- The very good attitude pupils have to their learning, their very good behaviour and their commitment to doing their best.
- The generous staffing levels and the good resources to support teaching and learning.
- The range of relevant awards is too small for pupils in Years 11 to 13 to fully demonstrate the extent of their learning and the new technologies and additional ways of communicating are not used well enough in some lessons.
- The procedures for judging the effectiveness of the school are not yet working well.
- Governors need to form and operate procedure to help them check the quality of the provision.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils in the Foundation Stage have made a very good beginning. Students in the sixth form are making satisfactory progress. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Overall, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 11 is good. The standards achieved in English, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education are good. They are satisfactory in mathematics and design and technology and very good in art and design and music. Too few lessons were seen in geography, history and in a modern foreign language for judgements to be made. Children in the Foundation Stage have settled very well and have made a very good start to their learning in each learning area. The good progress students in the sixth form made up to the end of last term has been compromised by staffing changes compounded by a significant increase in their numbers. Overall, they make satisfactory progress in their work toward the ASDAN awards.

Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in becoming mature and responsible.

Pupils make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They fully accept that school is a place where they are expected to work hard to do their best. In most lessons, they achieve this because of their very good attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good and this results in good quality learning. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers set very high standards for behaviour and learning and they, and the teaching assistants, encourage pupils very well. Teaching assistants are skilled and well trained. They make an important contribution to the pupils' good progress. The very good links with parents and carers means that for many pupils the work of the school continues in the home, to the benefit of learning. Overall, the curriculum is good, although for pupils aged 14 to 19 years it is only satisfactory. Primarily, this is because the highest attaining pupils are not able to demonstrate the full extent of their learning on a sufficiently wide range of nationally accredited awards. The range and quality of resources are good, and the staffing level is generous. The inclusion programme, especially, provides good opportunities to extend and enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils gain good advice and guidance in dealing with issues that are important to them. The links with the community are good. The links with the co-located schools are very good and, through the outreach programme, the links with other schools are developing.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has led and managed the move to the new accommodation very well. She is an excellent role model, and now that the senior management team is complete is fully justified in expecting the school to continue its development. Staff morale is very high. Governance is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. Many governors are newly appointed. The chairperson is committed and knowledgeable and is rightly keen to further develop the procedures that help check the school's effectiveness against other schools.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of parents are very good. Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school. Pupils say they like school and the staff very much. They are enjoying their new school and are very proud of it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the procedures for checking the progress of pupils against their targets for learning so as to inform planning and help recognise how effective the school is.
- Further develop the skills staff have in using new technologies and additional ways of communicating to enable pupils with the most complex learning difficulties to have full access to their learning.
- The range of relevant accredited awards for pupils in Years 11 to 13.

- The governing body's procedures for judging the quality of the provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

When the special educational needs of pupils are taken into account, the standards those in Years 1 to 11 achieve are good. Children in the Foundation Stage have made a very good start since the nursery opened in September 2004 and are making very good progress toward the learning goals in each of the early learning areas. Pupils in the sixth form are doing satisfactorily.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- All pupils, irrespective of the cause or complexity of their special needs, make equivalent progress in most of the lessons.
- Pupils are helped to become as mature and independent as is possible.
- Pupils make good progress in their ability to communicate and they make very good progress in art and design and in music.
- Children are given a very good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Students in the sixth form do not take enough of their work with those in the co-located secondary school.

COMMENTARY

1. In the lessons, all pupils achieve equivalent standards and make equivalent progress whatever their capabilities or the cause or complexity of their special needs. This is because teachers and their teaching assistants know their pupils very well and, in most lessons, are proficient in using many specialist procedures that match their learning and additional needs. The generous size of the classrooms helps by imposing no real limits on the strategies that teachers are able to use to promote learning. For example, pupils with the most complex needs are predominantly taught by sensory approaches that emphasise touching, seeing, hearing and smelling. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are taught using the principles of the treatment and education of children who are communicationally challenged (TEACCH). For the other pupils, teaching emphasises communication and social interaction. As a consequence, in most lessons, all pupils make equivalent progress. Because of the considerable range of pupils' capabilities, and their learning and additional needs, ensuring this is an ongoing challenge for teachers and teaching assistants. The headteacher and senior managers know this and realise it will be an even bigger challenge in the future, when the school has its full complement of pupils.
2. Over all the years, pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. The programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is planned very well and the excellent relationships they have with the staff make an important contribution to the development of their personal and social skills. In the lessons, pupils benefit from clear presentations of information on issues that are important to them as they grow up. In lessons in all the subjects and at other times, such as at lunch and break times, pupils gain good support, advice and, routinely, are encouraged by staff to do their best. As a consequence, they have fully accepted their role as learners and work very hard at their learning and behave very well. They gain in confidence as they move through the school and become more willing to act on the advice and guidance they receive. The caring and supportive ethos which permeates every aspect of the school and is one of its strengths makes a significant contribution to pupils' very good progress toward becoming as mature and as independent as possible.

In the other subjects, pupils achieve as follows:

	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
English				
• speaking and listening	Good	Good	Good	Good
• reading	Good	Good	Good	Good
• writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Good	Good	Good	Good
Art and design	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	*	*	*	*
History	*	*	*	*
ICT	Good	Good	Good	Good
Music	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Modern foreign language			*	*
PSHCE	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
Physical education	Good	Good	Good	Good
Religious education	Good	Good	Good	Good

* Too few lessons were seen in these subjects to judge the standards pupils achieve.

- In the seven months since its opening, very good leadership and management in the Foundation Stage has resulted in the establishment of a well organised curriculum that is supported by very good assessment procedures. As a consequence, children are making very good progress in each of the early learning areas. Attending the co-located mainstream nursery and mixing with other children for some part of each day is very beneficial to their personal and social development.
- Over the last term, staffing and organisational changes in the sixth form have affected the progress of students. Up to Christmas 2004, the original group of sixth form students were doing very well. The curriculum of the recently formed second class of students is continuing to be developed. For these students, especially, more involvement with the co-located secondary school will provide curricular experiences that will help prepare them better for life after school.
- A small number of pupils in Years 1 to 11 have their learning experiences broadened by being included in some lessons with pupils in the co-located mainstream schools. They are doing very well, both socially and in their learning. This is because their visits are excellently organised, supported very well by the linked teaching assistants, and are enjoyed very much by the pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is good, as is punctuality at the beginning and throughout the day.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes pupils have to their work.

- The very good behaviour and the respectful way pupils deal with each other.
- The ethos of care and support helps in developing personal and social skills.

Commentary

- Pupils over all the years are unanimous in saying that they are happy at school and they enjoy attending because staff are welcoming and friendly. They say staff help them when they want help, treat them very well and make learning fun. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school and play a major part in shaping their very good attitudes to learning. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. In lessons, they are often engrossed in their work and show a real determination to succeed. Extra-curricular activities, such as the lunchtime clubs, are valued and supported very well. Pupils readily take responsibility for day-to-day routines, such as returning registers to the office and, through the School Council, they are able to contribute to decisions to do with running the school. For example, representatives of the Council were able to meet the two recently appointed assistant headteachers over their interview day at school, and the Council is currently planning a day when pupils will organise activities and manage the school.
- Behaviour is very good. The high expectations staff have for behaviour are seen in the consistent way in which the code of behaviour is interpreted and, when pupils transgress, in the sensitive manner in which staff manage problem behaviour. As a consequence, the school is safe and orderly because pupils know and abide by the routines and respect the behaviour code. Only rarely is learning disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. In lessons, pupils share resources, take turns and show consideration and care towards each other. At break and lunchtimes, they are polite and respectful to each other. This is especially so when older pupils, for example, have lunch with their younger 'buddies'. Bullying is not an issue at the school.
- The strong, caring and supportive ethos and the way in which staff value all children equally, helps pupils achieve very good progress in their personal and social development. Qualities such as trust and respect characterise the relationships between staff and pupils and provide a strong base for the development of personal and social skills. In the dedicated PSHCE lessons and also at circle time, pupils have good opportunities to discuss and reflect on society's beliefs and views and to learn the values that have a positive impact on life. They have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are taught to respect the feelings of others and, when required, staff help them think through the consequences of their actions. Good opportunities are provided to understand other people's cultures, faiths and traditions through theme days with a religious focus and other events such as the celebration of Chinese New Year.

Attendance

- Attendance is good and has steadily improved since the school's opening. There have been no exclusions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.9	School data	1.1

National data	8.7	National data	1.7
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The excellent accommodation, including the very good specialist teaching rooms, benefits pupils' learning. The many specialist facilities, such as the excellent hydrotherapy pool and the sensory room, help meet their additional needs very well. Teaching and learning are good and pupils are cared for very well. Many parents and carers make an important contribution to the good progress their children make by following at home the strategies for learning used in the school. The very good links with the two co-located schools provide some pupils with beneficial opportunities for learning in the subjects and, especially, for developing their personal and social skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The good quality of teaching results in good quality learning. Teachers and the teaching assistants know pupils' capabilities, and their difficulties with learning, very well. In most lessons, they use this information well in selecting tasks that are relevant and challenging and in so doing ensure all pupils make equivalently good progress. Good records are kept on pupils' progress in most of the subjects, but this information is not being used well enough to judge the overall effectiveness of the school.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- THE EXCELLENT ACCOMMODATION SUPPORTS THE CURRICULUM AND IN MEETING PUPILS' ADDITIONAL NEEDS.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils help make pupils confident learners.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers and teaching assistants do not use all the additional strategies for communication or new technologies well enough.
- In some subjects, new technologies are not used well enough in supporting teaching and learning.
- The parents and carers of many pupils make a considerable contribution at home to the good progress they make.

Commentary

10. The generous size of the classrooms and the very good number of specialist teaching rooms supports the choice of strategies teachers are able to use in teaching the relevant parts of the National Curriculum and religious education. Some pupils with the most complex learning difficulties require special equipment, for example, to help them stand and soft cushions so that they can be prone when learning. The generous size of the classrooms gives teachers the opportunity to organise their classes, for example, into small groups that work independently with each other without interruption. Teachers have quickly learned to use the space to select, for example, game-playing strategies, role play or to assign small numbers of pupils to their teaching assistants to gain specific instruction. Pupils gain from the many opportunities they are given to take responsibility for their learning, either as individuals or as part of a small group. The specialist rooms also aid pupils' learning. For example, good use is made of the library to develop the skills in investigative learning. In the dedicated music room, keyboards and speakers systems are

permanently laid out. Other rooms, such as the sensory room and the hydrotherapy room, provide excellent support in dealing with pupils' additional difficulties.

11. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning. In most lessons, pupils behave very well and work very hard to do their best. They enjoy doing this because staff make sure learning is fun and, as a consequence, rarely is there a need to remind pupils to attend to their tasks. Their confidence increases when trying new tasks and teachers and teaching assistants are very good at encouraging pupils to try new ventures and to apply their learning in other contexts. Pupils delight in achieving success because they know their teachers and teaching assistants will celebrate with them. Teaching assistants are valued by their teachers. In most lessons, they are deployed well and make a significant contribution to the good standards pupils achieve. They are equally at ease when working with individual pupils, with small groups of pupils or when they support the teaching of the whole class.
12. The school is admitting an increasing number of pupils with complex learning difficulties, including some with autistic spectrum disorders. In any class, the range of pupils' capabilities and the diversity of their learning needs are considerable. Ensuring the learning needs of all pupils are being met all of the time is an ongoing challenge for teachers and teaching assistants, more especially as the pupil number increases to the agreed maximum of 90. To meet this challenge, teachers and teaching assistants are broadening their expertise through training, for example, in the use of additional and augmentative communication techniques, and the specialist procedures of TEACCH. Most are adept at using gestures, symbols, signs and pictures in making sure that all children have equal access to all lesson tasks. In many lessons, new technologies are also used well, for example, in helping pupils make choices or by presenting tasks through computers. In the good and better lessons, teachers succeed in meeting the needs of all pupils over the duration of the lesson. However, in the lessons judged as satisfactory, while the needs of most pupils are met well, occasionally, those with the most complex learning difficulties are not engaged in their learning over the full duration. In these lessons, staff do not use well enough the augmentative and additional communication strategies required in dealing with children with very little speech and language.
13. In a small number of subjects, including English, art and design and music, ICT provides good help in supporting teaching and learning. Most teachers have completed the national training programme and are proficient at using their laptops for lesson planning and record keeping. They have good skills and a good understanding of how computers and peripheral devices, such as smartboards, switches and Big Macs, can help in teaching and learning. Each classroom has at least one computer. In many lessons, pupils move quickly and quietly to the computer, for example, to match sounds to letters in a lesson in English for pupils in Year 1 or to complete repeated addition and subtraction sums in a lesson in mathematics for pupils in Year 3. In the subjects where ICT is not used well, primarily, it is because resources, such as CD-ROMs, are more limited. In these subjects, many opportunities are missed to bring topics alive through animation, sound and colour and in so doing extend pupils' learning experiences beyond those achievable without ICT support. A good start has been made in equipping the school with a wide range of peripheral devices, such as digital cameras, a variety of switches and easy access to the Internet, so that pupils with the most complex special needs gain satisfactory access to their learning through an assorted range of switches and peripheral devices that control lights, sound and

noise and computer screens. However, in most subjects, new technologies are not used sufficiently in supporting teaching and learning.

14. The parents and carers of many pupils make an important contribution to the good progress their children make. This is because the school fully embraces them as partners in its work and many take full advantage of this. The very good communication between staff and parents and carers through, for example, the home-school diaries, frequent meetings and regular telephone conversations, means that they have a detailed knowledge of how well their children are doing. They gain very good guidance on how they can help continue their children's learning at home. For example, they know their children's targets for learning and for personal and social development and many follow the same strategies for promoting these at home that are used in school. Consistency between home and school in dealing, for example, with issues to do with behaviour helps pupils' progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.8%)	13 (37.2%)	15 (42.8%)	6 (17.2%)	0 (0.0%)	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 provides very many high quality learning experiences that include interesting extra-curricular activities. The excellent accommodation includes many specialist rooms for teaching and for meeting pupils' additional needs. The range and quality of resources to support teaching and learning are, generally, good, although some subjects would benefit from a greater range of CD-ROMs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The accommodation and its location provides excellent opportunities for all pupils to gain full access to their learning and have their additional needs met very well. In this, they are helped by the good range of resources to support teaching and learning.
- The personal and social education programme is very well planned and very effective.
- The range of accredited courses in Years 11 to 14 does not meet the needs of all pupils.
- The use of new technologies to improve pupils' directional mobility is not planned well enough.
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' learning opportunities very well.

Commentary

15. Pupils have unrestricted access to the curriculum because of the excellent accommodation and the school's location on a shared campus. The accommodation includes, for example, an excellent hydrotherapy pool, a wide range of specialist teaching rooms, a library, spacious single level access to all parts of the building, joint nursery provision with the mainstream primary school and an excellent sixth form centre. The sporting facilities on the campus shared with the two co-located schools are also excellent. The National Curriculum and religious education and pupils' additional needs, including necessary therapy to support learning and development, are presented with few barriers. Resources to support learning are good. The school has done well in securing resources that match well with pupils' needs and capabilities, given that the number of pupils is steadily increasing. In most subjects,

resources support teaching and learning well, with the exception of computer presented work.

16. Personal, social, health and citizenship education are central to the curriculum. The very good provision available through the discrete lessons and circle time is supported very well by work in lessons in the other subjects, by theme days in religious education, the advice and guidance offered by visiting specialist teachers, but especially by the excellent relationships staff have with pupils. At lunchtimes, the friendliness staff show to pupils helps them gain respect for each other's dignity. Feeding and personal care programmes are carefully managed so that pupils gain as much independence as is possible. The School Council is successful in acting as a voice for pupils. The 'buddy' scheme to support younger pupils at break times also provides very good opportunities for developing personal and social skills of the older pupils by having them take responsibility for others. The oldest pupils take part in the work-related learning programme, which is a rich source for the development of personal and social skills.
17. Because they match with the extent of pupils' learning, the two ASDAN awards, Transition Challenge and Towards Independence, are appropriate and relevant accredited courses for many pupils in Years 11 to 14. However, they are not appropriate for all pupils. For a sizeable minority, they assess learning at too low a level. These pupils are capable of gaining success in some subjects on the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and also at the entry level of the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE). The range of courses for these groups is insufficient to meet all pupils' needs.
18. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are able to make excellent gains, for example, in extending their range of movement and in gaining strength and better co-ordination while in the hydrotherapy pool, but within lessons they are sometimes not fully involved in all lesson tasks because some staff have difficulties in communicating with them using additional and augmentative strategies. Similarly, some of those in wheelchairs are not provided with sufficient guidance in using electronic aids, like switches and joy sticks, to steer their wheelchairs and so improve their mobility and independence skills.
19. The quality and extent of extra-curricular and enrichment activities in the arts and other areas of the curriculum is very good. All pupils have access to the wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, which include art, drama, dance, drumming, circus skills, gardening, music, make it and a girls' club. Visitors include those from theatre groups and Indian dancers. The plays at Christmas and the theme days in religious education also extend the curriculum for pupils. The school is aware of the low status given to the sports and the limited use being made of the excellent sporting facilities on the campus, a situation caused by staff changes now resolved.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, welfare and health and safety is very good. Provision for support, advice and guidance is good and pupils have very good opportunities to present their views and opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils underpin the very high quality of care.

- Individual education plans provide very good guidance for learning and the additional needs of pupils are met very well.
- Specialist teachers and other professionals provide good support for pupils, although insufficient use is made of new technologies in helping pupils communicate and for non-ambulant pupils to learn directional control of motorised mobility.

Commentary

20. Pupils are cared for very well. All pupils are equally valued and staff know their learning and additional needs very well. The excellent relationships staff have with pupils are characterised by trust and respect and the overriding requirements of caring for pupils at all times. Very good arrangements are in place for child protection. The recommendations of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2004) are fully implemented. The statutory requirements for pupils with statements of educational need are met in full. This includes meeting responsibilities to parents and carers, most of whom attend the annual review.
21. The IEPs form very good templates for learning. The targets are well chosen and are known to staff and to most pupils, especially the older pupils. Targets are checked regularly and updated as they are achieved. As pupils move through the years, they take an increasing role in setting new targets, agreeing the criteria for successfully meeting the targets and in helping judge when they are reached. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are looked after very well. They benefit from being able to use the excellent facilities, such as the sensory room and the hydrotherapy pool.
22. Overall, good support is provided by other professionals within education and from Health and Social Services in meeting the wide range of pupils' additional needs. Visiting specialist teachers provide good assessment, support and guidance for pupils with visual or hearing difficulties. The very good programmes devised by the physiotherapists are followed very well by staff to generate increased flexibility and strength leading to improved co-ordination. The good support of the occupational therapists ensures that pupils are better able to attend to their learning through the provision of suitable equipment, such as seating frames. The provision for non-ambulant pupils to use appropriate switches to learn directional control of motorised movement leading to independent mobility is not as good. Provision for speech therapy is good, but the allocation of therapist time has not kept pace with the increasing number of pupils. This limits the extent of liaison and skill-sharing with staff and has had an adverse effect on the communication programmes for some pupils. Pupils who cannot speak, because of the lack of suitable equipment, have difficulty in progressing from simple touch-talkers to more functional alternatives.
23. Social Services provide respite care for families, although parents and carers wish for more. Help to continue pupils' learning during the summer holidays is provided through the summer play scheme. Steps are being taken to ensure that the appropriate people from Social Services attend the transition annual review to help plan for pupils' future needs, especially those for the first year after they leave school. Currently, the nurse linked with the school visits according to requirements. This model for meeting the health needs of pupils is working well at this time because the teaching assistants, especially, have been very well trained in dealing with the routine health-related needs of pupils. However, when the number of pupils grows to the anticipated maximum of 90, it is likely that this model will need to be reviewed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and carers is very good. The links with the wider community are good. The links with the co-located schools are very good. The provision of support and advice to other educational establishments is underdeveloped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good partnership with parents and carers enables many to take a full role in educating and developing their children.
- The good links already established with the local community.
- The outreach provision is not yet part of an LEA programme.
- The very good links that have been quickly established with the co-located mainstream schools.

Commentary

24. The school works very hard to develop close links with parents and carers. They report high levels of satisfaction with the school and considerable trust and confidence in the staff. They are very pleased with the progress their children are making and say that, in part, this is because their children like school and are happy at it. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the leadership and management of the headteacher, the quality of teaching and the fact that all pupils are treated and valued equally, regardless of their difficulties. They agree that the school is open and welcoming, and that they feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns or anxieties they may have. Inspectors agree with the opinions of parents.
25. Parents and carers say they feel very involved in school life, in their children's education and that they are kept well informed about achievements, through letters, newsletters, telephone calls, the home-school diary, open days, the school association, social events and through the formal annual review. The annual report outlining pupils' achievement in the subjects provides a good overview of what pupils know, understand and can do, but not for all subjects. Formal meetings, such as the annual review, and informal events are well attended. During open days, parents and carers respond enthusiastically when they learn along with their children. The school ensures that they have good information on their children's programmes of study and there is a good system to help them record learning at home. The ongoing dialogue with parents and carers is supplemented with an annual survey of views and opinions. There is good evidence to show that the comments of parents and carers are valued and their suggestions are taken very seriously.
26. The headteacher and staff are outward looking and already have established good links with the wider community to extend pupils' learning experiences, for example, through visits to local shops, the railway station, wildlife centres and frequent trips to theatres in Norwich. Regular visitors to the school include a large number of volunteers, the local Member of Parliament, members of the police and of other community services, theatre groups, artists, musicians and on theme days representatives from many different faiths and cultures. At times, such as Christmas, pupils stage performances for old people and others in the community. The school's facilities are regularly used by community groups and pupils from other schools. Play and activity programmes run during school holidays and are attended by some of the pupils.
27. The headteacher's vision includes the development of outreach provision so that the skills and competencies of staff are available to those in the mainstream primary schools of north Norfolk.
28. This provision is at its beginning. The work currently undertaken is highly valued and there is good evidence to show that both the staff and pupils receiving direct help in other schools are benefiting from the support and advice provided. At this time, outreach operates on an ad hoc basis as a service provided voluntarily by staff and not as part of a planned programme supported by the LEA. Without the formal support of the LEA, the vision will not be achieved in full.

29. The benefits of sharing a campus with mainstream secondary and primary schools are not being fully realised. But this is primarily because the school has been sited on the campus for only a short period of time. The links are already very good and many pupils are gaining learning experiences and opportunities to develop their personal and social skills that are not available to those in equivalent schools not located on a shared campus. The headteachers of both schools are fully committed to closer links with Sheringham Woodfields and when the links are fully realised the learning experiences of pupils in each of the three schools will be considerably greater than those gained by pupils in equivalent schools on independent sites.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher has led and managed the change from the old location to the new location very well. The school is calm, ordered and organised because many procedures have been quickly established and are consistently operated by all staff. The newly formed senior management team is very well placed to continue the development of the school and there are no barriers they need overcome. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher inspires staff and pupils to do their best and manages procedures that allow them to routinely achieve this.
- The headteacher's very good leadership includes a clear vision for the future of the school, especially with regard to inclusion.
- Performance management procedures work well for teachers but those for other staff are not as well developed.
- Assessment procedures inform lesson planning very well, but are not being used to compare the standards pupils achieve with those of pupils in other schools.
- The role of governors is underdeveloped.

Commentary

30. The headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and pupils alike. She has made a very good start as a headteacher. Since her appointment, she has led and managed the move to new accommodation with such efficiency that the impact on pupils' learning and their emotional states has been negligible. In this, she has gained considerable support from staff who followed the move, especially the senior managers then in place. From the opening of the school, she has taken great care to establish procedures that allow staff and pupils to do their best. The senior management team is now complete and, working with the headteacher, they need to ensure that the rapid development in the quality of the provision, seen since moving to the new location, continues.
31. The very good management of the headteacher and senior staff ensures that all the work of the school is well organised and the school is becoming increasingly effective in meeting its purpose. Day-to-day it is calm and ordered, with a very positive ethos that is built on the celebration of success. Pupils work hard to do their best, in coping with their difficulties and with their learning, because they enjoy being successful. They feel safe, valued and are happy at school, and this is a strength. They respect and trust staff and have excellent relationships with them and, increasingly, with other pupils. Parents are very appreciative of the sensitive and caring way in which staff deal with their children. They know that their children are happy at school.
32. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school. This includes a seamless link with the co-located mainstream schools to provide curricular

opportunities that are not available in most special schools located on single sites. The inclusion programme is already well established and benefits the learning and personal and social development of a small but increasing number of pupils. The headteacher is correct in recognising that the inclusion programme is now ready to move to the next stage of development, which is likely to include regular meetings of the staff of each of the three co-located schools at senior and co-ordinator levels and more use of the accreditation portfolio already established in the secondary school. The leadership and management skills of the headteacher, the good quality of teachers and teaching assistants and the excellent range of specialist facilities all contribute to making Sheringham Woodfields an ideal partner to function, with the other schools, as an extended school.

33. The performance management procedures are well established for teachers and contribute to securing good quality teaching and learning. They are less formal and so underdeveloped for the teaching assistants. Given the planned growth in pupil numbers and, as a consequence, the possibility of more staff these and the procedures for inducting staff need to be better to ensure the skills of the staff extend to meeting the greater challenge posed by more of pupils.
34. The very good assessment procedures, for example, in the Foundation Stage and for English throughout the school, include recognising the gains pupils make against 'P' Levels and National Curriculum levels. This information, and for the other subjects also, is recorded as end of year attainment in a database that was first formed when the school moved to its new location. Therefore, it includes entries for two years only. At this time, this information is not part of any procedure to judge the progress pupils are making against that of pupils in other equivalent schools. The school is working on this and, as a first step, is setting targets for learning in the subjects. When the target setting procedure is complete and the pupils' progress is benchmarked against those in other schools, then it will be possible to judge how much value the school adds to pupils' learning.
35. Governance is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met. Moving to the new location resulted in the loss of some long-standing governors. The new chairperson is very experienced within education and is very well placed to develop the role of governors to fully meet their brief as 'critical friend'. She knows the school well, shares the headteacher's vision and gives her considerable support. However, she carries too many areas of responsibility, and these are not shared equally among other members. Procedures for independently checking the work of the school are not yet formalised and with a sharp evaluative edge that challenges, questions and yet supports. The development plan is not closely enough meshed with the procedures for school self-review. Governors are not yet fully trained to include guidance for visiting classes and are not yet meeting their role as 'critical friend', especially as the school continues to develop with an increasing number of pupils.
36. Financial planning and accountability are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. A good example of this is the sharing with the other two schools on the campus of the cost of an ICT technician. The school is frustrated in its long-term planning because of the current transitional funding arrangement with the LEA. There has been no recent audit of the school accounts. No money was carried forward into the school's first year at the new location.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	716,402	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	707,351	Balance carried forward to the next year	9,051
Expenditure per pupil	14,736		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

The provision for work-related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New legislation for work-related learning for pupils aged 14 - 19 is not fully implemented.
- Many students are unable to attend college after leaving school because the nearest college is a considerable distance away.
- The good programme of careers guidance.

Commentary

37. The provision for work-related learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11 meets statutory requirements, but the new legislation for work-related learning for pupils over the wider age range of 14 to 19 years, as yet, has not been fully implemented. Pupils, aged 14 to 19 years with the least complex learning difficulties, make good progress in experiencing the world of work. First, they have work experience in school, then in the co-located schools, then when appropriate in well chosen placements in the community. All students attending the sixth form have duties and responsibilities within the centre that are designed to support their work-related learning and to improve their independence skills. As part of the ASDAN syllabus, pupils visit the community to see adults at work. These visits enable those with the most complex learning difficulties to experience vocational education, and become more aware of the roles people play in society. The others learn well about work through, for example, role-play. They also make good progress learning how to prepare for a day at work through practical tasks like packing a bag with items needed for the day ahead. They learn to work with others as members of a team. A mini enterprise programme to extend pupils' team working skills is almost ready.
38. Students who are preparing to leave school travel to a college to attend 'taster' courses, to gain some experience of college life. However, the college is a considerable distance from the school and this means that many students are unable to study there on a regular basis. Pupils do not take part in the vocational courses presented at the co-located secondary school.
39. The new statutory requirement for careers education from Year 7 is being met. From Year 9 onwards, there is a well developed programme of careers education and guidance, and well established links with the Connexions service. The newly appointed assistant headteacher is the co-ordinator for work-related learning. The

different elements currently operating are not yet linked well enough together so that pupils gain a more coherent experience of the world of work.

Sixth form

40. The sixth form opened in a good custom-built building within the boundaries of the mainstream secondary school one year ahead of the rest of the school in October 2002. It had a very good beginning. The initial group of students was served very well by the teacher in charge who quickly established very good routines, procedures and high expectations for learning. He left at Christmas 2004 and was not replaced until the first day of the inspection. During that time, more students joined the sixth form to make up a second class and the staffing arrangement was temporary. The learning and additional needs of the first group of pupils are met very well. This included being able to demonstrate the extent of their learning on ASDAN awards appropriate to their level of learning. This continues to be the case. The new group of students function at a higher level and their curricular needs are not being met as well as the other groups. For example, some have considerable skills and knowledge in ICT, but the only accreditation available to them at this time are ASDAN awards, which assesses them at a level below that at which they operate. They are quite capable of taking other qualifications, possibly the entry level of the GCSE. It is the same in the other subjects. The newly appointed leader knows this and wishes to quickly change the curriculum opportunities for these students so that they gain most benefit from being in the sixth form. Inspectors agree with her and the headteacher that closer links with staff at the secondary school, and the regular inclusion of students into the curriculum and accreditation opportunities already in place in the secondary school, including NVQs, will result in a wider ranging and more relevant curriculum.

Inclusion

41. The headteacher and all staff are committed to including pupils in the work of the co-located mainstream schools as regularly as is required to create curriculum experiences that best fit with pupils' learning and additional needs. A good start has been made, in part because of the shared campus, but also because of the enthusiasm of the headteachers, and many staff of the mainstream schools, to be part of this.
42. Pupils gain experiences of, and take work with, mainstream pupils in a number of ways. They link for primarily social reasons when they attend, for example, Christmas plays and other equivalent events. They join pupils for specific projects, such as the recent art project where 25 pupils worked with mainstream primary pupils. They attend lessons specifically selected to support learning and or personal and social development in subjects that they are very good at, for example, design and technology and history. Finally, some pupils from the other schools visit Sheringham Woodfields to gain specialist tuition in basic skills and to use the specialist facilities. Currently, seven pupils attend lessons on a weekly basis in the primary school and nine do so in the secondary school. They are supported by either the primary or the secondary teaching assistants for inclusion. The visits are managed very well. The work planned by the mainstream teachers is made known to the inclusion assistants who devise differentiated materials and outcomes so that pupils can be fully included in all the lesson tasks. For example, in a history lesson at the secondary school, the worksheet prepared for the mainstream pupils was presented in a mixture of words and symbols so that the included pupil would be able to understand the task and recognise the questions that needed to be answered.

43. Pupils are identified for inclusion by staff, by parents or as a response to the annual review. Targets for the inclusion experience are detailed and are known to all who teach the pupil. Records of the experiences pupils gain and the progress they make are detailed and include successes against the specific targets for inclusion. The records show that pupils enjoy their visits to the other schools and gain considerable benefit from them, both in their learning and in their personal and social development.
44. The shared campus, and the enthusiasm of the headteachers of each of the three schools, is an excellent platform to further develop the inclusion programme to provide very considerable benefit to Sheringham Woodfields pupils, as well as for those in the other schools.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The Foundation Stage has been very well led and managed since its recent opening. The curriculum is organised very well and covers fully all aspects of each of the early learning areas. Its presentation is supported by the very good assessment procedures, which document the progress pupils make against 'P' levels. Pupils gain considerably from joining, on a daily basis, those in the mainstream nursery attached to the school. This is especially so for the development of their social and personal skills. The quality of teaching is very good. With the exception of the outside play area, which is the focus of development, the range and quantity of resources are very good. The children gain particular benefit from the time they spend in the hydrotherapy pool. They are happy to come to school because the relationships they have with the staff are excellent. They are cared for very well because the procedures to ensure their safety and security operate very well. They are becoming confident learners and are as much at ease in the classroom in their own school as they are in the mainstream nursery. Each of the six children on roll has made a very good start to school and their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 - 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading.
- A wide range of approaches is used to promote learning in English.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to judge the progress pupils make against those in other schools.
- Not all staff are confident users of new technologies or of the strategies for additional and augmentative communication.
- There are too few accredited awards that pupils can take, especially for higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

45. Overall, pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve well in speaking and listening and in learning to read, and satisfactorily in writing.
46. Many pupils have severe speech and language difficulties. When they enter school, they are at the very earliest stages of communication, and some have very limited speech. As they move through the school, the highest attaining pupils learn to listen well and they express themselves well by speaking clearly and confidently. By the time they enter the sixth form, or leave school, many speak and listen well enough to give their opinions and ideas to visitors. Their speech and language skills are sufficient for all the situations they encounter. For example, they describe how they are feeling, purchase goods at the local shops, discuss topics of interest to them and are able to

explain their classwork. Those with the most complex learning difficulties make equivalently good progress, especially in responding to and interacting with others, and in extending their ability to concentrate. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and show a good interest in books. For example, younger pupils show their delight in big books, and learn to turn the pages, following the sequence of pictures and the routines of a phonics programme that help them match sounds to letters. Those with the most complex needs show their likes and dislikes by eye movement, vocalisation and by making choices. As they move through the school, the highest attaining pupils retell familiar stories from the books they have read and identify the authors. For example, a Year 9 pupil was able to describe the first meeting of Pip and the convict in *Great Expectations*. In writing, most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Lessons are planned carefully, although, other than in lessons in English, there are few opportunities for pupils to practise the emerging skills of writing. The youngest pupils move their hands to make marks and patterns. The highest attaining pupils in Year 6 write their names and their 'news' in simple sentences with some help. Pupils in Year 9 write poems using symbols and pictures that communicate meaning well. The best writers in Years 10 and 11 develop the length of their sentences, use word processing to draft and redraft their work with a satisfactory awareness of the rules of punctuation.

47. Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons, teachers successfully use a wide range of skills and strategies to meet the varied and complex needs of pupils. They use imaginative approaches and the good quality resources to plan lessons, which interest pupils and in which they work hard. The tasks selected for pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are often sensory based and include experiences such as tasting sweets, ice cream and jelly, for example, to help them understand a story about a world made of nice tasting foods. Most lessons incorporate the recommendations of the National Strategy For Literacy and the learning outcomes are linked to the relevant programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Pupils' very good attitudes to their learning and the excellent relationships they have with staff means that inappropriate behaviour rarely disrupts learning. Drama activities make a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening. Older pupils regularly take part in role playing, for example, to understand the feelings of the main characters in stories and poems. In a lesson on war poetry, pupils in Year 11 gained from taking part in a 'soldiers' parade' and packing as though they were leaving for the war front. During discussion at the end of the lesson, it was clear that many pupils recognised some of the feelings those who did go to war might have had by using words such as 'shocked', 'brave', 'scared', and 'lonely'. The procedures for assessing the gains pupils make work well, although end of year records are not compared for different groups of pupils within the school or against those of pupils in other schools.
48. Special events, such as Book Week, raise the profile of reading. Parents and staff read poems and stories and pupils enjoy the visits of storytellers and illustrators. Augmentative and additional communication strategies such as signing and symbols systems, pictures and sensory materials and the use of new technologies are, generally, being used well by many staff in helping those with the most complex learning difficulties gain access to their learning. Switches and software help pupils take a full part in lessons, but not all staff are confident users of new technologies or in using all of the additional strategies. Because of this, in a small number of lessons, the learning needs of those with the most complex difficulties are not always met in full.
49. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard and has gained good help from specialist advisors in adapting schemes of work to meet pupils' changing needs. The curriculum, the effectiveness of teaching and the progress of

pupils are all regularly checked. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 show the extent of their learning by taking ASDAN modules. This is an appropriate award for many pupils, but not for all. The best at English are capable of taking higher level awards, even the entry level of the GCSE.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. A good range of opportunities is made available for pupils to develop and apply their language and literacy skills in the lessons in the other subjects and throughout the school day. In part, this is because staff have been trained well in providing additional support for literacy. This shows, for example, through the consistent use of writing frames, which help pupils record what they have learned. Some staff, although not all, have good skills over the full range of additional strategies that help them communicate with pupils through signs, symbols, pictures and by using gestures. Also, the generous staff - pupil ratio means that staff are able to spend more time communicating with pupils as individuals or in small groups than is the case in many equivalent schools. Besides giving pupils opportunities to practise the skills of communication, this helps them gain confidence as speakers and listeners.

French

51. No teaching was observed and no judgement is possible on how well pupils are doing. There is no co-ordinator for the subject, although one of the newly appointed assistant headteachers is taking this responsibility. Long-term planning is based around the ASDAN syllabus and is linked to a commercial scheme of work. Photographic evidence and class records show that pupils work hard and enjoy the lesson activities. In Years 7 to 9, lessons focus on speaking French, for example, in learning to greet each other, count and recognise colours and food types. In Years 10 and 11, pupils complete a module of French in the summer term. They extend their conversational skills and write simple sentences with the help of sentence frames. Resources are satisfactory. There is an adequate range of sensory materials to stimulate tactile experiences and a good supply of music CDs and tapes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too little use is made of new technologies in supporting teaching and learning.
- The good procedures for recognising pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy learning mathematics and work hard to do their best.
- Too little use is made of ICT in supporting teaching and learning.

Commentary

52. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding and use of mathematics as they move through the school. Younger pupils, for example, demonstrate a growing awareness of the relevance of number in daily activities and begin to recognise basic shapes and understand simple comparisons. By Year 11, the highest attaining pupils count and read numbers very well and apply the four basic calculations accurately to social situations, such as shopping and travelling. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties explore objects with sustained

concentration. They anticipate, follow and join in familiar mathematical activities, such as number songs.

53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the very best lessons, there is an expectation of good behaviour and communication. Teachers plan in great detail, provide well-timed changes of activity, use clear unambiguous instructions and signing in promoting learning. Skilful questioning extends pupils' understanding and reasoning. Assessment procedures are good and are used well in planning lessons so that new learning is steadily built on prior learning. Teaching assistants make a consistent and valuable contribution to pupils' learning by helping ensure that all pupils are included in all lesson tasks. In the less successful lessons, teachers talk at pupils too much, some activities are not well matched to the different learning needs of pupils and the end part of lessons are too rushed and not used effectively to reinforce learning. Information and communication technology is underused in supporting teaching and learning.
54. Pupils have good attitudes towards learning mathematics and enjoy applying their learning in the lessons in the other subjects. Routinely, they behave very well, concentrate well and work hard. The excellent relationships staff have with pupils help pupils in their learning and in developing their personal and social skills, for example, when they work in pairs or in small groups. As a result, older pupils collaborate well with each other, take turns and share equipment well and value each other's ideas.
55. One of the newly appointed assistant headteachers has specialist training in mathematics. He is assuming responsibility for co-ordinating the subject. The quality of teaching and learning should be checked and the planning documents improved by including the recommendations of the National and Key Stage 3 Strategy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. While there were good examples of numeracy skills been reinforced in other areas of the curriculum, for example, counting in music and using mathematical language and shapes in design and technology, these experiences are not routinely planned into the lessons in the other subjects. A policy for using mathematical skills across the curriculum is a required first step in ensuring that teachers regularly use the opportunities in their lessons to apply and to reinforce pupils' mathematical knowledge.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils across the full range of learning needs make good progress in National Curriculum science and achieve well.
- Teachers make good use of resources to provide plenty of practical tasks and investigations to motivate pupils and meet their different learning needs, although some of the language used is sometimes too complicated for the less able.
- There is no science accreditation for the older pupils, and the quality of day-to-day assessment is inconsistent.
- The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is leading developments with commitment and enthusiasm.

Commentary

57. Over all the Year groups, pupils achieve well in science. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties make good progress because they are taught predominantly through sensory approaches. They use taste, touch, smell and vision, for example, to learn about colours, light and dark, weight and density and gravity. The highest attaining pupils make good progress over all topics. For example, in materials in Year 2, they observe how ice changes into water. By Year 6, they have learned the scientific language for freezing and melting and by Year 9, they know that ice is solid, water is liquid and heat will melt ice. By the end of Year 11, they name examples of materials that are solid, liquid or gas. They progress well from observing investigations in Year 2 to setting up experiments in Year 11 and recording their investigations, through completing a mix of symbols and writing. These pupils are not able to demonstrate the full extent of their learning on an appropriate examination because they can take only the ASDAN award, which is set at too low a level for their learning.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is good. No teacher has specialist training in the subject, but all make good use of planning documents of good quality. The very good range and quantity of resources, and the excellent specialist accommodation help teachers in providing work that is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils. For example, in the primary years, they learn about animals by feeling fur, feathers and animal toys and by pressing switches to hear animal sounds. By contrast, the highest attaining pupils in the same class find pictures of animals from the computer to print out, label and sort into groups. In their work on the planets, pupils in Years 7 to 9 with the most complex learning difficulties enjoy the sensory experience of making model planets out of papier-mâché. The highest attaining pupils use a good range of resources, models and videotapes to investigate the position of different planets from the sun. Although those with the most complex needs enjoy generally good experiences of science by using their senses and by taking part in many practical tasks, sometimes the language teachers use is too complicated.
59. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. End of year assessment records extend over the two years of the school's existence and are not sufficient, as yet, in helping set targets or to compare the progress made by different groups of pupils. Some teachers are very good at recording pupils' progress from week to week, but this is not the case for all. In some classes, there are gaps in pupils' records, too little photographic evidence and commentaries that do not include information on the level of support a pupil received in completing a task. The new subject co-ordinator is aware of the inconsistent way in which teachers assess progress and has plans to regularise this.
60. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed co-ordinator and the former co-ordinator work well as a team. Planning is good, and is based on the national guidelines. The monitoring of teaching, the assessment procedures, and the use of ICT in supporting teaching and learning are areas for continuing development to ensure that all of the work is as good as the best practice.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with the best achievement in the subject are capable of gaining higher nationally accredited awards beyond the ASDAN award available at present.
- Teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to the progress made by pupils with the most complex learning difficulties.
- Too little use is made of ICT in enabling pupils without speech or who are non-ambulant to develop the skills of alternative communication and independent mobility.

- The lack of a co-ordinator and too little monitoring of pupils' learning disadvantages their progress.
- In too many subjects, ICT is not used sufficiently in supporting teaching and learning.

Commentary

61. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not have discrete lessons in ICT, although they make satisfactory progress in achieving individual targets in ICT in the lessons in other subjects. Those with the most complex learning difficulties gain from using the good range of switches to activate programmes and equipment, for example, in the sensory room and in the hydrotherapy pool.
62. Pupils from Year 7 make satisfactory progress in their discrete lessons. By the time they reach Year 11, the most able pupils are able to control computers confidently through the mouse and keyboard. They use programmes for word-processing, publishing, database management and the Internet to create and edit their own files. They use hand-held scanners of the computerised library system without help in taking out and returning books. They operate radio, televisions and video players and music centres for tapes and CDs. However, they are capable of gaining success on nationally accredited awards that are more demanding than the ASDAN award, the only award available at present. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties make good progress in using switches in operating sound and visual effects and equipment, such as food mixers.
63. Generally, teachers without specialist initial training in the subject teach lessons. Many have gained a good range of in-service training, including completing the national training programme. They are supported in their work by a technician appointed jointly with the co-located schools. This means that the equipment is kept in good order, but teachers are missing the specialist guidance required to help them in teaching the scheme of work and in using equipment and programs new to them.
64. The good work of the teaching assistants enables pupils with the most complex learning difficulties to master the control of simple switches in taking increasing control of their learning.
65. There is no co-ordinator for ICT and no procedures for monitoring the quality of the provision, although these shortcomings will shortly be rectified. At this time, it is especially difficult to judge the progress made by pupils in Years 6 and below who learn about ICT in the lessons in the other subjects. The scheme of work is good and the sensory and hydrotherapy rooms provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn to use many switches in locations which stimulate and excite them. The school has rightly identified a need to continue to develop the skills of teachers and teaching assistants in using new technologies in supporting teaching and learning across the curriculum and in helping pupils become increasingly independent as learners, especially those who need to use wheelchairs.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The range of switches and peripheral devices, such as digital cameras, is wide. Most pupils use these well to gain full access to most of the lesson tasks. However, the needs of the pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are not always fully met. For example, because of the paucity of voice boxes and other devices to aid communication, some do not communicate as well, or as frequently, as they should. Also, there are too few devices to enable non-ambulant pupils to control motorised aids.
67. Generally, teachers make very good use of digital cameras to record pupils' achievements and to provide good evidence of progress. They also make very good use of computers and the Internet in planning the curriculum and lessons. In the lessons in English, art and design and music, new technologies are used well in supporting teaching and learning, although this is not the case in the other subjects.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

68. These subjects were sampled, and so no judgement on the quality of the provision in history and geography can be made. However, for both subjects, it is clear that pupils experience a good range of topics from the relevant programmes of study.
69. In **history**, the youngest pupils learn about Florence Nightingale and show an interest and some understanding of her life. Older pupils have a good understanding of the present and past in their own lives and in the lives of others through learning about, for example, life in Victorian times and World War II. They have a good understanding of chronology and accurately place important events and objects in order. In **geography**, teachers use topical international events and local news to stimulate learning. For example, projects on coastal erosion, a topic of great local concern, are completed by comparing the features of urban and coastal areas. International events, such as the recent Tsunami, have been studied by older pupils. They related the effects of this natural disaster to everyday lives and imagined what would happen to their school if it were swept away by a tidal wave.
70. Regular visits to places of local interest, such as local museums and coastal sites to see the effects of erosion, benefit learning by making it relevant to pupils. Visitors, such as those from the 'Living History' association, do likewise and bring topics to life, such as the effect of World War II on the local area. Role play is used well in helping make learning real. For example, pupils gain from dressing up as 'evacuees' and take a journey on a steam train to gain an understanding of what it must have been like for the children who were evacuated from the major cities. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to learn history and geography by following modules of the ASDAN award.
71. Both subjects are led and managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has a good vision for the future development of both subjects. She provides useful guidance to staff on matters of content and on the resources available in helping teach different topics. Long and medium-term plans emphasise how the development of new skills and knowledge should be built on prior learning and show good coverage of the relevant programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Resources to support teaching and learning in both subjects are satisfactory and include a good range of sensory materials and useful artefacts. Too little use, however, is made of ICT in supporting teaching and learning in the lessons in both subjects. For example, there are too few CD-ROMs to stimulate and extend learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

72. Religious education was sampled so no judgement can be made on the quality of the provision.
73. The analysis of written work, photographic evidence and discussions with staff confirm that pupils enjoy learning religious education. There are no regular timetabled lessons. Rather, pupils take part in three theme days each year and fully celebrate the Christian festival of Christmas by, for example, performing in a nativity play and by singing carols. The theme days this year have been on Hinduism for pupils in Years 1

to 6 and Buddhism and Judaism for the older pupils. Besides providing good information on each faith and meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, they are also used well in increasing pupils' cultural awareness. For example, primary-aged pupils wore saris, ate Indian food and decorated their hands with Mendhi patterns during the Hindi theme day.

74. The school has judged that organising theme days of activities is a more effective way to promote learning than is the case for regularly timetabled lessons each week. The result of this is that the amount of taught time for religious education is shorter than is the case for pupils in many equivalent schools. Each class teacher receives good guidance from the co-ordinator on the activities that may make up a theme day. Even so, maintaining continuity in learning and ensuring learning is progressive is more difficult when the subject is studied for one day a term. Because of this, there is too little evidence to judge the quality of teaching. As there are no formal assessment procedures to judge learning and the progress pupils make, assessment is unsatisfactory. The range of written work and photographic evidence in pupils' files does not reflect in full their learning over each theme day. As a consequence, too much anecdotal evidence is included in annual reports and too little information is given on what pupils understand and know about religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

75. Too little evidence was gathered in design and technology to judge the quality of the provision. There is no co-ordinator, but the planning documents are good and show satisfactory coverage of the main elements of design and technology, i.e. food studies, resistant materials and textiles. The quantity, range and quality of resources to support teaching and learning are also good. The subject offers good opportunities for inclusion with both the co-located schools and one pupil is doing particularly well in the lessons he is taking at the secondary school. The lunchtime Make It club is a very good opportunity for pupils to practise the skills of cutting and fixing materials and other essential skills. The absence of a co-ordinator, soon to be rectified, disadvantages the quality of the provision and limits the potential for development.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well over a broad range of artwork.
- The strong ethos for art and design is visible in the displays around the school.
- Leadership and management are very good and the procedures for recognising the progress pupils make.
- The best at art and design are capable of gaining success on more demanding nationally-accredited awards.

Commentary

76. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve very well. The youngest pupils show a good level of independence in completing tasks according to their needs and capabilities. Older pupils plan their work very well in model making and can select appropriate materials. Pupils make good progress in cutting and fixing skills. By the end of Year 9, completed work and pupils' records of achievement show very good progress in knowledge and skills across a broad range of

activities. These include printing, pattern making, using and exploring a wide range of media, modelling, sculpting and decorating and photography. Pupils develop a very good understanding of the use of colour, including how different colours can represent emotion. They are very good at using a range of techniques in creating abstract pictures and learn to produce their own work in the style of famous artists. In Years 10 and 11, they learn the importance of sketching work when, for example, they produce matchstick drawings of animals to represent cave paintings and learn to use different styles, such as Egyptian, for decoration.

77. Very well planned and progressive experiences and the displays of pupils' work around the school have established a strong ethos of very good achievement in art and design. This has been built on by the presentation of work in a school exhibition.
78. Leadership and management are very good and the co-ordinator has excellent vision for the future of the subject. The scheme of work established for all years is very well thought out. It is based on pupils achieving maximum independence in using brushes, tools and equipment and in gaining skills and knowledge as well as an understanding of a very wide range of artwork. The result is that pupils gain a broad and progressive experience of art and design. They achieve accreditation for their work through completing the appropriate ASDAN module, but many pupils are capable of achieving success on a more demanding award. The very good assessment procedures provide help in lesson planning and judge attainment through 'P' levels and National Curriculum levels. Although, as yet, there is no comparative assessment with other schools, the present procedures are substantial enough to allow the setting of accurate targets for learning, as a first step in judging the quality of work against that achieved by pupils in other schools.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in music.
- The very good quality of teaching makes very good use of ICT.
- There are very good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Leadership and management are very good, and ensure all pupils having a very broad experience of listening to, making and performing music.

Commentary

79. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve very well. The youngest begin to learn about music by listening thoughtfully and by relating musical sounds to concepts such as 'big', 'slow', 'small' and 'quick'. They use percussion instruments to reproduce sounds and they move to the tempo of the music by copying the movements of animals, such as elephants and birds. Having experience of many musical instruments helps them gain a very good knowledge of how musical sounds are made. For example, by the time they are in Year 7, most pupils know and identify the sounds of string, brass, wind and percussion instruments. New technologies, especially electronic keyboards, are used very well in composing and performing music. For many pupils, the lunchtime instrumental sessions and the weekly after-school Drummers Club provide excellent opportunities to practise their skills and extend their learning. Also, pupils are able to practise their skills and enjoy making music when they take part in the school concerts and other performances.
80. The quality of teaching is very good. It is characterised by very good planning, the skilful way in which the teacher plays many instruments and the regular opportunities pupils have to be active in their learning. For example, pupils have many opportunities to play instruments and to use the backing sounds of electronic keyboards in supporting their compositions. Teaching

assistants are deployed very well. They are very effective in ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in all lesson tasks.

81. Music is led and managed very well. The very good scheme of work helps in planning lessons so that new learning is built on prior learning. The co-ordinator has high expectations for learning. In lessons, these are most often met in full because the sensible selection of tasks results in pupils learning by making music according to the capabilities. Progress is recorded very well and this information is used well in helping plan future lessons. The range and quality of resources, including electronic equipment such as key boards and amplifiers, is very good. These are set up very well in the dedicated music room. The very good quality of provision has been recognised by the Arts Council for England through the award of the Artsmark Certificate.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well over the full range of the subject.
- The very good facilities, the teamwork of staff and the very good quality of their demonstration make significant contributions to pupils' good progress.
- The enjoyment pupils gain from lessons is a strength.
- The absence of a co-ordinator disadvantages the development of the subject.

Commentary

82. Pupils achieve well over all the years. Younger pupils make good gains in confidence in controlling their pace and use of space as they move around the large hall. They increase their strength and co-ordination through jumping and hopping because of good demonstrations by the teacher and routine encouragement of the teaching assistants. Pupils with the most complex learning difficulties experience the sensation of buoyancy and freedom of movement as they relax in the warm water of the hydrotherapy pool. The relationships they have with those who support them in the pool are based on absolute trust and because of this they confidently try new activities that lead to an increase in the range and quality of their movement. Pupils have regular opportunities to swim and many gain distance awards of the Amateur Swimming Association. Older pupils follow the ASDAN module in sports and leisure, and learn about the main sports and activities.
83. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are characterised by the teachers' enthusiasm and the excellent quality of relationships. Pupils feel secure in all the lessons in physical education and willingly take part in all the activities. Lessons are structured well, beginning with warm-up sessions and ending with cool-down time. All adults involved in the lessons are very good role models for the subject because of the way they dress and the quality of their demonstrations. The very good teamwork between teachers and the teaching assistants, and the very good quality of the inside and outside teaching areas, characterise teaching. In the lessons judged to be satisfactory, the pace of activities was too slow and there was too little emphasis on ensuring high quality in movement and posture.
84. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and sustain a good level of active involvement. They dress appropriately, listen carefully to instructions and work hard to

improve their performance. The subject offers excellent opportunities, not fully realised, for pupils to be included in the lessons in the co-located schools.

85. The absence of a specialist co-ordinator who will bring and maintain rigour, quality and high standards to this subject, disadvantages development of the subject. For example, pupils can no longer benefit from using the trampoline because no one is sufficiently qualified to take the sessions. Lessons in physical education link well with many aspects of the curriculum, particularly PSHCE and science. Lunchtime clubs, for example, the dance club and inter-school sports competitions in swimming and football provide pupils with very good opportunities to extend their learning and to enjoy competition. The good scheme of work and assessment procedures offer clear guidance and support in planning and teaching lessons for teachers with no specialist experience of physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for personal and social development permeates all the work of the school and is supported very well in the lessons in the other subjects.
- The very careful planning of lessons contributes to teaching being very good.
- The excellent relationships between pupils and staff underpins all the work in PSHCE.

Commentary

86. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social skills and in becoming as independent as is possible.
87. Promoting pupils' personal and social skills, including their ability to communicate, is a primary aim of the curriculum and permeates all the work of the school. In the discrete lessons in PSHCE, pupils learn about issues that are important to them as they grow up, for example, the need to stay healthy and safe. The links made with lessons in science and physical education especially reinforce issues to do with relationships and the need for a healthy life style.
88. But the most important contributor to the very high quality of the provision for PSHCE is the excellent relationships that pupils develop with staff. Staff are friendly and caring. They are excellent role models and routinely encourage pupils to do their best. They celebrate good achievement quickly and warmly. By recognising even their smallest successes, they take every opportunity to increase pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. Lunchtimes, breaktimes and when pupils make visits to the sensory room, and especially the hydrotherapy room, are all used excellently by staff to encourage pupils to work hard as individuals and with each other. Those who take lessons in the co-located schools gain from the very close and supportive relationships they have with the link tutors. They become increasingly confident knowing that they are doing well in their lessons. Being able to spend part of their week with pupils in the other schools provides specific, powerful and excellent opportunities to develop personal and social skills.

89. The expectations for behaviour are very high. The procedures for helping pupils improve their behaviour also work very well because they consistently implement them and provide very clear guidelines on what is right and wrong and what is acceptable. Targets for personal and social skills in IEPs are well thought out and the strategies designed to help pupils achieve their targets are implemented consistently by all staff. Many pupils make especially good progress towards their targets because their parents and carers diligently apply the same procedures at home.
90. Leadership and management are very good. Parents are of the opinion that the way in which the school helps their children become as mature, responsible and as independent as possible, is a strength. Inspectors are of the same opinion.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	3

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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).

Note: Two assistant headteachers joined the staff on the first day of the inspection. Therefore, this judgement relates to the senior management team who oversaw the move to the new location and the time up to the inspection.