

INSPECTION REPORT

**STRETTON COMMUNITY SPECIAL SCHOOL
FEDERATION**
(Formerly Stretton Brook School and Crown School)
Burton on Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124505

Headteacher: Mrs J. Harris

Lead inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th April 2005

Inspection number: 274149

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:	4 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	204
School address:	Bitham Lane Stretton Burton on Trent Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B. Gretton
Date of previous inspections:	12/10/1998 (Stretton Brook) 28/2/2000 (Crown School)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is one of Staffordshire's newly formed federated special schools, and is a partnership between two schools located on adjacent sites. They were both all aged schools for pupils with special educational needs. However, each school previously catered for pupils with different learning needs; one being a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and formally known as Stretton Brook, and the other catering for pupils with profound or severe learning difficulties (PLMD or SLD). The latter, known as Crown School, also educated pupils with different degrees of autism (ASD) including some with very challenging behaviour.

The purpose of each site has changed. Since January 2005, reception and primary aged pupils have been educated on the Crown School site, while the secondary aged pupils and the Post 16 students are now educated on Stretton Brook site. However, because of a shortage of space in the secondary school, some pupils in Years 10, 11 and Post 16 are currently being taught in the primary school building. Both schools now educate pupils with a very wide range of special educational needs and attainment on entry is well below average. These include MLD, SLD, ASD, or PMLD, or speech and language difficulties. A few pupils have sensory disabilities or social, behaviour and emotional difficulties. Approximately a half of the pupils have moderate or severe learning difficulties, while a third have speech and language difficulties, and over a third are autistic. Some of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Due to the complexity of the provision the pupils have been arranged into classes according to their priority needs and within age groups. The school also manages a specialist unit for pupils who exhibit severe challenging behaviour. This is one of three similar units within the authority and is located in a separate building on the Crown site. There are seven pupils in this unit from both the primary and secondary phases of education. In addition, there is a small inclusion unit in the secondary school where pupils who have been excluded or are in danger of being excluded, or have a record of long term absence from mainstream schools are educated.

A total of 204 pupils attend the school. There are five children in the reception year, 24 in Years 1 and 2, 50 in Years 3 to 6, 59 in Years 7 to 9 and 46 in Years 10 and 11. At Post 16 (Years 12 and 13) there are 20 students. Pupils predominately come from Burton on Trent but some pupils travel from more distant areas, such as Uttoxeter. Approximately ten percent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistani. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, and overall this is average. The school has an active Sportsmark.

For ease of reading and purposes of the report, the educational provision is referred to as: the 'primary school' (Reception to Year 6), and the 'secondary school' (Years 7 to 11, and Post 16) throughout the report. Pupils in reception to Year 6 are referred to as 'primary aged' pupils, while pupils in Years 7 to 11 are referred to as 'secondary aged' pupils. Pupils at Post 16 are identified as 'students'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. D. Gander	Lead inspector	Art , Provision for Post 16, work related curriculum, English as an additional language
14066	Ms G. Hoggard	Lay inspector	
27058	Ms K. Cannon	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, religious education
16198	Ms C. Etherington	Team inspector	English, modern foreign language
32963	Ms J. Lock	Team inspector	Science, geography, music
27429	Mrs M. Smith	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, design and technology, special educational needs
19368	Mr T. Watts	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Even though the school has recently gone through a great many changes it is continuing to improve and is presently satisfactory. These changes have been effectively and sensitively managed, and therefore they have not had a detrimental effect on the quality of educational provision, and care and welfare of pupils. A working partnership between the staff from the two original schools is emerging, but is in the early stages of being a whole school co-ordinated approach. An appropriate and high priority has been placed on ensuring that teachers have the skills to teach pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. As a result, teaching is therefore consistent across the two sites. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and staff, and the high emphasis on personal and social development, result in pupils who achieve well and who are confident to move to the next stage of education or training. Because of the complicated funding arrangements that exist it is not possible to make a judgement on value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching is good and is consistent across the school.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The work related curriculum and preparation for further training is very good.
- The headteacher's approach to managing change is good, and is focusing on supporting staff and building effective teams.
- The relationships, behaviour and attitudes shown by pupils are very good. In these new learning environments they demonstrate high levels of tolerance for others.
- There is a consistent approach to care and welfare across the whole school. It is firmly based on the concern staff have for pupils' well-being.
- The present situation of the school having two budgets does not allow the governors to strategically plan in an efficient and effective way.
- The co-ordinators are not yet monitoring and evaluating aspects of their subjects.
- The accommodation at both sites does not meet the needs of pupils.
- The assessment of pupils' achievements is too complex and does not provide enough information to track progress or for teachers to use in planning.

Due to the changes made to the school it is not appropriate or possible to comment on improvements since the last inspections of the two schools in 1998 and 2000.

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	Good
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good
Year 13	Good	Very good

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

Overall, pupils and students are achieving well, especially where teachers have developed specialist expertise in meeting the different learning needs of pupils, or where they are teaching their specialist subject. However, sometimes where accommodation is inadequate pupils' overall achievements in a subject are affected. This is especially so in art, design and technology, and music in the secondary school. Although the number of children in the reception class is large,

they achieve well due to the very good organisation and separate planning for each individual child. A similar situation exists at Post 16, where all students' present and future needs are planned for at an individual level, although the placing of one group of these students in the primary school undermines their opportunities to work and mix with other Post 16 students in the school. The exceptionally good planning, teaching and organisation overrides the inadequacies of their accommodation. There are no differences in the achievements of pupils with differing special educational needs, or by pupils with English as an additional language. The inclusion unit in the secondary school is successful and pupils make significant progress, as do autistic pupils across the school. Pupils' personal qualities are improved very well through the overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Amidst all the changes the school is providing a satisfactory quality of educational provision. A concentrated effort has gone into ensuring that all teachers can meet the needs of all pupils, and as a result teaching is good overall, with many examples very good teaching. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets all statutory requirements, and is supported by a range of additional opportunities. There are good links with colleges, but opportunities for pupils to experience education at other schools are not well enough developed, especially for secondary pupils. Care and welfare are very good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are good overall, but they could be more aware of their targets. The accommodation does not meet the needs of pupils and is unsatisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership provided by the headteacher for bringing about the considerable changes to the school has been good. The management of change has been well paced and supportive to staff, parents and pupils. The roles and responsibilities of staff are very new and teamwork is still developing, and is satisfactory. The very recently formed governing body is providing satisfactory governance, but some their long term planning is hampered by the financial systems imposed on the school. During this period of change the governors have not been able to ensure that statutory targets for the school have been set.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Even though the educational provision has undergone some great changes, parents are very positive about it. They report that high expectations are set, and that their children achieve well because of the dedicated and caring staff. Concerns were raised by a few parents regarding the care and inclusion opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This was investigated and the team found that the quality of education and care is currently satisfactory. Pupils report that they enjoy their time in school and the activities that the school provides for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Create a situation whereby governors can manage the budget of the school more efficiently and effectively, and so they can be more proactive in their strategic planning.
- Involve co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating aspects of their subjects so that there is consistency in planning and an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of standards across the school.
- Provide appropriate accommodation for particular subjects and groups of pupils.
- Develop a system whereby the learning outcomes of lessons can be assessed, along with the targets on IEPs, in order to provide information to track progress and set targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

It is not appropriate to compare the provision in this school with the provision in the two schools at the time of the last inspection as it is an entirely different establishment.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils across the school, and of differing special educational needs, achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils are achieving well, especially by Year 11 when they gain a range of relevant accreditation.
- Overall achievement for secondary aged pupils in art, design technology, and music is affected by the lack of accommodation.
- Children in the reception class achieve well due to the very good organisation and separate planning for each individual child.
- The exceptionally good planning, teaching and organisation for Post 16 students overrides the inadequacies of the accommodation, although the placing of one group of these students in the primary school undermines their opportunities to work and mix with other Post 16 students in the school.
- The most able pupils achieve very well in physical education.

Commentary

1. The school now offers a wider range of accreditation for pupils in Year 11 and at Post 16. They gain recognition of their achievements through General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Entry Level GCSE Award, as well as the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), and the Accreditation for Living and Learning (ALL) Award.

Awards for Year 2004	Subject	Pupils numbers	Grade
GCSE	Maths	1	C
		2	F
		2	G
		2	U
AQA units	English	4	
Entry Level	Science	3	Level 3
	Science	7	Level 2
	Science	3	Level 1
Entry Level	ICT	2	Level 3
	ICT	7	Level 2

The good results have been achieved because of the expectations that teachers have for pupils and also because the pupils are matched to the most relevant or appropriate course. Individual teacher's knowledge of pupils, their subject knowledge, along with the good assessment (which is part of all accredited courses) ensures that pupils are successful. The school has developed some links with mainstream schools for pupils who have been identified as having high ability in a particular subject. This is an emerging development and a few older pupils are attending a local secondary school on a part time basis so as to follow GCSE courses in mathematics, art and design, English, and ICT. Early evaluation of the initiative shows that this is successful for these pupils. There are plans in the new federated status of the school to expand these opportunities.

2. The overall achievements of pupils in some subjects in the secondary school are affected by the lack of specialist accommodation. This is especially so in art and design, design and technology,

and in music. The curriculum offered in these 3 subjects is narrow and therefore does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to achieve as well as they might. In addition, the lack of accommodation means that the school cannot offer these subjects as options for accreditation to pupils in Years 10 and 11, or at Post 16. There has been an attempt to overcome this in art and design by linking in with a neighbouring high school so that one pupil can study the subject for Year 11 accreditation.

3. Children in the reception class achieve well and make good progress. This is because staff work closely together in the organisation and planning of the activities, and in the assessment of children's progress. Children's individual targets are clearly written, and are closely based on the day-to-day checking of children's progress. Decisions are taken by the staff concerning the following day's activities and how they will be taught. All staff are able to ensure that no matter what the children's learning difficulties are they can all access the activities and make progress. This enables children to move towards a more structured curriculum, such as the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies when they are ready.

4. Students in both of the two Post 16 groups achieve well. The management has had difficult decision to make concerning the makeup of the two groups, especially in the relation to the space available, the numbers and the educational needs of the students. The current grouping of the students by educational need is very appropriate. Students within each group have similar long term learning targets, and teachers construct learning opportunities at an individual level. For example, some higher attaining pupils have access to local high school courses, along with college link courses, work experience and independent learning. They also run their mini-enterprise project, called The Playground Theatre Company, at a very professional level. Students with more complex learning needs have been grouped together and their future learning needs are very much the focus of the content of their curriculum, such as decision making and basic skills for living in a community. The success of both groups is due to the use of staff who are each very skilled in teaching students with different learning needs and by using a more adult approach to learning. The accommodation in which the students are working should have more of a detrimental impact on their learning. In the secondary building the classroom they have is small, and makes group work or individual work very difficult to carry out. However, the staff have arranged the activities so they can use other rooms that are available in the school, such as the information and communication technology room (ICT) and the food technology room. Although the students with the greatest learning needs are based in the primary school, and this does not give them opportunities to mix socially with students of the same age, the space allocated to them is very appropriate. It is large, and has different areas, which are used well to support different activities, such as daily living skills, ICT and Art. Due to this careful planning and consideration of how to make the best use of the resources, and the good deployment of staff, the students achieve well.

5. Some pupils, mainly the most able pupils, achieve very well in physical education (PE), especially their attitudes and knowledge of the subject, as well as improving their skills in individual activities. They become enthusiastic about sport, and develop a deep enjoyment of physical activities and sport in general. Many of their successes are recognised in certification through nationally organised agencies, with older pupils and students gaining Junior Sports Leader awards. This achievement is due to enthusiasm of the specialist teacher, and the overall very good teaching by all staff who are involved in the subject. The lessons are very well planned, with clear targets for each pupil. The good achievement is very well supported by the out-of-hours programme where a large number of pupils participate in well-organised clubs. These clubs are community as well as school based, and pupils are often coached by specialist coaches. However, this achievement is not uniform across the school as there is less out of school activities made available for pupils who are the least able, and they do not have the same opportunity to succeed.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to work and learning, and their behaviour in are good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is overall satisfactory, and it is good for social and moral development. Attendance is good and better at Post-16. Punctuality is very good at both sites.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are positive and enthusiastic about their learning.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are very good.
- The school expects high standards of behaviour.
- The school places a great importance in developing social and independence skills.
- Cultural development is good, but spiritual awareness in assemblies could be improved.
- Attendance is good, and punctuality is very good across the school.

6. Pupils and students indicate that they are happy at school, and speak positively about their achievements. This is obvious from the enthusiastic engagement they show in lessons, and in group work and discussions. They relate well to school staff, and know and adhere to the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This strongly influences pupils' attitudes to learning. Relationships are a strength of the school, and amidst all the changes an ethos of harmony and trust has been created. This is because the staff are aware of how change can upset vulnerable children, especially pupils who are resistant to change. Pupils are eager to show their work to visitors, and are confident enough to invite them to be included in aspects of the lesson.

7. Behaviour, despite the fact that the school now has more children with potentially disruptive behaviour on both sites, is generally good. Exclusions are rare. The staff expect high standards of behaviour and pupils accept the recognised boundaries. This significantly supports their personal development and their awareness of right and wrong. Lunch and break times are well organised sociable occasions, with pupils being respectful towards staff and supporting each other very well. On both sites, there is an obvious tolerance shown by more able pupils for those who need more help and understanding. This ethos of care has been created in a short time. For example, when one pupil became distressed at falling over in the playground, several of his peers immediately rushed to help him. The concerns shown by some parents in the questionnaire returns about disruptive behaviour were not observed during the inspection. Pupils on both sites were polite, respectful to visitors and teachers, and conducted themselves in an orderly manner around the school. There are pupils in the school who have challenging behaviour which is linked to their condition, such as Autism, and their behaviour at times can be disruptive to the learning of others. However, any incidents are well managed using appropriate methods, and lessen the disruption to others in learning.

8. The school provides many opportunities for all pupils to develop social and independence skills. Whenever possible, pupils participate in sporting activities, residential and off-site visits. These are enthusiastically received by pupils and spoken highly of by parents. Within lessons, pupils of all ages and special educational needs are expected to share and take turns from the earliest years onwards. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with many opportunities at all times of the day to develop behaviour, independence and self-help skills. This continues throughout the school, and at a level which is appropriate to each pupil's or student's future needs. For example, the personal development of students at Post 16 is matched to their future needs, such as independent travel for the higher attaining students, and for lower attaining pupils, the choosing of clothes for an outdoor excursion. The school council, which is well established at secondary level and in the early stages of development in the primary school, provides pupils with opportunities to make their collective voice heard, as well as involving them in aspects of citizenship through the election of representatives and officers. Alongside this is the school's emphasis on moral development. They do this by encouraging pupils to think about the feelings of others, and the consequences of their actions. There were no incidents of oppressive behaviour seen during the inspection, and school records show that bullying is rare. When it has occurred incidents are appropriately recorded and dealt with in a consistent way on both sites. The school is aware of the

pupils' safety and vulnerability. Staff are caring and sensitive in their approach to dealing with vulnerable pupils, especially those in the inclusion unit who have less than successful educational experiences in the past. As a result, most of these pupils now attend school on a regular basis, are taking part in school events, such as the school production, and are successfully taking part in work experience placements.

9. Staff make good use of pupils' ethnic backgrounds to introduce a range of cultures and traditions into their lessons. Music therapy further encourages their cultural development as does the opportunity to handle actual photographs, clothing and artefacts from Christian and Islamic celebrations. Pupils respond with enthusiastic interest to this reinforcement of their learning. Music, dance and drama are integral to the curriculum and older secondary and Post 16 pupils produce very professional dramatic and musical productions. Spiritual development is promoted through visits to a range of religious establishments and primary aged pupils have opportunities to marvel at the works of nature through lessons and off-site visits. At secondary level, pupils re-enact aspects of World War 1, dressing in uniforms and exploring the reconstructed trenches at a military museum to imagine the horrors of trench warfare. Music therapy makes a positive contribution to pupils spiritual awareness, not although daily assemblies include a prayer and music, these are somewhat perfunctory occasions and lack emotional stimulation.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.1
National data	8.8	National data	0.5

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

10. Attendance is good as an overall figure but varies between sites. It is better at in the primary school than in the secondary school, but it is improving. Routines for checking attendance, managing latecomers and monitoring registers are also very well organised. The pace is efficient and pupils move quickly into their classes, both in the morning and after breaks. The school has been particularly effective in improving the attendance of pupils in the inclusion unit, who were previously school refusers or who had been excluded. The attendance of Post-16 students is very good and they maintain a high level of interest in attending the various activities on offer.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Amidst all the changes, the school is continuing to provide a satisfactory quality of the education. A concentrated effort has gone into ensuring that all teachers can meet the needs of all pupils, and as a result teaching is good overall, with many examples very good teaching. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It meets all statutory requirements and is supported by a range of additional opportunities. There are good links with colleges, but opportunities for pupils to experience education at other schools could be stronger especially for secondary pupils. Care and welfare are very good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are good overall. The accommodation on each site is unsatisfactory as it does not meet the needs of pupils or the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, and there are examples of very good teaching that result in pupils achieving very well. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching overall. In the best lessons committed teachers use their knowledge of pupils and their experience and expertise in special education to plan well differentiated learning outcomes.
- Behaviour management of pupils with ASD is good and facilitates inclusion.
- The quality of teaching is very good at Foundation Stage and at Post 16.
- The very good support given by classroom assistants and the team work helps the pupils learn.
- The assessment systems are too complex and the information is not used in lesson planning.

Commentary

11. Overall teaching is good, and in almost all subjects inspected there were examples of very good teaching. There is also a consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. This is commendable because in the reorganisation of the classes and pupils, many teachers are teaching pupils with specific special educational needs which previously they have not encountered. Teachers have worked hard during a short time to understand the different learning styles pupils have, and in response perfect different teaching methods. In most lessons teachers are meeting the learning needs of the pupils, aided by the good use of teaching assistants, resources and appropriate levels of work, based on their knowledge of pupils' ability and prior achievements. This has been a priority for the school. In a small number of lessons, teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons teachers do not always plan in sufficient detail what they want pupils to achieve by the end of the lesson, and this means that they do not always assess how much pupils have learnt or understood. Evidence of this can be seen in samples of pupils' work where the work set is the same for higher and lower attaining pupils, but pupils with the greatest difficulties do not finish the tasks. Although the profile of teaching shows that a great number of lessons were good or better, there were some unsatisfactory examples observed during the inspection. These were because teachers did not know the levels at which different pupils were working, and as a result set activities which were either too difficult or too easy. Pupils therefore did not make gains in their learning. For example, in one lesson pupils were working on numeracy targets set in IEPs which were at a lower level than the work they were completing in mathematics lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 82 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3(4%)	32 (39 %)	28(34%)	16(20 %)	2 (2 %)	1(1%)	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. In the specialist unit for the most challenging pupils, a very structured approach through TEACCH and the use of the picture exchange communication system (PECS) has led to improved behaviour which allows pupils to access the curriculum. Limited inclusion is now possible during assembly and break time. Other pupils with ASD, who are fully integrated into their peer groups, are very well managed. Teachers know their pupils well, anticipate problems and avert disruption through early intervention. Some teachers have adapted very well to the wide range of ability in classes, plan well for different levels and enable pupils with additional learning difficulties to make good progress and learn to work independently.

13. The teaching and learning of pupils in the Foundation Stage during the week of the inspection was very good overall. Special emphasis is given to the priority areas of their learning, such as personal, communication and mathematical areas. The high quality organisation, planning and team work overcomes the fact that there are large number of pupils in the class with a very wide range of special education needs, and that the children are taught with pupils from Years 1 and 2. This very good teaching leads to very good learning in lessons, and to good achievement in the long term. A similar situation exists in the provision for Post 16 students where the facilities for

the higher attaining pupils are very cramped. The teacher's understanding of the needs of the two different groups of students, and the management's decision to use this expertise to the best advantage means that higher and lower attaining students are achieving well. Of particular note is the planning of appropriate learning experiences at different levels, and the teachers' ability to communicate and motivate pupils to achieve. In both classes the quality of team work is very good, and in the class for higher attaining students, independent learning by the student is always considered an option.

14. There are extremely able and well-qualified teaching assistants who support pupils very well in their learning. These assistants are invaluable in providing the good structure needed to help pupils with learn. For example, they make good use of the PECS communication systems to ensure that pupils understand and can participate. In addition good use is made of a full time assistant who specialise in supporting pupils who have English as an additional language, as well as communication and learning difficulties. All teaching assistants show respect and empathy for pupils of all ages and this boosts the pupils' and students' self esteem and confidence. They also provide curriculum support whilst managing behaviour so that pupils can learn and achieve.

Assessment

15. Assessment is overall unsatisfactory and is the result of the many changes that the school is going through. As two separate smaller schools, the assessment systems that they each had in place would have the needs of the particular school and the pupils, as well as being manageable. Assessment of older pupils in subjects which are linked to a recognised accredited course is good. It is ongoing, supported by pieces of work, well marked with notes to describe when and how it was produced, and it informs the teacher of the next stage of learning. Assessment of Foundation Stage children is very good. The individual targets are clearly written, and are closely based on the day-to-day checking of children's progress. This informs the decisions that staff take about how they will change the way they teach.

16. Across the rest of the school, and for other pupils it is currently unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- Teachers do not always plan the different learning outcomes for pupils of differing attainment levels, although lesson planning does show the learning objectives and the different activities. The teachers therefore have no way of assessing and recording at the end of each lesson what pupils have achieved. The learning outcomes of a lesson are not always used to inform the planning of the next stage of learning for pupils in each curricular area. There are no levels of attainment, for either for National Curriculum or Performance Levels (P Levels) built into the planning, so teachers cannot easily or accurately translate the achievement into assessment data.
- Teachers provide levels of attainment for each pupil in English, mathematics and science. These are derived from two very different commercial assessment systems which have been used by each school. This is now confusing for teachers who have to use both systems. These two assessment systems are not entirely compatible and this makes the tracking of progress of pupils, either individually or by group, difficult. The lack of a whole school system does not allow the school to obtain an overall picture of the standards achieved in the school from which statutory school targets can be easily set.
- Only one person has overall responsibility for the management and collation of assessment for the whole school. This person also is a subject co-ordinator and a class teacher, and has not enough time available to co-ordinate this important area for the whole school. Subject co-ordinators are not yet involved in assessment in their subject.
- Pupils are not aware of their targets set in their IEPs, and therefore are not fully involved in evaluating how well they are doing.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is overall satisfactory. It is very good for pupils in the Foundation Stage and at Post 16. The range of other educational experiences is satisfactory. The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good progress is being made in developing the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- There are differences in the amount of time allocated to different subjects for different groups of pupils.
- Despite the shortcomings in the accommodation, the curriculum for Foundation Stage pupils and for those at Post 16 is very good.
- The unsatisfactory accommodation severely limits some pupils' learning opportunities.

Commentary

17. With the changes that have taken place, it has been necessary to review the curriculum that was being used in each school. The school has made good progress in appointing curriculum co-ordinators who are in the process of meshing together the curriculum for higher attaining pupils with the one used with lower attaining or specific needs pupils. The development of some subjects is further advanced than others, but all subjects and groups of pupils are receiving a curriculum which covers all subjects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education is taught according to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

18. The school provides a broad curriculum as it provides all subjects. However, it is overall it is only satisfactory because the monitoring of the balance of the time table for pupils in different groups and in different subjects is not fully in place and this has led to some differences occurring in the time given to some subjects. For example, too much time is given to PE for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and some classes have as much as 60 hours a year more of this subject than others. There is also some unevenness in the timetabling of some subjects within the school day. For example, on one day during the week, one class spends four out of five lessons in PE activities. In addition, there is unevenness in some of the time allocated to lessons which means that some subjects are short in overall time for some pupils. The overall curriculum imbalance results in an unequal opportunity for some groups of pupils to gain knowledge and skills.

19. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very well planned. It contains many very good opportunities for learning centred on a weekly theme, such as "People who help us". A very valuable link has been established with the unit for nursery-age children at the Children's Centre in the middle of Burton-on-Trent. The link is made stronger by the use of very capable staff from the school taking the groups during the week. This provides consistency in meeting children's learning needs when they transfer to the Foundation Stage. The curriculum for all Post 16 students is very appropriate. It is constructed for each student according to their present learning needs, their independence needs, and their future needs as young adults in the community. All students have access to a range of accredited courses which can be built on in their placements after school. They have very good experiences connected with the world of work by taking part in weekly work experience or college placements, as well as a block work experience. Many are successful in these placements and have paid weekend work as a result. Students with more complex difficulties have a separate but equally good curriculum. It too is linked to their needs, and contains elements of learning outside the school. For example, they have some of their sessions in the local college environment but taken by school staff. Links with other education establishments have been made and these students link with a local public school.

20. Both school sites are clean and tidy and staff have worked hard to produce many attractive displays of pupils' work and achievements. These are of equal quality in both schools and add considerably to the learning environment. However, the accommodation at both sites has some

shortcomings, which adversely affects the organisation and size of classes in the primary school and the curriculum for secondary aged pupils. The school and the Local Education Authority are aware that the buildings are not adequate and some of the shortcomings have been highlighted in their recent building survey. However, the following situation exists:

- In both schools numbers in some of the classes are large for the size of the rooms, and/or the learning needs of the pupils, and there is a wide age range in some classes in the primary school. For example, some classes have four age groups, and from different key stages of the National Curriculum. The management have organised the amount of space in the best possible way taking account of the learning needs of pupils, but the present make up classes means that it is difficult to implement schemes of work in the subjects over a period of years and as pupils move through the school. It is also difficult to give pupils a sense of moving forward in their education if they stay in one classroom for too many years.
- In the secondary school, the accommodation for the Post 16 students is too small. This limits group work, and pupils can be, and sometimes are, distracted from learning by the close proximity of classmates. The limited space means opportunities to practice certain social and independence skills are restricted. Pupils do not have their own space for quiet reflection or sanctuary if they feel unwell or upset. Meals that have been prepared have to be eaten in the classroom as there are no separate social areas. In addition, there is no space in the secondary school for Post 16 students with more complex difficulties, and they are presently being educated in the primary school. This means they do not have chances to mix with students of the same age. This arrangement also takes up a lot of classroom space and adds to the complex arrangements in the primary school.
- There are further limitations in the secondary school. There is no art room, design and technology room, or music room. This affects the curriculum as it limits the range of activities the pupils can experience, such as more challenging work in science, art, and design technology, and offering art or design technology to pupils in Years 10 and 11. The lack of special rooms also restricts the amount of resources the school has in those subjects, and teachers waste time as they have to move from place to place. Specialist rooms also have to be used as classrooms for teaching other subjects and this makes timetabling difficult.
- There is no private area for individual counselling or careers guidance, no room available for parents, and no rooms in which therapists or the school nurse can work. The staff room is too small to accommodate all the staff.
- In the primary school, Foundation Stage children are not separate from some of the Year 1 and 2 pupils and the classroom is a thoroughfare to the swimming pool. This is distracting and can cause problems when pupils are involved in floor play. There are no rooms for therapists and other professionals to work, and no parents' room. There is no office for the deputy head. The staffroom is too small to accommodate all staff and they have to use the school library as a work preparation area.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good and very well managed. Support, advice and guidance in personal development are good, but there is insufficient tracking of academic progress linked to a simple assessment system. Pupils' views are sought and acted on satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring school where each individual is well supported.
- The management of behaviour is good.
- The tracking of pupil's progress is not always used effectively.
- Careers guidance for older pupils and students at Post 16 is very good.

Commentary

21. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work well as a team to support the pupils in their care. Daily routines, such as monitoring attendance, managing movement around the site and dealing with accidents or mishaps are smooth and well organised. There are a large number of trained first aiders. Good medical support is provided by the school nurse, although the terms of her working contract issued by the Local HealthTrust means her role extends only to those pupils who were previously educated at Crown School. The governors for health and safety have a clear grasp of what is needed. Office staff in both schools are welcoming and efficient, greeting individual pupils and parents by name. Child protection procedures are tight and efficiently run. The headteacher, as designated officer, has undergone regular refresher training and all staff are vigilant in watching over the pupils and students in their care. New staff are carefully inducted into procedures and training is extended to support and lunchtime staff.

22. All staff, from senior management to mid-day supervisors show obvious care and concern for each pupil: they greet them by name, know their siblings and out of school achievements and guide them gently towards appropriate behaviour, whether in classrooms, at mealtimes or in the playground. The management of behaviour is, with a few minor exceptions, consistent in both schools. Staff have undergone training and work to a common set of rules. Registration periods at the start of the day set the tone - they are brisk, efficient and purposeful. Teachers' expectations are made very clear, and they are very well supported by teaching assistants who demonstrate an almost uncanny ability to understand what is needed and do it unobtrusively; perhaps encouraging an unruly pupil to listen or fractious partners to co-operate on the computer. Those pupils who need them have individual behaviour plans, which parents are encouraged to apply at home. Pupils who have more challenging behaviour and are educated in the high dependency unit are also well managed in a firm yet sympathetic manner and consistent with their needs. The inclusion group in the secondary school also receives firm but fair treatment, which has worked wonders with their attendance and self esteem. Breaks and lunch times are very well supervised and as a result pupils feel secure and interact well with their peers.

23. Planning for individual academic progress is less successful because targets set in IEPs are not precise and measurable within a set time frame. Too often when targets are not achieved, they are repeated rather than changed. When targets are reviewed and changed, it is sometimes very difficult to see any link with the previous target. A few teachers have not yet adjusted to the change of population, and lack experience and expertise to work with pupils with severe learning difficulties. Learning objectives for lower attaining pupils are not clear in lesson plans.

24. Careers guidance is very good and pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education. It starts at Year 9 and continues through to when students leave at either 17 or 18 years of age. They receive good advice from within and from outside the school, and staff have a positive attitude to them achieving their best. There is very much a 'can do' attitude to the advice and support. This is backed up by the very good involvement and support by Connexions, who attend the school on an almost weekly basis. They are part of the change taking place in the school, and are working in classes with pupils and students with more complex needs, and where they have had limited involvement in the past. They are involved with the choice of after school training or placement, and support is given to parents and pupils when visiting and making decisions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory, but good at post-16.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about the school's work, but there are some inconsistencies in the communications with parents.
- Links with the community are good.
- Transfers into and out of the school are well prepared and managed.

Commentary

25. Parents are in general very supportive of the work of the school, as are parent governors. They feel that their children are happy and making good progress. They are happy with the teaching, feeling that staff have high expectations and treat their children fairly. They feel their views are sought and respected, and the school is well led and managed. About a quarter of parents of primary aged pupils were not happy about their children's behaviour, but this was not reflected in anything seen during the inspection. Some parents in the secondary school felt they did not get enough information about progress, which was partially confirmed by the very variable nature of the annual reports to parents. Some contain reasonable information about what pupils know, understand and can do, but others contain bare references to levels, which are unlikely to be understood by most parents. There is minimal information about what levels pupils have reached and how they can improve. The prospectus is only at the moment in draft form because of the recent federation, and for the same reason it was not possible to see an up-to-date version of the Governors' annual report to parents. However, parents are invited to annual reviews and contacted on occasion by telephone (or home-school diary for the younger pupils), for example, to discuss behaviour modification or work experience. Some support groups operate in school for those parents whose children have profound and multiple learning difficulties or are on the autistic spectrum. In general links with parents are good, and they attend performances and sporting events with enthusiasm, but are not always fully informed about what is happening with regard to their children. This is, in part, a historical legacy from different management systems and has been improving rapidly since federation.

26. Links with the community are good and varied. Good use is made of local leisure centres for sports such as judo, swimming and trampolining, and some of the local community come in to use the pool at school. In the arts, the school's Playground Theatre Company has performed at the Brewhouse Theatre and goes out to other schools, thereby tremendously benefiting the confidence and self-esteem of its participants. The whole operation is run as part of a mini-business enterprise with Post 16 students on the board, running the finances and organising the program-including some shorter sketches used to inform and educate primary aged pupils about personal, social and health education. Several of the pupils with more profound disabilities have been to a special school in Malta for a "celebration of the senses". There are links with the Navy and local garden centres - for example, the latter have sponsored the building of a sensory garden. Good partnerships have been forged with health and social services, notably through the use of the school nurse. The school has over the course of a number of years forged very good relationships with various employers, both local and further afield. They offer successful work experience to older pupils and Post-16 students, such as working in the local charity shop, at a supermarket and at a riding stable. In some cases these have led to Saturday jobs or more permanent employment. The result of these initiatives is confident, positive students with high self-esteem.

27. Transfers into the school, and when students are ready to move on, are very well organised and managed. There are excellent links and liaison at the lower end of the school. There are good relationships with the Children's Development Centre, for example the Tots and Toddlers group and Roundabout nursery. There is very good teamwork with the support assistants, and planning and assessment liaison is very smooth across in to the Foundation Stage. At the other end of the school students are well prepared to move on to work placements or college courses. Independence training is a strong focus for Post-16 students, covering such areas as travel, shopping for and cooking meals, and health and safety in the workplace. Those who go regularly to Burton College are confident and positive; work experience similarly prepares them well for life after school. The part - time placements to other schools are carefully planned and organised, though at the moment

apply only to a small minority of higher ability pupils. Nonetheless in these individual cases they are prepared well for a possible transition to more mainstream education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good, but of other key staff, it is satisfactory. The school is well managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors are committed to ensuring that the needs of pupils and their parents are effectively met throughout the process of federation.
- The headteacher has shown great skill in the management of change, and especially in her management of staff.
- Although only incorporated in January 2005, the new joint governing body has already established a satisfactory committee structure and governors are committed to establishing an effective joint provision.
- Teamwork between leaders of subjects and other aspects of the school's work in ensuring a joint approach and in monitoring the quality of provision is at an early stage of development.
- The monitoring of performance data is unsatisfactory.
- Having two separately operated budgets is delaying governors' forward planning for the strategic development of the federated schools.

Commentary

28. The process of federating the two schools has been a complex one. Led by the example set by the headteacher, all staff of both sites and governors from the newly incorporated governing body have shown a strong commitment to ensuring the best possible education for all pupils throughout the period of change. They have also striven to keep parents informed as to what is happening at each stage of the federation. The result is that pupils of all ages and abilities on both sites are continuing to receive a good quality of education that ensures they achieve well.

29. The headteacher has demonstrated highly effective skills in the management of change and in her sensitive dealings with staff. She has motivated staff to give of their best during what is potentially a very difficult period for many of them, resulting in a lot of changes taking place in a relatively short time. These include the establishment of distinct primary and secondary school sites, with resulting changes in class organisation, effective utilisation of accommodation that is not yet fully adapted for its new purpose, and the redeployment of some teaching and support staff between sites. Throughout, both new staff and those taking up new roles within the federation report that they have had very good induction, support and mentoring from the headteacher and other senior staff.

30. The governing body has already established an effective system of committees to manage its workload, though some committees are better staffed than others. Governors are also starting to allocate particular responsibilities for aspects of the school's work, for example a governor for special educational needs. Discussions with representative governors show that they are keen to establish an effective joint provision across the federated schools and have taken steps to get to know both sites. For example, there is a detailed plan in place for improving the accommodation to better meet the needs of all pupils.

31. Other staff with leadership responsibilities are performing these satisfactorily. The headteacher and the two deputies have established appropriate pairs of leaders of subjects and other aspects of the school's work. Some are newly appointed to the federation; others are new within their current role. Some of these teams have started to meet regularly and to work together to review policies and audit current practice, for example in English. However, others teams are not yet at this stage. There is insufficient monitoring taking place of teaching and learning and of the effects of all of the recent changes so that the impact of these can be properly evaluated.

32. Because there are weaknesses in how the pupils are formally assessed and in the setting of the targets on their individual education plans, the monitoring of resulting performance data is unsatisfactory. This must be addressed in the strategic planning for the joint provision, to ensure that governors and the senior leadership team can set realistic targets for school improvement.

33. The fact that governors have to work with two separate and differently managed budgets is an added complication, and has limited planning to the process of changing over to one provision. Apart from the application to become a specialist sports college, there is currently no longer-term vision than one more academic year for wider curriculum development, for pupil assessment and reviewing accreditation opportunities for the full ability range.

34. Because the budgets are allocated to each school as they were in the past that is for different type and groups of pupils, it is impossible calculate the unit cost per pupil. This is further compounded by the fact that some staff are not paid from the budget of the school in which they teach and also some staff teach in both schools. It is therefore impossible to judge value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management are very good.
- The monitoring of children's progress and the setting of targets for achievement informs the planning of the curriculum.
- The accommodation is not satisfactory.

35. The Foundation Stage is very well led and has an excellent team of support staff. The curriculum is very well planned and balanced, with many very good opportunities for learning in individual sessions. Each week there is a theme - about "People who help our health – the dentist" during the inspection, for example. There is a strong and very valuable link with the "sister" unit for nursery-age children at the Children's Centre in the middle of Burton-on-Trent, where several very capable school staff are based. Many children transfer from there, and the procedures for introducing them to the unit are excellent.

36. The teacher works very closely with the support staff in the organisation, planning, teaching and assessment of children's progress. Lessons are always focussed on one main area of learning, but they also include targets from other areas, so that each session is a very good mixture of learning activities and targets to support the main aims of each lesson. Children's individual targets are clearly written, and are closely based on the day-to-day checking of children's progress, and decisions that staff take about how they will change the way they teach. Whether children have autistic tendencies, or severe learning difficulties, they all benefit from the very good teaching, encouragement and support during their activities. All staff are very capable, and have positive and warm relationships with the children, and with their parents. When children are ready to move up the school, there is a smooth change to the National Curriculum, and the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies that the older children in their class have been following, and the whole process is managed very well.

37. The area in which the Foundation children are taught is not satisfactory because it is a thoroughfare to the swimming pool. The rooms are spacious enough, but the Reception age children are taught in a class with pupils who are one or two years older. It is only the very good organisation and separate planning for each individual child within the two groups that makes the situation so effective. When children come into the unit, their standards are, because of the nature of the school, well below what is expected nationally. However, the very good teaching leads to very good learning in lessons, and to good achievement in the long term. Teaching, learning and progress are especially good in the most important areas of their learning – in personal social and emotional, communication language and literacy and mathematical areas. In other areas, teaching and learning are good. Children are achieving well by the time they are ready to leave the unit.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of self-help, social and independence skills is very good in focussed lessons.
- This aspect underlies all other learning in the unit, whether in groups, free play, or at lunch.
- Children make very good progress, and achieve very well.

Commentary

38. Teaching is based very well on the daily notes of children's behaviours and progress. All staff know very clearly what each child's next learning step is, as all pupils have a separate target for some aspect of their personal development. Some sessions are aimed mainly at this aspect, perhaps at snack time for eating and drinking, or when dressing before and after exercises. Children's behaviour is always very well encouraged and managed. This is seen as the way of encouraging learning from the start, along with their communication skills. Staff create many opportunities to develop children's behaviour, independence and self help skills. Children are encouraged to hang their coats up, find a toy or a book to look at, check their personal timetables, and take the register to the school office. They sit together very amicably together at story-time or when playing at the sand tray, and they join in games, snacks and drinks together. Often, they will help their partner, perhaps to make a jigsaw or a cake.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision in communication, language and literacy development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress because this aspect underlies all teaching.
- Clear targets are very well followed in individual sessions as well as whole-class lessons.

Commentary

39. Some children enter the unit with little idea of how to listen to anyone, and no ability to speak clear words. Staff focus very well on developing children's ability to listen to what is being said to them, and to say what they want, need and think. Staff create many opportunities to develop these skills throughout each day. These are partly in very well planned lessons directly aimed at speaking and listening, such as talking with the adults about the weekly topic (perhaps taking part in a beautiful role play as a dentist or doctor, telephoning for an appointment, then examining each other with their white coats on). They sit with support staff or the teacher, looking at a book, or a set of pictures. Much learning is based on the use of the PECS system, in which children swap their small picture or symbol for a real item or an activity. They use this system very well to make their wants known, and to organise their own timetables. At other times there are many activities in which staff and children are communicating together, such as about the snack they are having, the play dough they are making models with of mouths full of very white teeth that they have to count or singing action songs, or saying number rhymes. All of these combine to encourage children's learning very well. Staff give very good encouragement for children to begin to recognise letters, and to read single words such as their names. Often, children will turn over the pages of books and talk with staff about the pictures, or what they imagine the words to say. Children begin to make marks on paper or in sand, sometimes with foam or paint, and eventually learn to write their name, and other small words they know.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is very well based on careful checking of individual children's progress.
- Learning is very good in one-to-one sessions, as well as group activities.
- The support for mathematics learning in other activities is very good.

Commentary

40. Lessons are very well based on accurate assessments of how well children understand numbers, counting and other mathematics skills. Many lessons are directly aimed at improving children's awareness of what numbers are, and what 4 or 5, for instance, mean in terms of real things such as Scooby-doo dolls, or teeth in the mouth. Counting songs and rhymes further reinforce the idea of what a number is "worth", and children join in the singing as well as they can. Mathematical learning is also very well reinforced in other activities such as in the sand tray, using playdough or the road mat. Children enjoy feeling shapes in a bag, arranging toy cars in a sequence of size or colours, and using the construction toys for building and arranging the blocks. Children become good at recognising and matching shapes and colours, deciding which toy is big or small, or saying which Lego block is in front of the box, inside, on top, or behind it. Staff are very good at encouraging and noticing small improvements in what children are doing, and they incorporate these into their planning for future sessions. They also do this very well in the other areas of learning.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

The provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievements spread over a wide selection of activities.
- Imaginative and enthusiastic teaching leads to good progress.
- Very good use is made of these activities to support learning in other areas.

Commentary

41. Learning is based on a very good range of activities that the teacher and support staff plan carefully and imaginatively, often as part of the weekly theme, or creative sessions. The more able children learn to use computers to select items on the computer screen, either with the mouse or on a touch screen. They "turn the pages" on electronic books; make simple patterns and pictures; and activate voices and sounds. Through daily play activities, children learn that there are many different tiny "minibeasts", vehicles, toys, and people who help them, such as the dentist, doctor or nurse. The role play that they take part in is very well organised, and children love to take on the different jobs – even including "doing the ironing", laying the table, clearing up, and manning the telephoning in the "dentist's waiting room". Working together, children will make birdseed cakes, Christmas decorations and cakes that look like ladybirds. The reinforcement of their communication and social skills through these activities is very good, especially with the extensive speaking, listening, signing and PECS opportunities between adults and children.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers organise many good opportunities both indoors and outside, using some very good equipment and large apparatus.
- Learning sessions are well planned and enthusiastically taught.
- Staff aim for children to really enjoy their sessions, as well as to develop their physical, social and language skills.

Commentary

42. Children take a very active part in a good variety of activities using small equipment such as scissors, building blocks, pens and brushes. They also use the outdoor play area with its large apparatus for climbing, running, sliding and crawling through the tunnel. Children are very enthusiastic when using the large apparatus, including the trikes and scooters; or using the ball pool

and soft play area. In the swimming pool, they are also keen, and are becoming confident enough in the water to float without the adult holding them, or to splash their faces. Physical sessions are planned well, and are skilfully taught by the teacher and support staff alike. In each of their activities, children gain much pleasure, as well as exercise. They chatter, play together in pairs, “let off steam”, perhaps with a ball, bean bag or hoop. Staff are good at encouraging the reinforcement of these social and language development skills through many physical activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are very imaginative for individuals and larger groups.
- Staff are especially good at encouraging children’s communication and social skills.
- Many activities are especially well linked with the weekly theme.

Commentary

43. Children’s good progress is across a wide range of creative activities, such as painting, making collages, printing, using play dough and playing with plastic toys and models. Also, staff plan very well for children to enjoy and develop their skills in singing and musical lessons and taking part in role play as different characters. Often, the songs are number rhymes, or are about parts of the body, to reinforce understanding in other areas of learning. Teachers and support staff are very patient and persistent with the less able or autistic children, for instance when encouraging children to handle and use different materials and tools. Children and staff use the PECS cards and books very well throughout their creative sessions, reinforcing the normal speech between them, perhaps at the sand tray, painting easel, water trough, road mat or the table where children play with building blocks, toy cars and animals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2, 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages and abilities have achieved well, and there is no difference between the achievements of pupils with different types of special educational need.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, though it ranges from some that is just satisfactory to examples of very good teaching on both sites.
- Good attention is paid to developing pupils' basic literacy skills, but less emphasis is placed on ensuring that they read a wide range of literature.
- Subject leaders are working well together to audit and combine provision but there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The use of drama makes a particularly strong contribution to developing pupils' communication skills.

Commentary

44. Analysis of the lessons observed and work samples provided, from pupils across the age-range of both sites and of those with all types of special educational need, shows that all pupils have good achievement. For primary aged pupils, work is carefully planned using the national literacy strategy, they enjoy books together as a class, and have opportunities to work individually or in small groups. Secondary aged pupils now have English class - taught by their form tutor and this has given them stability and a continuity of approach. The National Key Stage 3 strategy informs planning for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and some older pupils achieve success in accredited courses.

45. Because not all of the teachers are specialists in the subject, some of the lessons seen were just satisfactory. In these lessons, work was not planned well to match the range of ability levels present in the group, and pupils' literacy targets were not precise enough to help them to move on to the next step of learning. In some cases, the interest level of the text chosen was too young for pupils. In the very good lessons seen, support staff were well deployed to help pupils of different abilities make progress, the choice of texts was more appropriate, and teachers used a very good range of strategies to ensure pupils' learning, including the use of information and communications technology. However, the planning for all lessons could have been improved by more careful identification of learning outcomes, based on thorough assessment of pupils' attainment.

46. Although one of them only took up her post in January 2005, the two subject leaders have already worked together well to conduct an audit of staff training needs in English, and of the resources available on each site. However, they are not yet effectively monitoring teaching and learning in the subject by observing lessons. This means that they have not found the very good practice so that it can be shared across the federation. Neither have they identified the less effective non-specialist teaching, monitored what range of texts each class studies, or evaluated the quality of learning under the new form tutor teaching arrangements in the secondary school.

47. There are good opportunities for pupils to further develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects. They learn specialist vocabulary in science, discuss a range of issues in personal, social and health education and citizenship, and compare features of English with the modern foreign languages they learn. Drama is used particularly effectively to develop their speaking and listening. Younger pupils undertake role-play, for example in history. Older pupils have opportunities to take part in high quality public productions performed in a local theatre, and gain in confidence and self-esteem as well as the opportunity to improve their communication skills.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. All teachers place good emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy, including their speaking and listening skills, their independent reading and their writing. For example, pupils learn phonics to help with their reading and writing, learn spelling rules and practise their handwriting regularly. However, although younger pupils share a good range of literature, some older pupils study a more limited range that focuses on the school's reading scheme with fewer opportunities to read other fiction and non-fiction.

French and German

49. Modern Foreign Languages was one of the subject areas sampled during the inspection. Therefore, it was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision. The subject is only taught to pupils in Year 7 to 9, although some older pupils have opportunities to learn Japanese greetings and judo terminology to support their participation in this aspect of their physical education.

50. Two lessons were seen; one in French with less able pupils, and one in German with more able pupils. Both lessons were of very good quality, with both teachers observed using a wide range of strategies to enable pupils to learn new vocabulary. Because the teachers spoke their target language well throughout the lesson, pupils develop good accents and pronunciation and can conduct short conversations in French or German. Learning about the customs of France or Germany, for example when a French café day is held, makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Analysis of a sample of work in each language suggests that achievement in both is at least good. There is a good balance of work to ensure that pupils develop all of the skills of a new language, including reading and writing as well as speaking, listening and responding.

51. Discussion with the joint subject leaders shows that they each have a detailed knowledge of their own specialist language and are managing their subject well, but they are not yet working together to develop a joint plan that will clearly show how the provision for the federated schools will be improved.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is reflected in the pupils' good achievement.
- Year 11 pupils gain national accreditation through examinations.
- Co-ordinators do not monitor the subject or its teaching in either school.

Commentary

52. Pupils across the school achieve well and most make good progress as they move through the school. The levels they reach, and their mathematical knowledge understanding and skills depends on their learning needs. For example, there are pupils of all ages at the earliest stages of numerical ability. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 have made sufficient progress to enable them to work towards either GCSE or Foundation Stage mathematics. All pupils in these year groups further develop their mathematical skills through the Youth Award accredited schemes, which provides experiences in using mathematical concepts in life skills. In 2004, the 13 pupils entered for GCSE examinations gained A*-G grades. Standards of learning have improved significantly for secondary aged pupils, with an increasing number gaining national accreditation. This represents good achievement and is the result of overall good teaching. Lessons are well structured to include elements of mental, practical and individual work. Teachers' good knowledge of the pupil' needs and abilities ensure that individual needs are met. Older or higher attaining pupils are aware of their targets and what they must do to improve. Teaching assistants provide very good

levels of support and praise is used well to encourage and stimulate pupils' self-esteem and interest. Relationships are very good, and the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour mean that no time is wasted. Teachers keep effective records of their pupils' achievements and most work is marked and annotated to show where help was needed and what was independently completed.

53. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The two co-ordinators are currently developing a more cohesive approach to the curriculum. There is an overarching policy for the whole school, but assessment procedures and the sharing of progress reports have yet to fully develop. The subject is not monitored and this is an issue for the school to address. Resources are satisfactory but the accommodation is cramped on occasions. Attractive wall displays celebrate pupils' achievements.

Mathematics across the curriculum.

54. In each school co-ordinators advise staff on the use of numerical skills in their lessons. Additionally, all staff have received training in National Numeracy strategies. However, the lack of monitoring means that it is not possible for co-ordinators to gauge teachers' successes in encouraging numeracy in other subjects. During the inspection numeracy skills were well promoted in personal, social and health education, music, science, food technology and information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall, and is good for pupils in Years 1 to 6

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good and pupils achieve well.
- Day-to-day assessment is too limited to give a clear idea of how well a pupil is doing.
- The information from monitoring is not used enough to identify where improvements are needed to raise achievement.

Commentary

55. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Overall, teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and effectively manage the pupils' behaviour so that lessons are well ordered. As a result pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory but it is better in Years 1 to 6 where pupils are more motivated to learn through the use of interesting and stimulating resources which brings the subject alive. For example, in a lesson seen with six to nine year olds, pupils showed a keen interest in discussing the characteristics of two live stick insects. In another seen, five year old pupils were eager to learn about the sense of taste and were able to distinguish between various foods. Expressing their approval "mmm I liked that" said one. Higher attaining primary aged pupils eagerly share their knowledge with teachers, for example, a class of nine to eleven year olds were observed discussing the sorts of creatures that lived in a rain forest. They could remember unusual names and describe characteristics of a variety of species. One pupil said, "The Queen Alexandra Birdwing is the largest butterfly in the world and its wings are symmetrical", showing he was developing a scientific vocabulary with which to describe various ideas accurately. Throughout this lesson pupils used scientific expressions and could draw food chains describing primary and secondary consumers. This is further developed in older pupils, and higher attaining pupils in the younger classes of the secondary school described a magnetic field as, "an invisible force field that attracts anything in the vicinity that is made of iron". However, the content of the lessons and the methods used in teaching in the secondary school are not as motivational, and opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in deduction are sometimes missed.

56. The amount of day-to-day assessment varies across the two schools. This means that although the teaching assistants use their substantial knowledge of the pupils to help them learn, the lack of day-to-day assessment of the gains pupils have made does not provide evidence of the

progress they are making. This weakness in assessment affects longer term curriculum planning and how well it meets the pupils' learning needs. As a result, planning does not always drive improvement and opportunities are lost to raise achievement.

57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinators are new to the post and are in the early stages of writing a curriculum to suit the needs of the pupils. They have some good ideas how to develop their subject and to improve resources. However, there is insufficient monitoring of pupil achievement and the quality of teaching in the subject to identify where improvements are needed to raise achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good or better in Years 7 to 11 so pupils achieve well and gain appropriate accreditation.
- The subject is well managed in the senior school where the curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of the wide range of ability.
- Co-ordination is at an early stage of development in the primary school and this has led to inconsistent provision.
- Use of accommodation and resources is good.

Commentary

58. Lessons are well planned, taught with pace and challenge, encouraging pupils to work independently, explore possibilities, and take responsibility for their own work. In an excellent lesson in Year 10, pupils were evaluating examination work and seeking to improve it before submission to the examiner. Their attitudes were mature and enthusiastic. Year 8 pupils collaborated well in groups to write simple programmes for the Roamer, refining the programme each time till they achieved the accuracy needed. Throughout Years 7 to 11 pupils showed a developing bank of skills and understanding culminating in the achievement of the most appropriate accreditation.

59. The two co-ordinators in the senior school are experienced and enthusiastic. They have worked together for some time and have adapted the curriculum well to meet the needs of the changed population of pupils with PMLD, SLD, MLD and autism. A range of accreditation is available to pupils now, and the co-ordinators are evaluating others to ensure that pupils' work is rewarded with the most appropriate recognition of their achievement.

60. The recently appointed co-ordinator of work with younger pupils is experienced in working with older pupils with moderate learning difficulties and is still coming to grips with the younger and less able pupils. She has made a good start with curriculum planning and schemes of work but these have not yet been put into practice. As a result, teaching, learning and achievement are dependent on the knowledge and level of enthusiasm of individual class teacher. There are examples of good practice, but no consistent approach to skill building. In most of the lessons observed, the level of individual support needed suggested that the task was too difficult. Assessment is at an early stage of development and does not lead to good planning for individual progress. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are working on switch control at an appropriate level, and one girl can confidently operate a four switch communication device.

61. The ICT suite on the in the secondary school is very well used and primary aged pupils have access to its facilities. All classes have access to the internet. A range of switches and special keyboards ensure that all pupils, whatever their physical difficulty, can access the computer. The use of interactive whiteboards is good where they are available and the school is increasing the number in the primary school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. Information technology is used effectively, on both sites, to enhance teaching and learning. Examples of good practice were seen in English, maths, history, geography and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

A total of 5 lessons was observed: one in history; one in geography and three in religious education. It is therefore not possible to judge the overall provision for history and geography. Comments about specific aspects of the subjects are included and are derived from information gathered from discussion, analysis of pupil's work and examination of the school's documentation.

History

63. In history, there were no lessons observed in the primary school. However, an analysis of pupils work indicates steady progression of learning; from basic time scales for the youngest and/or lower attaining pupils through to the study of Romans and Victorians for pupils who are the oldest. 6. In the secondary school, the Year 9 pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of World War 1. This is extended in Years 10 and 11 with a study which examines the causes and aftermath of World War II. There is written and photographic evidence which shows a wide range of off-site visits to reinforce topics being studied. In the one lesson seen with pupils in Years 8 and 9, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Pupils further developed their good knowledge of the slave trade triangle by acting a short play depicting the relationships between white people and their slaves. This clearly portrayed the conditions of life and the humiliations of plantation slaves alongside the cruelty and disregard for human life practised by the overseer. The lesson provided very good input to pupils' social, moral and spiritual awareness. Leadership of the subject is shared by two co-ordinators. There is now an overarching policy on history for both sites, however, curriculum planning is in the early stages of development towards creating a coherent and progressive programme of study for all years.

Geography

64. Again no lessons were observed in the primary school. The subject was sampled at the secondary school, with the observation of one lesson for Year 10 pupils. These pupils were following a Certificate of Achievement unit of work in which they learnt about the role and workings of National Parks. This lesson was well taught and planned at the right level to enable pupils to achieve. The subject provides interesting lessons that are enriched by trips, such as to Rosliston Forestry Centre and the residential visit to the Peak District. Further activities are included in the curriculum, such as visits from the curator of the local zoo who brings snakes into the school for pupils to observe and touch. This contributes well to the pupils' understanding. The co-ordinators offer advice and support to other colleagues but there is insufficient monitoring of the subject to show how teaching or pupil achievement could be improved.

Religious Education

The provision in religious education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Secondary aged pupil achieve very well.
- The very high standard of teaching is reflected in pupils' learning.
- Good provision is made for pupils who do not participate in class lessons.
- Assemblies do not sufficiently support religious education.

65. Pupils in all years achieve well. In the primary school, pupils gain a good understanding of how Easter symbolises new life and the sacredness of living things, though linking the learning to

real everyday occurrences, such as looking at budding trees and flowers, and the hatching of eggs. Pupils show reverence for different religious cultures and traditions. Photographic evidence indicates pupils' awareness of a range of religious beliefs. Festivals such as Passover, Eid and Diwali are commemorated through traditional foods, which reinforce pupils' learning through the senses of touch, taste and smell. In the secondary school, pupils in Year 9 understand the biblical creation of the world and quote short extracts from Genesis. By Year 11, their participation in mature discussions on a range of moral issues is excellent. Their written reports and photographs form part of their work towards Youth Award accreditation, and achievement is very good.

66. Teaching and learning in the primary school is very good. Lessons are very well planned to cater for all needs and abilities. Very good use is made of cultural artefacts, such as Islamic wedding clothes and jewellery and pupils are delighted with the sparkle and feel of the materials, making comparisons with their earlier work on Christian weddings. Pupils respond very well to the teacher's high expectations of good behaviour, and teaching assistants provide good levels of support. In the secondary school, teaching and learning is outstanding. Well paced lessons are challenging and relevant to pupils' needs. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were spellbound by the teacher's voice and body language as she led them through the story of creation. They closed their eyes and ears so as to imagine the blackness before time, and recalled earlier learning on how life developed and was lost in the Garden of Eden. Pupils eagerly raise their hands to answer questions, and the teacher's strategies are excellent in retaining their complete attention. Teaching assistants provide very good support in oral and written work. In Year 11, the teacher's excellent planning and preparation encourages very mature discussions on moral issues such as abortion. A volunteer pupil is well briefed for the 'Hot Seat' role prior to answering a range of challenging questions from her peers. Group work, supervised by the teacher and teaching assistant, is excellent, and end of lesson discussions indicate that pupils have sensitively considered their conclusions. The teacher's fascinating twist on the cases presented strongly reinforces pupils' learning.

67. The whole school curriculum follows the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education and fully meets statutory requirements. Where pupils have been withdrawn from aspects of religious education at the parents' request, arrangements are made for them to study their own religion separately. In all years, lessons are topic based but, although the school has an overarching policy for religious education, monitoring of the subject and assessment procedures are in the early stages of development. There is a good bank of resources and guest speakers and visits to churches, mosques and temples further support the curriculum. A daily act of collective worship takes place during the end of day assemblies in both schools, but opportunities for reflection and the development of spirituality are missed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In this area of learning, a total of 18 lessons were observed. Eleven were observed in physical education, with two in music, two in design and technology and three in music. Insufficient lessons were seen to make overall judgements about the provision of art and design, design and technology, and music.

Art and design

68. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, one at the primary school and one at the secondary school, the teaching and learning was good in the primary school and satisfactory in the secondary school. The quality of teaching is undermined in the secondary school by the fact that there is no specific art room for teaching the subject. The subject is basically well taught by a teacher with expertise in the subject, but all teaching is carried out in pupils' classrooms with restricted space and resources. The teacher carries the resources in a plastic box from lesson to lesson. Tables in the rooms are too small for teaching art, and some classrooms have carpeted areas which further restrict the working space. This lack of an art room for secondary aged pupils has an effect on the range and breadth of opportunities which they experience. For example, they cannot work with clay, on large three dimensional sculptures, or on group projects. In addition, art and design is not offered as an option for pupils in Years 10 and 11, except for one pupil who has

the ability to join a local high school for the subject. The breadth and range of opportunities are better in the primary school where the subject is appropriately taught by class teachers. Management of the subject is satisfactory with a developing partnership between the two co-ordinators. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject by them as a team has not yet started.

Design and technology

69. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement on provision for design and technology. The lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. Behaviour management and development of social skills was very good in all three. The main emphasis in the cooking lesson in the special unit was on communication and following instructions rather than design and technology and this was entirely appropriate. In the other lessons, both with Year 7, there were the elements of design, making and evaluating. Problems with staffing and co-ordination during the transition period have impacted on this subject and at present individual teachers are using their experience and expertise with the various groups of pupils and adapting the curriculum to meet their needs. Specialist accommodation is not available so use of resistant materials is unrealistic, but food technology is taught as a life skill.

Music

70. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a judgement on provision. Music in the primary school is taught by a music therapist on a part-time basis. If the one very good lesson seen was representative of the regular practice, then pupils are receiving very good music education. The co-ordinator and the therapist planned together and the lesson observed was interesting and enjoyable. The development of listening skills was excellent and pupils learned to make sound pictures linked to animal characteristics. The secondary school has had a number of supply teachers in recent months but pupils have still retained their skills. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were given the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their knowledge of pitch and their understanding of tuned and untuned instruments. Teaching and learning were good and the pupils were enthusiastic.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good progress is in overall sportsmanship, skills, health, enjoyment and exercise.
- The very good teaching is based on very detailed assessment within each skill area.
- The range of activities for some pupils is extremely wide and imaginative, both within the school and in other schools and centres.
- The leadership and management have not yet been effective in developing an integrated school-wide provision.

Commentary

71. Pupils achieve very well. The great achievement is in the all-round attitude and knowledge development, as well as skills in individual activity elements. Many of the more able pupils become enthused with sport; they know what it is to be sportsmanlike, to be fair, to try hard and be competitive as well as to play in a team that cooperates together. They learn about health and safety aspects, and the value of exercise and hygiene. Pupils develop a deep enjoyment of physical activities and sports. Many of their successes are recognised in certification through nationally organised agencies. Some of the most able pupils are studying for the Junior Sports Leader awards. The least able and severely autistic pupils also develop their skills and awareness of their bodies very well, through a different range of activities that have been adapted for them.

72. The teaching is very good, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. The best lessons are very well planned, with clear targets for each pupil. Teachers and support staff work extremely well together, each taking individual pupils, groups, or whole classes. They give inspiring praise and encouragement that motivate pupils to try harder and excel. Classes mainly have a very good staffing level, and staff make use of a good selection of equipment and facilities to enable pupils' learning. Sometimes, the targets for what pupils are expected to learn are not clear, and there are occasions when pupils can spend a long time waiting their turn for an activity. Language development, mathematics and personal and social skills are very well reinforced through physical education activities.

73. All pupils take part in some activities that are particularly appropriate for their own ability level. The older, more able pupils have opportunities to take part in an excellent range of physical activities. The school goes far beyond the basic range that is expected, as part of the taught time in school, and at many places away from the school. The partnerships with other schools, centres and national organisations are very strong. Opportunities include seasonal activities such as sailing and skiing; indoor activities such as trampolining and swimming; team games; athletics; modern and country dance; and a host of more specialist and adapted games and activities. Some extremely good opportunities exist for taking part in national and regional competitions, and for after-school activities such as judo and dance. However, the activities in other establishments, and after school, are mainly for the more able pupils. Less is done for the pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties, or who have strong autistic tendencies, or very challenging behaviours. The subject leaders hope to extend the opportunities for the least able pupils, especially within the school, as it can be difficult to provide specialist transport after school.

74. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinators do not see physical education as a unified provision within a single school. They do not have a clear and incisive view of the priorities across the subject. The spectacular provision for some more able and older pupils who are based in one building is not available throughout the school. The balance of what is taught from one year to the next is not always equal: Year 7 pupils, for example, have twice as much physical education time as Years 8 and 9. Some pupils may go two or more years without any gymnastics, swimming or outdoor adventurous pursuits, for instance.

75. A very good effort has been made to maintain and improve some pupils' standards at a very high level. However, the approach across the whole school has not been well integrated, and best practice in each area is not fully shared. The range of activities has increased; teaching standards in Years 1 to 6 have improved; and the teaching groups are no longer so large that pupils' learning is affected.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

PSHE

Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the provision of the subject but the main strengths are that:

- It contributes well to pupils' personal development, including pupils who attend the inclusion unit.
- There is very good provision for developing an awareness of the world of work.
- The staff team has developed the subject well.

76. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is given high priority for both primary and secondary aged pupils. There is a strong emphasis on building self-esteem, confidence, and developing relationships. All pupils have good opportunities in discrete lessons, tutorial times, and assemblies. Lunchtime arrangements effectively promote pupils' self-help skills, while providing opportunities for developing relationships and social skills, and healthy eating. This contributes very well to their personal development, behaviour and attitudes. This is especially evident in the

inclusion unit where pupils have not had successful previous educational experiences. Through an understanding and supportive approach, a positive ethos for learning is developed, which results in improved attendance for the pupils and achievement. The leadership of the subject has developed well under the new federated arrangements. The co-ordinators, who have only just assumed their responsibilities, are extremely enthusiastic about the subject, and have identified which areas of the curriculum need more development. However, they are not yet at the stage of monitoring teaching and identifying good practice.

Citizenship

77. The citizenship element of the curriculum is satisfactory. It is satisfactorily supported by the links the school has with the local community and pupils' access to events outside school. Within the taught curriculum the co-ordinators have developed schemes of work that use aspects of the national QCA programmes of study. These have been appropriately adapted to the needs of the pupils. Lessons in citizenship develop the pupils' awareness of their responsibility towards others. Pupils show a growing knowledge about local communities, people's jobs and roles in society, community issues, the world of work and their role as citizens. For example, in one lesson on Children's Rights pupils discussed, with understanding, the right to life, the right to food, and the right of a young person to be appropriately treated if found guilty of a crime. Displays around the school help pupils understand the part they play as citizens as in the one about the forth-coming General Election and another illustrating good manners. There is a wealth of evidence that this aspect of the curriculum is supported through topical issues, such as the Asian tsunami, the death of the Pope, the Royal Wedding and the General Election. All pupils are involved in a range of charity fundraising activities.

Work related curriculum

78. There is very good provision for careers education. The school places very high emphasis preparing pupils to enter the adult world of leisure, training and work. A very relevant curriculum for this has been developed for pupils from Year 10 upwards. It is closely linked to the accreditation used for preparing pupils for independent living. The Connexions service who provide vocational advice and support is very involved in the school, including being part of the Governing Body. The service delivers and supports this aspect of the curriculum. Work experience is very well established with all pupils accessing it from Year 11 upwards. These link well with the after-school placements, such as for catering, and give pupils a valuable insight into vocational areas for when they leave school. To complement this some in Post 16 have very good opportunities to enhance their social skills and knowledge and understanding of how businesses work through the mini enterprise initiative of running a Theatre company. This provides students with excellent opportunities to work as a team, solve problems, relate to adults in businesses, and also to enhance their confidence through a public performance.

POST 16 PROVISION

The provision for Post 16 is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very good and has been developed to meet all students' future needs.
- The use of the primary school as a base for students with more complex needs is not appropriate.
- The quality of teaching for both groups of Post 16 students is very good.

Commentary

79. All students benefit from the Post 16 provision which has been part of the two schools before they became federated. Each had its own curriculum and these have been brought together under the 14 -19 vocational curriculum that the school now provides. The work is focussed on being an

adult and presents opportunities to the students to widen their knowledge base, work and training experiences, and gain accreditation. Besides students continuing with developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills, they also have individual learning plans where they have opportunities to access a wide range of subjects and accreditation. These are negotiated with each student so that their curriculum is tailor made and therefore very relevant to their needs. There are examples of higher attaining students accessing GCSE courses at mainstream school, completing some additional qualifications in other subjects in this school, and having link courses with colleges and work experience placements. Students study for the ASDAN Life Skills and Foundation for Work award as part of the school's links with the Staffordshire Business Partnership. This also supports students on extended work experience placements. Students are required to make an in-depth study of their work placement, including Health and Safety, training and recruitment, interviews with employees and conditions of work. Students also have the opportunity to attend college on a targeted 'in fill' basis on a Wednesday, or attend extended work experience placements with the support of Connexions and the Staffordshire Business Partnership. The options include: Art and Design, Catering, Brickwork, Painting/Decorating, Joinery, Hair and Beauty, Vehicle Maintenance, and Health and Social Care.

80. Lower attaining students or those with more complex needs also have an individually tailored curriculum and this is very much concerned with preparing them to cope independently as possible, and on making decisions and taking charge of their life. The group is very small and is appropriately being taught with Year 10 and 11 pupils. However, through thoughtful organisation and planning, these students have opportunities to experience activities as a group outside the school environment. This allows them to feel some distinction of being older. However, the siting of their class in the primary school, even though the staff have located it in a very separate section of the school does not allow these students to work alongside and mix with students of the same age.

81. All students are being taught by teachers who are very experienced in dealing with young people with special educational needs. The management has grouped the pupils together by ability and this has enabled them to organise the students' individual timetables and access to accreditation more effectively. The relationships between the higher attaining students and the class teacher are excellent and founded on respect and a long term association. Organisation is well planned, and lessons are carried out in a calm and adult atmosphere. For example, the students as part of their accreditation made three-course lunch, with a choices in each course, and provided a very enjoyable atmosphere, with confident and adult conversation, to which an inspector was invited. Organising such activities is difficult in one classroom, although there is some use of the food technology room and the ICT room. The teacher created many opportunities for pupils to follow through their decisions, such as working independently on course work for their accreditation or for their links with other schools. Due the large number of students in the class, and the widening of the ability level the management have placed a very experienced teaching assistant in the class. She is very capable and leads discussion well, when working with small groups of students on Life skills units of work. Because of this students are able to understand and complete the work. The teaching of students with more complex difficulties is equally as good. This is carried out by two teachers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. These are very experienced teachers who when not working with these students teach in the secondary school. They communicate clearly and simply with the students and are very aware of their different traits in behaviour, such as those shown by students with Autism or who need a sensory approach to teaching. Again the quality of the support from the teaching assistants in managing the behaviour is very good, and as result students take part in the activities without disrupting the class and the learning of others.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	0
Value for money provided by the school	0
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).