

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Thornhill Park School  
Sunderland**

**LEA area : Sunderland**

**Unique Reference Number : 108877**

**Headteacher : Mrs P. Watson**

Reporting inspector : Mr M. H. Wright  
T11469

Dates of inspection : 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> April 1997

Under OFSTED contract number: 400728

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the Schools Inspections Act 1996

## Information about the school

Type of school :	Special (Autism)
Type of control :	Independent
Age range of pupils :	4 - 19
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	21, Thornhill Park Sunderland Tyne & Wear SR2 7LA
Telephone number :	0191 5140659
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Appropriate authority :	Tyne & Wear Autistic Society
Name of chair of governors :	Mrs Kathleen Marshall

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## Main findings

*“It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references as to attainment take account of information contained in pupils’ statements and annual reviews”.*

Overall, all pupils make satisfactory or better progress over time. The range and degree of progress recorded is variable. And the pace of progress for some pupils in some aspects of their learning is slow, whilst for others it is rapid. For some pupils the progress they make is erratic. Some pupils make very good progress with their social behaviour, their level of independence and in their ability to communicate using words, symbols and electronic aids. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the progress made by their children over the time they are at Thornhill.

Progress in English is variable across all key stages depending on the severity of individual pupils’ difficulties in the acquisition of language. Overall it is satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally very good particularly in the development of effective means of communication.

1. The majority of pupils enter the school with poorly developed communication skills and an inability to extract meaning from the spoken word. Progress in speaking and listening is good and, by the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils communicate through symbols or speech and are beginning to sequence their working day through the use of schedules. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils respond to their own names, listen to instructions and some can retell events from their immediate experiences, although the least able are still reliant on pictorial symbols. By the end of Key Stage 3, a few use language to convey information and to ask questions, waiting and listening for the answers. The majority speak in sentences, using past tense and descriptive words. On leaving school, all pupils have developed communication systems which, for the least able, enable them to indicate their basic needs while the most able are equipped to take a places in colleges of further education.
2. Progress in reading is variable. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have been introduced to books and are beginning to recognise that the written word conveys meaning. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can identify individual letters and are building up a limited sight vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils still rely on their increasing sight vocabulary but a few can word build and enjoy reading. The most able pupils are using books to obtain information and for reading for pleasure by the end of Key Stage 4 and at post-16.
3. Progress in writing is also variable but, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are developing their fine motor control and a few can write independently. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can overwrite letters, some have mastered correct letter orientation and a few use simple punctuation. By the end of Key Stage 3, although some pupils have been introduced to the cursive style of writing most, those who can write prefer to continue using print. There is evidence of the emergence of creative writing with pupils using different tenses and appropriate simple punctuation. Some pupils are still unable to write independently. At the end of Key Stage 4 and in the post-16 group, the majority of pupils can use writing for a purpose, for example, filling in application forms and letter writing.
4. In mathematics in all key stages and at post-16, the vast majority of pupils make sound or better progress. Only one example of unsatisfactory progress was seen at Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 1, more able pupils can count up to thirty, add combinations of numbers up to ten and can identify and sort simple shapes. In Key Stage 2, more able pupils can recognise and write numbers up to five, identify and sort simple shapes. At the end of Key Stage 3, more able pupils can order numbers up to one hundred, work in multiples of ten,

recognise quarter and half, sequence days, weeks and months, and use mathematical names for three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Key Stage 4, more able pupils can use calculators well, use mathematical language for simple shapes, work out area and volume of regular shapes and solids and use co-ordinators. In post-16 more able pupils were able to use calculators and measure distances on maps. One pupil is taking General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics at a local college.

5. In science in Key Stage 1, there is evidence of progress for pupils who can socially participate in an activity, and can understand which materials might float or sink. In Key Stage 2, some children can explore and investigate materials making progress in their understanding. At the end of Key Stage 3, there is evidence of progress for children who can formulate early hypotheses, apply tests and observe the outcomes and understand what is meant by a fair test. Some children also show progress in Key Stage 3 when correctly labelling plants and recognise differences in leaf shapes. Some pupils can understand varying shadow length, through practical enquiry, and record their findings. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils understand that mixing foodstuffs can modify texture and that the application of lead can cause change.
6. Progress in the foundation subjects is variable. It is predominantly satisfactory in all key stages. Only very rarely is progress less than satisfactory in physical education and design and technology. Occasionally, individual pupils make progress in line with national expectations in art, food technology and music.
7. Pupils respond well to their teachers and care workers; they show great interest in their lessons. Some persevere with support and some independently, maintain concentration and show enjoyment in their activities. The behaviour of most pupils is very good, taking into account their difficulties, they display good control. They are well managed and consistently and effectively supported by staff. The opportunity provided for most pupils to partake in the school pantomime is a remarkable achievement by staff to achieve such a high standard of work from the pupils.
8. Pupils' attendance is very good. The school is developing procedures to ensure that the very small number of unauthorised absences are dealt with appropriately. Pupils are punctual to lessons and enjoy attending their classes. Day pupils generally arrive punctually at school.
9. The quality of teaching overall is consistently satisfactory or better in all key stages and only occasionally is it unsatisfactory. Teaching is often very good and very occasionally inspirational. The management provides clear, detailed guidance for teaching with regards to its philosophy and methodology. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the planning is inadequate and does not ensure that clear instructions are given to all staff and that pupils are supported in such a manner as to gain the maximum benefit in situations which are less well structured. However, in the vast majority of lessons the level of support provided is well guided by clear, informed planning, high levels of supervision and appropriately managed levels of challenge are provided for the pupils. The very well developed Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets help to ensure the careful delivery of a developing, appropriate, National Curriculum experience for every pupil.
10. Teachers introduce a range of flexible teaching methods in order to meet and to effectively focus and challenge the interest of the pupils. In the most effective lessons, the teacher maintains a lively pace. Teachers and classroom assistants collaborate very effectively to harness the interests and the obsessive and ritualistic behaviour of the pupils in a sensitive manner which leads them towards increased levels of skill, confidence and independence. The careful, consistent use of schedules, pictures and icons, verbal prompts, rewards and sensitive handling creates a climate in the classroom conducive to learning and most pupils

make good progress. Whilst a significant number of pupils show signs of frustration and varying levels of challenging behaviour in lessons, they are always managed effectively by the staff, thereby minimising the effect on the learning of others. The management has not developed adequate monitoring strategies to ensure the required level of consistency of delivery of quality teaching on all sites. Whilst weak teaching is recognised by the management, processes to affect change have not always been effective.

11. The good teaching and the high expectations of the staff have a positive impact on the pupils' levels of achievement and the degree of progress made by the pupils.

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12. During the last few years the school has made both rapid and substantial curriculum change. This has resulted in the production of National Curriculum policy documents and a framework for planning, assessment and recording. However, the 'Essential Curriculum' needs to be integrated into the National Curriculum schemes of work. These need to be more detailed and comprehensive in order to meet National Curriculum requirements and to improve planning and assessment processes. Some areas of the National Curriculum, such as history, geography, information technology and aspects of design technology, are not yet fully implemented. The structured teaching approaches, which are designed to utilise and manage the characteristic traits of people with autism, are used effectively, in almost all cases, across the whole school and residential establishments. A new system of curriculum co-ordination has been set up and this now needs to be supported and implemented. Staff require more detailed written guidance on the use of the new planning and recording systems to ensure they are used consistently and effectively. The IEPs are of a particularly high standard. They are well prepared and contain clear targets for all areas of the National Curriculum. The school has combined the annual review with the annual report and produces documents of a good standard which are well presented at meetings. However, the school needs to use annual reviews to ensure appropriate modifications and disapplications to the National Curriculum are approved and recorded by local education authorities.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is appropriately promoted and moral and social development are very good. Spirituality is reinforced in school assemblies and through the effective religious education curriculum. The way in which the school acts as a community and the very good relationships established within school ensures continued progress in this area. Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions and understanding of others is developing effectively and good opportunities are provided to extend pupils' experiences through a range of music and multi-cultural foods.

14. The school makes excellent provision for the educational and personal support and guidance of both pupils and their families. Caring, close and informed relationships between staff and pupils pervade the life of the school. They provide a secure and safe environment that permits pupils to develop and modify their perception of life at their individual pace and level of comfort and acceptance. There are effective systems in place for the monitoring of attendance, behaviour, social and personal development, but their monitoring of academic progress is under-developed.

15. Care arrangements are complex, yet they ensure detailed cross-references to all aspects of pupils' requirements and personal development. The regular, frequent and mainly documented exchanges of information on the behaviour, health and activities of pupils takes place between care and teaching staff daily.

16. The school has successfully received accreditation for their work as a provider of approved autistic provision. Staff are meticulous in the observation of the privacy and dignity of pupils within the residential setting, whilst remaining alert to the necessity to oversee many aspects of the pupils' activities. Facilities for pupils to discuss their affairs in confidence are available for those individuals to whom it is a matter of concern. Meals are of a very high standard and make a good contribution to the well-being of pupils and are an eagerly anticipated part of the day.
17. The school places a high value on the monitoring of pupils' personal guidance to reflect progress made in personal skills and appropriate behaviour in society. The school makes very good provision for the health and safety of pupils. There are effective child protection procedures in the school which are well known to all members of staff and parents.
18. A firm commitment to partnership exists between school and parents to support pupils' learning. Parents are very positive in their endorsement of the routines established by the school to ensure the well-being of their children. They are pleased with the quality and amount of information provided by the school and the school attempts to ensure the transmission of up-to-date facts on pupils' reviews, IEPs and activities. Whilst there is no special provision for accommodating parents, the school is pleased to involve visiting parents in the daily life of the school. Parent/teacher evenings are well attended as are events to further parents' knowledge on specialised aspects of their child's care. School performances, such as the pantomime, are well attended. The school strongly benefits from the dedicated support offered throughout the local community by the extended network of friends and family of its staff and parents. Fund-raising events and ventures are driven by their initiative and imagination.
19. There are good links with support agencies in the community. Specialist support is quickly accessed by the school when they deem it appropriate. Good links have been established with the local careers service.
20. The school makes wide and varied use of the resources in the local community to benefit curriculum areas and personal development. Pupils' social skills flourish in the many opportunities given to them to enjoy their region and the local leisure and commercial facilities.
21. The quiet, well informed and sensitive leadership of the headteacher successfully empowers all staff who respond diligently and provide a stimulating environment which fully meets the particular requirements of the autistic pupils in their care. This work is underpinned by clear aims, a mission statement and a very clear policy and guidance document. A strength of this leadership provided by the director and the headteacher ensures the consistency with which behaviour management strategies are applied across all four sites throughout the twenty-four hour curriculum. The headteacher, ably supported by a well informed deputy, senior teachers and a senior communication therapist, has encouraged the staff to begin to develop a full and appropriate engagement with the National Curriculum by the pupils within the overall twenty-four hour curriculum. Levels of delegation are appropriate, day-to-day decisions are seen to be fair and all levels of management are felt to be accessible by staff and parents. There are no equal opportunities issues.
22. Very clear working partnerships have been developed between the director, the headteacher, the governors, the staff and the parents which ensures that a clear direction is established for all the work of the school. Parents value highly all levels of school management and feel they are very approachable and helpful. All staff have job descriptions and understand their roles. The staff handbook is informative and clear. Daily routines run smoothly and, in spite of the complexities caused by the nature of the four centre site, routine communication is good. The three year school development planning process is

becoming a very effective tool in guiding the work of the school strategically but the annual management plan is not clearly prioritised, costed or evaluated. The curriculum, financial and management plans are currently discrete documents. There are no clearly identified success criteria against which the school can measure its progress. Currently the school development plan, the curriculum plan and the detailed financial planning processes operate as three distinct processes.

23. The number of qualified teachers in the classroom is appropriate to the number and needs of the pupils across the school whilst the number of non-teaching staff working in the classrooms is very good. The role of the subject co-ordinator is developing but as yet there is insufficient evidence of cohesive whole-site co-ordination. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are sound but procedures for teacher appraisal are not formalised. Individual in-service needs are effectively identified and the school development plan is moving towards structures which will match individual staff development needs with the corporate needs of the school.
24. The school maintains a high quality level of displays of pupils' work; this is respected by pupils. The quality of residential care accommodation is very good and appropriate to the needs of the pupils with well furnished, clean and comfortable accommodation. The residential units provide a secure, warm, family ethos personalised by the pupils' own belongings. This contributes to the quality of education for the pupils.
25. The school is very effectively maintained and kept very clean. There are several shortcomings in the school premises, for example, in science, art, design and technology and physical education. The school effectively accesses a wide range of community resources which both enhances the curriculum and learning opportunities for the pupils.
26. The level of learning resources is generally good. The level of provision, deployment and condition of books, materials and equipment to support pupil achievement and National Curriculum coverage is good in mathematics, food technology and physical education and satisfactory in English, science, art, music, religious education and information technology. In history, geography and aspects of design technology the level of resources are unsatisfactory.
27. The school makes effective and efficient use of the resources available to it, including special grants and donations. Funds are allocated appropriately and fully used to support the learning experiences of the pupils. Efficient use is made of all staff throughout the twenty-four hour curriculum in order to respond to the unique needs of the pupils. Accommodation and learning resources are efficiently used and have a positive effect on the achievement of the pupils. There is effective day-to-day financial planning and control, and routine administration is excellent across all aspects of the life of the school. The efficient and effective roles played by the bursar and the administration staff has a significant effect on the efficiency of the school and the welfare and achievements of the pupils. Curriculum audits are complete and external auditor's reports have been effectively implemented.
28. As a result of the quality of education provided, the good progress made by the pupils, the relatively low unit costs and the excellent financial management, Thornhill Park School gives good value for money. There is, however, work to be done in relation to the development of the curriculum in order to raise even further the achievement of the pupils.



## **Key issues for action**

1. The Headteacher, together with the governors, should:
  - .improve management planning by bringing together the curriculum, financial and management planning into a single, agreed framework for whole-school development;
  - .establish success criteria for each target within the management plan to assist the school in monitoring and evaluating its own progress;
  - .improve the level of National Curriculum entitlement, together with processes for its assessment;
  - .improve appropriate specialist accommodation to support aspects of the National Curriculum, most urgently for science, art, design and technology and physical education for Key Stages 3 and 4;
  - .improve teaching where it is unsatisfactory by formalising monitoring procedures and subsequent support strategies.

## **Introduction**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Thornhill Park School is a specialised independent school offering education and residential care for children with autism. It is in a range of modified buildings on two separate sites in Sunderland. The sites are over three miles apart. The school's work is strengthened by its affiliation to the National Autistic Society. The school caters for a mixed population of pupils in the 4-19 year age range. There are currently eighty-five pupils on the school roll most of whom are white. There are 64 boys and 21 girls; forty-four are boarded and all of the pupils have statements of special educational need except for one pupil who is under assessment. Pupils are placed at the school by a wide range of local education authorities (LEAs) and, as a result, the catchment area stretches from Essex to Cumbria with the majority of pupils coming from the North East. Many of the pupils are placed in the school either after having failed to be accommodated in a mainstream school or other special school, or as a result of an early assessment of autism. The school is full to capacity and has a waiting list.
2. The parents value very highly the work of the school both in terms of the degree of progress it achieves for the pupils and for the high degree of support it routinely provides for the families. The headteacher and management of the school have clear plans for development for the school which are prioritised and costed. These include:
  - .restructuring the senior management on the retirement of the Director of Education and Care Services;
  - .continue to develop the whole school curriculum, including assessment, recording and reporting;
  - .continue to develop the teaching of information technology across the school;
  - .continue the development of the Carley Hill site.

## 1. Key indicators

### Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	1	0	1

No pupils were entered for Key Stage 1 tests.

### Attainment at Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	8	0	8

### Teacher assessment:

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1996	8	0	8
LEVEL	W	1	2	3	4
English	2	1	2	0	0
Mathematics	1	3	0	0	1
Science	1	3	1	0	0

Unable to assess 3 pupils due to communication handicap.

### Curriculum tests:

Science: 4 tasks abandoned; 1 completed to Level 1.

### Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	3	1	4

Pupils mainly working towards Level 1; 1 possible Level 1 in reading for 1 boy.

### Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	3	1	4

GCSE mathematics final exam in June.

### Routes taken by pupils aged 17 or over

1996: 2 pupils entered into further education.

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	N/A
Unauthorised Absence	School	2
	National comparative data	N/A

## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	1
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. *“It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references as to attainment take account of information contained in pupils’ statements and annual reviews”.*
2. Local education authority statements lack specificity and do not set baselines to assist the school in its aspirations to offer an appropriately modified National Curriculum experience to all pupils. Pupils enter the school with very significant learning and social difficulties.
3. Overall, all pupils make satisfactory or better progress over time. The range and degree of progress recorded is variable; the pace of progress for some pupils in some aspects of their learning is slow, whilst for others it is rapid. For some pupils the progress they make is erratic. Some pupils make very good progress with their social behaviour skills, their level of independence and in their ability to communicate using words, symbols and electronic aids. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the progress made by their children over the time they are within the range of Thornhill provision.
4. The degree of progress made by the end of Key Stage 1, Key Stage 4 and post-16 based on both lesson observations and scrutiny of evidence files is consistently good, occasionally very good and never less than satisfactory. By the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 it is almost always satisfactory or better, frequently good and occasionally very good; it is rarely unsatisfactory.
5. Progress in English is variable across all key stages depending on the severity of individual pupils' difficulties in the acquisition of language. Overall it is satisfactory, sometimes good and sometimes very good particularly in the development of effective means of communication.
6. The majority of pupils enter the school with poorly developed communication skills and an inability to extract meaning from the spoken word. Progress in speaking and listening is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils communicate through symbols or speech and are beginning to sequence their working day through the use of schedules. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils respond to their own names, listen to instructions and some can retell events from their immediate experiences, although the least able are still reliant on pictorial symbols. By the end of Key Stage 3, a few use language to convey information and to ask questions; waiting and listening for the answers. The majority speak in sentences using past tense and descriptive words. On leaving school, all pupils have developed communication systems which, for the least able, enable them to indicate their basic needs. The most able are equipped to take places in colleges of further education.
7. Progress in reading is variable. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have been introduced to books and are beginning to recognise that the written word conveys meaning. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can identify individual letters and are building up a limited sight vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils still rely on their increasing sight vocabulary but a few can word build and enjoy reading. The most able pupils are using books to obtain information and for reading for pleasure at the end of Key Stage 4 and post-16.

8. Progress in writing is also variable. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing their fine motor control and a few can write independently. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are can overwrite letters, some have mastered correct letter orientation and a few use simple punctuation. By the end of Key Stage 3, although some pupils have been introduced to the cursive style of writing, most who can write, prefer to continue using print. There is evidence of the emergence of creative writing with pupils using different tenses and appropriate simple punctuation. Some pupils, particularly those in the special unit, are not able to write independently. At the end of Key Stage 4 and in the post-16 group, the majority of pupils can use writing for a purpose, for example, filling in application forms and letter writing.
9. In mathematics in all key stages and at post-16, the vast majority of pupils make sound or better progress. Only one example of unsatisfactory progress was seen at Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 1, more able pupils can count up to thirty, add combinations of numbers up to ten and can identify and sort simple shapes. In Key Stage 2 more able pupils can recognise and write numbers up to five. At the end of Key Stage 3, more able pupils can order numbers up to one hundred, work in multiples of ten, recognise quarter and half, sequence days, weeks and months and use mathematical names for three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Key Stage 4, more able pupils can use calculators for all four operations well, use mathematical language for simple shapes, work out area and volume of regular shapes and solids and use co-ordinates. More able pupils in post-16 are able to use calculators and measure distances on maps. One pupil is taking GCSE mathematics at a local college.
10. In science in Key Stage 1, there is evidence of progress for pupils who can socially participate in an activity, and can understand which materials might float or sink. In Key Stage 2, some children can explore and investigate materials making progress in their understanding. At the end of Key Stage 3, there is evidence of progress for children who can formulate early hypotheses, apply tests and observe the outcomes and understand what is meant by a fair test. Some children also show progress in Key Stage 3 when correctly labelling plants and recognise differences in leaf shapes. Some pupils can understand varying shadow length, through practical enquiry, and record their findings. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils understand that mixing foodstuffs can modify texture and that the application of lead can cause change.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1. Pupils respond well to their teachers and care workers. Their attitudes to learning are generally good. They are interested in lessons and the majority of pupils sustain their interest and concentrate well, some with support and some independently. They enjoy practical tasks and try hard to achieve. Relationships in class are good between pupils and particularly between pupils and staff. The good relationship staff have with pupils promotes a positive learning atmosphere. Pupils generally co-operate well and, at times, work surprisingly well collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Many show concern and care for each other and within their ability, show tolerance and respect for the feelings and work of others. Pupils show enjoyment in lessons, some of which are fun.
2. Generally behaviour in lessons, breaktimes and around the school is very good. The majority of pupils conduct themselves in an orderly and sensible manner, some with a high level of support and others with little or none. This good behaviour is most noticeable at play times, lunch times and home times. They play in a sensible manner, sometimes interacting with each other successfully, with a substantial level of staff support.

3. Some pupils are naughty and at times mischievous, some present more challenging behaviours, but all incidents are well managed. This is achieved by the high staffing ratio and by the staffs' vigilance and timely intervention preventing more serious situations developing. Where lessons are well organised and clear instructions given, the challenge is well managed and behaviour is very good. On the rare occasions where structure and expectations are less clear, behaviour can be unsatisfactory. When the behaviour is well managed it has a positive effect on pupils' learning.
4. A school incident book is meticulously maintained and all staff consistently apply the agreed school behaviour policy. There have been no exclusions from the school this year. IEPs target pupil behaviour; all incidents are recorded and monitored well. There is no bullying in school.
5. Pupils' personal development is effectively supported. Independence is fostered and, where appropriate, pupils occasionally take responsibility for their own actions. They are encouraged to make decisions, choices and selections and many successfully achieve this. Although no work experience is provided for pupils, they do follow a good series of industrial visits which widen their experiences and enhance their personal development. A most positive feature of pupils' personal development is the way in which many participate in the school pantomime. This is a remarkable achievement by staff to achieve such a high standard of work from pupils with great personal difficulties.
6. When given the opportunity to take responsibility, such as giving out registers, assisting at meal times, helping other children, collecting and storing resources and tidying up, pupils generally respond well. They show respect for school property and the work and property of other pupils.
7. Generally, pupils respond well showing good attitudes to developing independence, social skills and forming effective relationships. Most pupils respond well to school rules, set routines and clear structures.

### **Attendance**

1. Pupils attendance is very good and the school is developing procedures to ensure that the very small amount of unauthorised absences are dealt with appropriately. Pupils are punctual to lessons and enjoy attending their classes. Day pupils arrive punctually at school.

### **Quality of education provided**

#### **Teaching**

1. The quality of teaching overall is consistently satisfactory or better in all key stages and only occasionally is it unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. Teaching is often very good and very occasionally inspirational. The management provides clear, detailed guidance for teaching with regards to its philosophy and methodology. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the planning is inadequate to ensure that clear instructions are given to all staff and that pupils are supported in such a manner as to gain the maximum benefit in situations which are less structured. Lessons lack pace and stimulation. The match between the expectations and the pupils' abilities are inappropriate. The impact is to unsettle the pupils for periods of time which extend beyond the lesson itself. In some lessons the level of challenge is low and all pupils are given the same worksheet to complete.

2. However, in the vast majority of lessons, the level of support provided is well guided by clear informed planning, high levels of supervision and appropriately managed levels of challenge are provided for the pupils. The teachers' subject knowledge is well matched to the needs of the individuals and specific aspects of their disability. The very well developed IEP targets help to ensure the careful delivery of a developing appropriate National Curriculum experience for every pupil. Teachers introduce a range of flexible teaching methods in order to meet and to effectively focus and challenge the interest of the pupils. In most effective lessons the teacher maintains a lively pace. Teachers and classroom assistants collaborate very effectively to harness the interests and the obsessive and ritualistic behaviour of the pupils in a sensitive manner which leads them towards increased levels of skill and confidence. The careful, consistent use of schedules, pictures and icons, verbal prompts, rewards and sensitive handling creates a climate in the classroom conducive to learning and most pupils make good progress. Whilst a significant number of pupils show signs of frustration and varying levels of challenging behaviour in lessons, they are always managed effectively by the staff, thereby minimising the effect on the learning of others.
3. Teachers and care staff work very hard to maintain detailed records in their evidence files in order to demonstrate the progress made by pupils over time. This process is highly valued by parents. Teachers' records, whilst being laboriously maintained, are very often descriptive and not always consistently recorded and dated. Teachers do not revisit the range of skills learned with sufficient precision.
4. The good teaching and the high expectations of the staff have a positive impact on the pupils' levels of achievement and the degree of progress made by the pupils.

### **The curriculum and assessment**

1. During the last few years the school has made both rapid and substantial progress towards meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. National Curriculum policy documents and the framework of a good planning, assessment and recording system are now in place. The IEPs are of a particularly high standard and the school is to be commended on them. However, further development is needed for the school to achieve its aim of working fully and confidently within the National Curriculum in a way that is relevant for children and young people with autism.
2. The school's successful and well considered 'Essential Curriculum' is yet to be integrated into the National Curriculum schemes of work. Such integration would ensure that all the needs of the children are planned and recorded within one scheme, making a more manageable planning and recording system. In addition, the current schemes do not yet have sufficiently precise learning objectives or details of the sort of activities which could help teachers plan and record pupil achievement. Some Key Stage 1, 3 and 4 staff have devised other additional planning systems which describe more detailed learning outcomes and activities. Some areas of the National Curriculum, such as history and information technology, are not yet fully implemented and so the entitlement of the pupils is not fully met.
3. The post-16 curriculum is relevant, balanced, broad and motivating for the young people. Work is well designed to help them prepare for adulthood; a curriculum for life. Although work experience cannot realistically be offered, there is a good programme of industrial visits and careers education. A relevant system for accrediting pupils' work has been adopted recently. Some college links are used to enhance the curriculum and accreditation the school can offer.

4. Educational visits are a strong feature of the school at all stages and across subjects. They are well planned and used to promote the delivery of the curriculum.
5. Where relevant, the school uses a number of structured teaching approaches which are designed to manage and utilise the characteristic traits of autism. These are used consistently and effectively in almost all cases within both the school and care establishments on all sites and for all ages. These approaches, which require highly differentiated timetable structures for individual pupils, also provide a framework which helps the school to effectively meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of abilities and additional special educational needs.
6. The twenty-four hour curriculum is relevant, lively and varied and helps support the work of the school. For some pupils this is over fifty weeks in the year.
7. Senior management have recently reviewed and restructured systems for the co-ordination of the curriculum, taking into account the particular difficulties of being based on four sites and catering for pupils aged from 5 to 19. The review led to a revised system, of phase and subject co-ordinators, being introduced recently. It is too early to judge the effect of this process. A recent development in this area was the releasing of the primary co-ordinator to monitor and support colleagues; this has proved to be very effective.
8. A sound framework for assessment now exists with the IEPs, lesson plans, pupil attainment sheets and pupil evidence files. There is some inconsistency in the use of these systems. Similarly, there is not yet a whole-school policy or guidelines on marking. Statutory end of key stage assessment is yet to be fully implemented and reported.
9. There is a policy for sex education which the school is now at the early stages of implementing.
10. The school conducts annual reviews in accordance with the code of practice and makes every effort to ensure good attendance. Considerable effort is put into ensuring that the different practices of over twenty LEAs are accommodated. The school has combined the annual review with the annual report and produces documents of a good standard which are well presented at meetings. The school needs to use the annual review process to ensure that any relevant modifications or disapplications to the National Curriculum are approved and recorded by the appropriate LEA. The quality of their statements and amendments, following annual reviews, is variable; few statements adequately describe the provision and curriculum needed to meet pupils' needs and some inaccurately describe the provision required.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

1. The ethos of the school is excellent. It is underpinned by the school's aims to encourage pupils to regard themselves positively and to treat other people with tolerance, respect and courtesy; to help each student to become a happy and caring young person capable of contributing to the community in a positive way.
2. Spirituality is promoted, where appropriate, through a strong spirit of community in school, particularly in the residential areas of the school. Pupils are given time and support to reflect upon their actions and many pupils respond well to reflective atmospheres created by a range of music. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in class, in assemblies and in displays throughout the school. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour in school, and religious education is taught at an appropriate level throughout the school and at post-16.



3. The pupils' moral development is very well promoted by the way the school acts as a community. Staff provide good role-models for pupils and relationships between pupils and staff, and pupils themselves are very good throughout the school. Behaviour is generally good, although some pupils are occasionally mischievous and some present more challenging behaviour due to their condition.
4. There is no bullying in school and many pupils are developing an awareness of right and wrong. They generally show respect for their own property and work, that of others and school resources they use. Some more able pupils are beginning to develop responsibility for their own actions.
5. Pupils' social development is very well promoted within the school and the community. There are good links with the community through physical education, drama and the annual pantomime production. The participation in the school pantomime is an exceptional opportunity for pupils and should be recognised as a remarkable achievement for all pupils who take part. The 'Good News' board is used effectively to recognise and reward successes.
6. Pupils are offered opportunities to develop responses in a range of different social settings, always within a caring, supportive environment. A very good range of extra curriculum activities are offered giving the pupils opportunities to improve their social development. Some pupils are given the opportunity to extend and improve their social development by residential experiences on Holy Island or at Beadnell. Some more able pupils work successfully in pairs and small groups, a commendable achievement for the pupils who manage to do so.
7. The cultural development of pupils is promoted effectively through the use of the community, educational visits and school drama productions. Many pupils have an awareness of their own culture and some study the French language and through this gain some appreciation of another European culture, language and traditions. There are few multi-cultural books in the library.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

1. The school makes excellent provision for the educational and personal support and guidance of pupils and their families. Caring, close and informed relationships between staff and pupils pervade the life of the school. They provide a secure and safe environment that permits pupils to develop and modify their perception of life; at their individual pace and level of comfort and acceptance. There are effective systems in place for the monitoring of attendance, behaviour and social and personal development, but the monitoring of academic progress remains underdeveloped.
2. Care arrangements are complex yet ensure detailed cross-references to all aspects of pupils' requirements and personal development. Regular, frequent and mainly documented exchanges of information on the behaviour, health and activities of pupils take place between care and teaching staff daily.
3. The schools behavioural management strategies of sensory contact and physical restraint are recorded and applied sensitively. The school has successfully received accreditation for its work as a provider of approved autistic provision. Staff are meticulous in the observation of the privacy and dignity of pupils within the residential setting, whilst remaining alert to the necessity to oversee many aspects of the pupils' activities. Pupils' individual requirements are given due consideration when constructing care plans for all aspects of their school life, and the avoidance of infringing the rights of any pupil is given a high priority in restraint

procedures.

4. Facilities for pupils to discuss their affairs in confidence are available for those individuals to whom it is a matter of concern. Pupils can access outside phone lines within the school. The school makes good provision for administering to the medical needs of the pupils and they have access to a range of medical services. Pupils who are residential are registered with a local practitioner. Good arrangements with a local chemist assist the careful dispensation of medication and storage arrangements, and the administration of approved medication are secure. Bedtime and early morning routines for residential pupils are carried out with a sense of fun, friendliness, and firm handling when appropriate. Pupils enjoy close relationships with the care staff and frequent expressions of affection are an accepted occurrence in the residential units and across the twenty-four hour curriculum. Meals are of a very high standard and make a good contribution to the well being of pupils and are an eagerly anticipated part of the day. Pupils' assistance with the preparation of all meals is a major feature of the independence training of the school.
5. The school places a high value on the monitoring of pupils personal guidance to reflect progress made in personal skills and appropriate behaviour in society. Great emphasis is laid on personal hygiene and communication to permit pupils to achieve good and safe use of public places. The school makes good use of evidence files to record pupils' successes and achievements. Induction procedures to the school are sensitive and thorough, and monitored to assist in the recording of the progress of the pupil. Transition plans and reviews do not yet provide a sufficiently clear action plan to secure appropriate provision. The range of options available for pupils is limited.
6. The school makes very good provision for the health and safety of pupils. There are comprehensive reviews of fire safety provision, and fire drills are held regularly and monitored by the health and safety committee. Risk assessments are an integral aspect of the planning of the school and are featured across the curriculum and daily activities of the pupils. Detailed driver assessments have been completed for all members of staff who use the school's transport for pupils. There is comprehensive first aid provision across the school. Many members of staff are trained first aiders and the restocking of first aid materials is co-ordinated across the school. The school has taken extensive measures to secure the safety of the pupils and has instigated rigorous signing and signing-out procedures in all the units. There are effective child protection procedures in the school, which are well known to all members of staff and parents.

### **Partnerships with parents and the community**

1. A firm commitment to partnership exists between the school and parents to support pupils' learning. Parents are very positive in their endorsement of the routines established by the school to ensure the well being of their children. The school is attentive in maintaining close contacts with parents and conscientiously ensures a regular exchange of information between home and school. Parents value the efforts made by the school to assure continuity of care at home whilst providing a family atmosphere in the school.
2. Parents are pleased with the quality and amount of information provided by the school. The school attempts to ensure the transmission of up-to-date facts on pupils reviews, individual plans and activities. Many parents attend and contribute to reviews and appreciate the extent to which the school makes good efforts to involve them in decisions on their child's development and progress and at transitional points in their child's life. The home/school book is an invaluable resource for maintaining informed contact. Whilst there is no special provision for accommodating parents, the school is pleased to involve visiting parents in the daily life of the school. Parent/teacher evenings are well attended as are events to further parents' knowledge on specialised aspects of their child's care. School performances, such

as the pantomime, are well attended. A number of parents regularly assist in the school and are available for extra support if necessary. Parents appreciate being able to work with their child in the class, spend time in the residential environment, and absorb the school's approach to learning and care. They are very supportive and appreciative of the school's procedures and care policy. The substitution of annual reviews for reports satisfies most statutory requirements but they do not include the attendance figures.

3. The school strongly benefits from the dedicated support offered throughout the local community by the extended network of friends and family of its staff and parents. Fund raising events and ventures are driven by their initiative and imagination.
4. There are good links with support agencies in the community. Specialist support is quickly accessed by the school when they deem it appropriate. Good links have been established with the local careers service. The school's contact with LEAs is largely limited to their involvement in placement and reviews and in general it is not always well supported by the some of the LEAs it serves.
5. The school makes wide and varied use of the resources in the local community to benefit curriculum areas and personal development. Pupils' social skills flourish in the many opportunities given to them to enjoy their region, and the local leisure and commercial facilities. The school appreciates the friendly, accepting and generous approach offered by many organisations to the pupils.
6. Developing links to local educational establishments offer pupils the opportunity to access accredited schemes of work and the progress of a nationally accredited scheme in the school is presenting pupils with increasing chances to enter further developmental areas of work. The initiation of visits to a local school for some of the younger pupils is extending their cultural and social expectations.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

1. The quiet, well informed and sensitive leadership of the headteacher successfully empowers all staff who respond diligently and provide a stimulating environment which fully meets the particular requirements of the autistic pupils in their care. This work is underpinned by clear aims, a mission statement and a very clear policy and guidance document. A strength of this leadership provided by the director and the headteacher ensures the consistency with which behaviour management strategies are applied across all four sites throughout the twenty-four hour curriculum. The level of democratic informality has a positive effect on the enthusiastic involvement of all of the staff and many parents in the life of the school. The headteacher, ably supported by a well informed deputy, senior teachers and senior communication therapist has encouraged the staff to ensure a full and appropriate engagement with the National Curriculum by the pupils within the overall twenty-four hour curriculum. Both the schools mission statement and aims are known, understood and implemented across the whole school's work. The work of the school is well supported by well written prospectus, policies, guidance notes and information leaflets. These are highly valued by parents. Levels of delegation are appropriate, day-to-day decisions are seen to be fair and all levels of management are felt to be accessible to the staff and parents. There are no equal opportunities issues.

2. Very clear working partnerships have been developed between the director, the headteacher, the governors, the staff and the parents which ensures that a clear direction is established for all the work of the school. Governors fulfil their statutory duties enthusiastically. They positively contribute to the good quality of education provided and the development of a positive ethos, which reflects the staff's commitment to high achievement. All staff have job descriptions and understand their role. The staff handbook is informative and clear. Daily routines run smoothly and, in spite of the complexities caused by the nature of the four centre site, routine communication is good. Effective strategies are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to action any shortcomings. The three year school development planning process is becoming a very effective tool in guiding the work of the school strategically but the annual management plan is not clearly prioritised, costed and evaluated. The school has not developed clearly success criteria nor the mechanisms by which they can be evaluated. Currently the school development plan, the curriculum plan and the detailed financial planning processes operate as three distinct processes.
3. The school complies with statutory requirements and is aware of its stage of development in ensuring full National Curriculum entitlement for the pupils.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

1. The number of qualified teachers in the classroom is appropriate to the number and needs of the pupils across the school. A significant number of staff hold appropriate additional qualifications. The numbers of non-teaching support staff working in the classrooms is very good. There are detailed job descriptions for teaching staff, non-teaching staff and care staff which identify to whom the person is accountable, for whom they are responsible, the main purpose of the post and a list of duties and responsibilities.
2. There is a very clear school management structure for both education and care which is led by the headteacher and her deputy. Middle management for education is led by a curriculum co-ordinator and there is a person responsible for liaison and behaviour management in each of the primary, senior and tertiary departments. Care staff are led by a qualified head of care with two houseparents allocated to each of the three residential units. There is also a succinct policy document on the role and responsibilities of the governors of the school included within which are those relating to staffing, accommodation and learning resources. A member of staff oversees welfare issues and manages the co-ordination of all sites. The staff management structure is cohesive and effectively supports a complex multi-professional organisation.
3. The non-teaching staff working in the school setting include multi-disciplinary support from two communication therapists whose active participation in school life makes a significant contribution to the quality of education for the children. Teaching staff and non-teaching staff are appropriately deployed across the classrooms. The teaching staff are very well supported by non-teaching staff of high calibre.
4. Teaching staff are allocated non-contact time for planning, reviewing and the undertaking of co-ordination duties. However, given the range of co-ordination duties across four sites, this time is limited. The role of the subject co-ordinator is developing but as yet there is insufficient evidence of cohesive whole-site subject co-ordination.
5. The care staff in the residential units are well organised and the systems and structures for staffing of the units work efficiently and are enhanced by the voluntary contribution of time given by teaching and support staff. Many care staff are following a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in a nearby college of further education and the head of care is a qualified

NVQ assessor. The school provides suitable numbers of night-time care staff. Night-time supervision is organised appropriately and includes two 'waking' members of staff for each residential unit plus one of the two unit houseparents who 'sleep-in' overnight. Care staff, teachers and communication therapists work collaboratively and participate effectively in fortnightly joint planning meetings to discuss and plan pupil programmes. Administrative, catering and maintenance staff are helpful and supportive and their work is highly valued.

6. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are sound and the staff handbook provides a good guide for newly appointed members of staff on a wide range of school activities and procedures as well as helpful information on autism. Procedures for teacher appraisal are not formalised. A three-year staff development programme, which is costed on an annual basis, and individual in-service needs are effectively identified through formal staff development interviews. The school development plan is moving towards structures which will ensure matching the staff development needs of the individual with the corporate needs of the whole school including the current developments in the National Curriculum.
7. In some areas of the school, for example, Carley Hill, the classrooms are small for the number of pupils being taught and the range of adults involved in the lesson. Specialist teaching accommodation for design technology, art and physical education is limited, whilst for science there is no specialist accommodation. Staffing, accommodation and physical resources feature significantly in the school development plan and the school has substantial plans for both buildings and resources. Good quality display is a feature of the school. The displays are attractive, well mounted and are respected by the pupils. The maintenance and cleanliness of the school are of the highest standard.
8. Day and evening toilet facilities are sufficient, accessible and offer appropriate privacy. The quality of residential accommodation is very appropriate to the needs of the pupils and has a positive impact on their achievements. The residential units are well furnished, clean and offer comfortable accommodation for the children. The general fabric of the residential accommodation is good. Bedrooms are personalised with the children's own possessions and this contributes to the secure, warm, family ethos of the residential units. A good range of leisure resources and extra-curricular experiences are offered to children in residence which extends their learning, personal development and social skills in a safe and secure environment.
9. The level of provision, deployment and condition of books, materials and equipment to support pupil learning and National Curriculum coverage is good in mathematics, food technology and physical education and satisfactory in English, science, art, music, religious education and information technology. In history, geography and aspects of design and technology, the level of resources are unsatisfactory.
10. In Key Stage 4 and post-16, students additionally have access to resources which support independent learning appropriate to their age and special educational needs. The provision in the school libraries does not adequately support the development of the National Curriculum.
1. The school makes good use of a local centre to supplement resources for religious education and also effectively accesses other wider community resources, for example, college of further education provision, library services, museum, sports centre and swimming pool, to enrich the curriculum experience of the pupils.

## **The efficiency of the school**

1. The school makes effective and efficient use of resources available to it, including special grants and donations. Funds are allocated appropriately and fully support the learning experiences of the pupils. The school development planning process is becoming an effective tool in enabling the creation of a cohesive bonding of the four discrete sites into a whole school whilst also empowering them to develop ownership and some uniquely different, and age appropriate, opportunities for the pupils.
2. Efficient use is made of all staff throughout the twenty-four hour curriculum in order to respond to the unique needs of many of the pupils. Effective change-over practices, the detailed documentation of incidents, behaviours and social progress coupled with the high level of commitment to the pupils, amongst all staff, demonstrates a high level of efficiency. Accommodation and learning resources are efficiently used and have a positive effect on the achievements of the pupils. There is very effective day-to-day financial planning and control and routine administration is excellent across all aspects of the life of the school. Curriculum audits are complete and external auditor's reports have been effectively implemented. The high quality of work of the bursar and the administration staff support the good work of the school.
3. As the result of the quality of education provided, the good progress made by the pupils, the relatively low fees and the very efficient financial management, Thornhill Park School gives good value for money. There is, however, work to be done in relation to the development of the curriculum in order to raise even further the range of areas in which pupils could continue to make progress.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **English, mathematics and science**

#### **English**

1. Progress in English is variable across all key stages depending on the severity of individual pupils' difficulties in the acquisition of language. Overall however, it is satisfactory, sometimes good and sometimes very good particularly in the development of effective means of communication.
2. The majority of pupils enter the school with no recognisable language and an inability to extract meaning from the spoken word. The priority for these pupils is to establish a system of communication that is both simple and meaningful through the introduction of pictorial symbols gradually linked to written words.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils can communicate effectively. Some pupils use symbols only, some are developing speech and a few can talk in sentences. The majority know the names of familiar people and objects, listen to instructions and understand action words. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can greet each other using proper names and most can respond to their own names. The majority can match words and pictures while the more linguistically advanced can talk in sentences describing events from their own immediate experiences.
4. By the end of Key Stage 3, the most able use grammatically correct English, understand how to describe objects and have an awareness of the value of language to convey information and ask questions waiting and listening for the answer. There are some pupils who continue to find difficulty in understanding and rely almost entirely on symbols and schedules. They are increasingly tolerant when others speak and listen attentively to verbal instructions. By the end of Key Stage 4, some pupils converse normally with strangers, can retell a story-line in their own words and enjoy watching and listening to television programmes.
5. On leaving school at the end of the post-16 provision all pupils can communicate satisfactorily. The least able retain the use of symbols but can convey their basic needs; the most able are sufficiently competent to integrate into colleges of further education.
6. Pupils regularly have the opportunity to take part in drama productions such as the Christmas pantomime or assemblies taking advantage of the material produced for them by the English co-ordinator. Key Stage 4 and post-16 students work for a national accreditation in performing arts (Mime).
7. Progress in reading is variable. The school does not use any one recognised reading scheme. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have all been introduced to books, some can match words and pictures and a few can build a sequence of letters to copy words. Two pupils have a limited sight vocabulary and can read for meaning supported by the use of picture and contextual clues. By the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils can recognise individual letters and have a limited sight vocabulary although most progress is in the acquisition of mechanical reading skills with an increasing gap between that and their level of comprehension. The most able do enjoy books, read with fluency, attempt word-building and can recall a story prompted by direct questioning.



8. By the end of Key Stage 3, some pupils borrow books from the public library either during school visits or when taken by their parents. The majority of readers still rely heavily on sight vocabulary but some can word-build and a few read for pleasure. Some can use simple dictionaries tracking initial and second letters, recognise the written names of staff, members of their class group, colours and shapes and can also match the names to pictures. By the end of Key Stage 4, the variation between pupils' reading skills is very marked. A few pupils in the post-16 group remain unable to recognise letters or make sense of the written word while the most able read books for pleasure, and also as a learning resource.
9. Writing skills are very varied. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are colouring shapes with increasing fine motor control, some can overwrite dotted letters and a few can write independently. By the end of Key Stage 2, there is evidence of progress over time in the correct orientation of letters and appropriate spacing when writing sentences. A few can use capital letters and full stops accurately.
10. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have been introduced to cursive style but most are resistant and choose to continue printing. Some pupils show evidence of the emergence of creative writing and an understanding of the use of past tense and basic punctuation. A few are competent in transferring their work onto the word processor. By the end of Key Stage 4 and into the post-16 group, students can use writing for a purpose such as job applications, completion of official forms and letter writing.
11. Spelling is not well developed but a few pupils with good reading and writing skills are encouraged to give attention to spelling. In Key Stage 3 some pupils have spelling tests each week.
12. In the majority of lessons attitudes to English are good and the effect of developing communication skills enhances the learning experience of pupils across all areas of the curriculum. The use of schedules provides a framework for sequencing the day and gives pupils a safe and confident environment in which to progress.
13. The quality of teaching is consistently satisfactory and sometimes good. Classrooms are well organised to ensure optimum attention and reduce extraneous stimulation. Most lessons are well planned, and supported by skilled and effective classroom assistants. Pupils understand the tasks, and the work that is expected is appropriate to their varying abilities.
14. The two libraries are underdeveloped and as yet do not adequately support the curriculum.

## **Mathematics**

1. In all key stages and at post-16 the vast majority of pupils make sound or better progress. Only one example of unsatisfactory progress was seen at Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 1, more able pupils can count up to thirty, add combinations of numbers up to ten and can identify and sort simple shapes. In Key Stage 2, more able pupils can recognise and write numbers up to five. At the end of Key Stage 3, more able pupils can order numbers up to one hundred, work in multiples of ten, recognise quarter and half, sequence days/weeks and months and use mathematical names for three-dimensional shapes. By the end of Key Stage 4, more able pupils can use calculators for all four operations well, use mathematical language for simple shapes, work out area and volume of regular shapes and solids, and use co-ordinates. In post-16 more able pupils were able to use calculators and measure distances on maps. One pupil is taking GCSE mathematics at a local college.

2. Pupils respond well to mathematics and progress, due to the skilful adult support and good staffing ratios. They generally remain on task in all key stages and post-16. In a small number of cases pupils were becoming independent learners.
3. The quality of teaching is generally sound and mainly good at all key stages and post-16. At Key Stages 1 and 3, some teaching is very good. One isolated example of unsatisfactory teaching was seen at Key Stage 3. Better teaching was characterised by clear learning objectives being identified on planning and prior assessment being used to inform planning. Good teaching was also associated with good management and deployment of support staff, suitable pace, regular change of activities to cater for pupils' short attention spans, the use of appropriate resources and the use and application of mathematics in real life situations. In all key stages staff were seen to be helping pupils learn and apply mathematical language and to become independent learners.
4. In post-16, mathematics is taught as part of an integrated life skills programme. The mathematical work is presented in real life situations and this motivates pupils.
5. Schemes of work are in place along with lesson planning and recording systems. However, the schemes of work need to be revised to detail both learning objectives and associated activities to help all staff plan, deliver, assess and record effectively. Clear guidance needs to be given to staff about how these systems should be used so that they are used consistently.
6. Although a national accreditation is in place at post-16, suitable external accreditation has not yet been found for younger pupils and internal accreditation systems were not seen. However, displays of improved work and the 'Good News' board is used in most areas of school to recognise and reward success, including that in mathematics.
7. Information technology support for mathematics is at an early stage although some useful software was seen in use at Key Stage 4 and in post-16.

## **Science**

1. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. There are a range of attainments exhibited by the pupils. Some pupils can participate in a task by taking turns, others can respond to verbal commands accompanied on occasion by prompt or gesture. Other pupils can identify materials which will float or which will sink, whilst some more able pupils can articulate the response "it floats" or "it sinks" after experimenting with materials and water. Some of the able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 can correctly place on a chart actual objects used which float or sink. By the end of Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory. Pupils can explore some differences between some solid objects and liquid whilst others can explore the different floating or sinking characteristics of solid and non-solid materials. The most more able can construct simple circuits involving batteries, wires and bulbs and can further construct simple circuits with switches that are used to illuminate a bulb.
2. By the end of Key Stage 3, progress is good, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Some pupils can predict a range of objects which will float or sink and some of the most able pupils can use the word 'buoyancy' with meaning. Other pupils can label, using word cards, the leaf, stem, flower and root of a plant or write the names of these plant parts. More able pupils can distinguish between an opaque material and a transparent material and appreciate that opaque material will cast a shadow when placed in front of a light source. As pupils approach the end of Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory. Pupils can distinguish textures in foodstuff and record outcomes of practical enquiry.

3. No post-16 science was observed during the week of the inspection therefore secure judgements cannot be made upon attainment or progress. Evidence from students' previous work, photographs and displays of students' own science enquiries demonstrate that the subject is being taught in a practical and socially realistic fashion appropriate to the age and needs of the students.
4. Positive relationships between adults and pupils are always apparent in science. The pupils concentrate and participate well. Good pupil attitudes and behaviour are often linked to clear communication of task or activity. Relationships are always good. When unpredictable behaviour occurs it is handled efficiently and with due attention to health and safety issues.
5. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching is mainly good, never less than satisfactory and sometimes very good. In Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is sometimes good and never less than satisfactory. The best quality of teaching is characterised by very good short term planning, a good sequence to the lesson which can include an introduction to communicate to the children what is required of them and any tasks or practical activity. There is good pace to the lesson with a practical, exploratory activity guided by adult prompts and a match between the task, the pupil's stage of understanding, choice of resources and a form of recording, which could range from a photograph of the outcome or the pupil recording using pictures or symbols, or a pupil-written record.
6. Schemes of work should be reviewed and further consideration given to medium term planning. Structures are in place for recording. These are sound and there is substantial uniformity across the school. A range of assessment materials for science are available particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4 and assessment informs both medium and short term planning. When giving further consideration to medium term planning attention should be paid to ways by which assessment informs planning in science across the school.
7. Pupils social, moral and cultural development is supported in science through, for example, the pupils' developing understanding of living things and their classification skills which add to a greater coherence of the environment around them. Work in areas of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes contribute to the pupils' social development and social understanding.
8. Considerable development has taken place in science and a sound basis has been established for the subject. The role of the co-ordinator is very important to all further subject development. This role should be reviewed with further consideration given to the subject monitoring role of the co-ordinator.
9. There is no specialist accommodation for science and easier access to a wider range of science resources in each of the four school sites would contribute to pupil achievement. The overall level of science resources is generally satisfactory.

## Other subjects or courses

### Art

1. The majority of pupils enter the school with very limited artistic skills or experiences. The pupils make good progress in their art lessons in all key stages. Scrutiny of pupils' evidence files, photographs and videos illustrates that, over time, pupils make good progress when using a wide range of media working in both two and three dimensions.
2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can name, match and mix three colours. Most pupils can match colours with help. As they progress through Key Stage 2, most pupils develop their confidence and some improve their skills. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can apply paint to paper, matching colours or using tools accurately. Some pupils develop skills in modeling with clay. One or two pupils can draw recognisable figures, houses and plants with help. One or two of the more able pupils can draw accurately from direct observation and can draw, accurate, recognisable portraits.
3. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know a range of colours by name and can mix required shades. The most able can draw independently and paint, freely, expressive pictures. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made progress in their learning. They understand the properties of clay and demonstrate good abilities in the basic techniques of handling it. Pupils have made progress with drafting skills and one pupil has been given the opportunity to refine his skill when drawing a recorder from direct observation.
4. Pupils make progress when using art work to support the subject understanding in relation to seaside topics and lighthouses. Art experiences extend pupils' learning in the residential setting where pupils continue to make good progress.
5. Pupils enjoy art lessons and show excitement and curiosity when introduced to new media. They collaborate surprisingly well and some evaluate and modify their work. Relationships in art lessons are good. Pupils persevere to complete work and take a pride in what they achieve. Some pupils take pride in showing visitors their work on corridor and wall displays.
6. The quality of teaching in art is rarely less than satisfactory in any key stage and often it is good. Good teaching is characterised by clear National Curriculum planning, clear instructions and good planned collaboration between teachers and support staff. The pace of learning is lively, pupils' needs are understood and the activity is carefully planned within the daily schedule of each pupil. The pupils understand what is expected of them and when. Pupil management strategies are consistently applied and the pupils are encouraged to succeed at each key stage.
7. Detailed assessment strategies are developing with evidence files. The subject is well organised and whole-site co-ordination is beginning to develop and secure continuity and progression. The curriculum is broad and balanced and in accord with National Curriculum requirements. The more able pupils however, are given insufficient opportunities to work in the style of recognised artists. Whilst the school has sought to develop and increase the range of specialist accommodation for art, the provision is still inadequate for the senior pupils.
8. Artwork is well used around the school and corridors to enhance the quality of the learning environment.

## Design and technology

1. Progress is generally sound for design and technology across the school, with pupils making good progress in Key Stages 1, 4 and in post-16 classes. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make progress in the range of construction kits they can use and their ability to respond to models or photographs as a source of realising a simple design. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can use scissors, paste and a range of materials to make simple musical instrument, and make progress in manipulating construction kits.
2. In Key Stage 3, where the work is part of a strongly taught theme based on visits to the sea and a lighthouse, pupils make good progress in their ability to select and use a wide range of materials, to involve themselves strongly in a response to an exciting recent experience, in their ability to share space and work co-operatively and in the development of their basic 'making' skills. Progress is sound or unsatisfactory by the end of Key Stage 3, where the work is less well developed and linked to behaviour and skill practice with less reference to the design and making process to engage pupils' interest. Progress is good in Key Stage 4 and in post-16 provision where pupils make good progress in lessons involving food technology when there is a strong practical basis for the work linked strongly to developing skills for life. They can select, purchase and prepare the ingredients for a meal and share the tasks of cooking and serving. The more able are learning to price the ingredients at the planning and at the purchasing stage, and compare the results.
3. Pupils respond well to imaginatively planned and resourced lessons. They listen well and watch demonstrations with interest. Older pupils show a developing sense of appropriate behaviours when shopping in public settings. Pupils are strongly motivated by lessons involving food, or when an exciting range of material or resources are presented.
4. Teaching is good overall, with occasional sound lessons in each key stage and occasional unsatisfactory teaching. The good teaching is characterised by imaginative and well organised lessons linked to pupils' experience, using a good range of resources, methods and activities. There is often a group focus to the task, as in the production of a working lighthouse following a visit, or a group meal that will be eaten by the group when complete. A range of construction toys may be used to provide good match to the developing abilities in the group. Staff team-work is well managed, and all the staff are working to the greatest practical level of independence for each individual. Tasks and targets are clear. Attention to safety is good, and verbal prompts and demonstrations are judiciously applied and effectively reinforced. A shopping trip provides an impressive example of good links into the community, and elements of controlled risk taking in a very public setting. Where lessons are sound, progress is sometimes limited by undemanding tasks or over-enthusiastic verbal prompts and hand guidance. In unsatisfactory teaching poor presentation of the room and the lesson, overlong holding activities and a lack of ideas for ways of improving motor skills, lead to periods of frustration and low motivation.
5. The curriculum is variably developed in different parts of the school, and under-developed overall, although there is a useful outline scheme suggesting the broad areas of coverage. There is an imbalance in the range of experiences offered and therefore no overall system of planning, assessment and monitoring sufficient to ensure continuity and progression in any detail. Aspects such as the use of construction toys, model making, electrical circuits and food technology are well developed in parts of the school but not in others. There is limited access to work with resistant materials. Modelling materials and textiles are well used in some areas. Assessment against pupils individual targets, and within lessons, is at least sound but against curriculum experience and entitlement overall is underdeveloped.

6. Food technology contributes very positively to pupils' social development in terms of safety in the home, hygiene, healthy eating, self-reliance and public social skills. Group making tasks help develop turn taking, and the sharing of ideas and the development of co-operative behaviours.
7. Recent appointments are beginning to address the complexity of issues in meeting full curriculum balance. While there are many examples of good practice to build on, much remains to be done to achieve consistency across the school.
8. Staff skills and confidence within the subject are variable, and the provision reflects this range. Curriculum development and staff development are not yet fully linked, or given sufficient school priority if breadth and balance are to be achieved. The school has developed good accommodation and resources to support food technology but does not have the specialist accommodation, and fixed or mobile resources to deliver a full curriculum, particularly on the sites south of the river for science or design and technology.

## **Geography**

1. Only a few lessons and recorded documentary evidence were seen to make secure judgements. However, in those lessons, which were at Key Stage 3 and in post-16, pupil response, progress and teaching is at least satisfactory and mainly good. There is evidence in displays and in pupil files of other geographical work at all key stages and post-16, including much fieldwork. Photographic and documentary evidence show that fieldwork is well planned and used to help pupils develop skills and understanding in a number of curriculum areas. From these sources it is evident that, in ways appropriate to their age and ability, pupils are encouraged to: follow simple directions, use geographical terms, identify features of a landscape, use and make simple maps, learn about the effects of weather on people and their surroundings, and use relevant information technology packages. There is some good independent mobility work which could be incorporated and reported as part of the geography curriculum. One more able pupil was observed reading a book on volcanoes with understanding as part of an English exercise. Records and displays indicate that pupils continue to make progress in their understanding of the worlds around them as they progress through the school.

## **History**

1. History is in the early stages of development. It has only been identified by the staff as a discrete subject in the National Curriculum since September 1996 when the two co-ordinators were appointed. In view of this and the small number of lessons seen the available evidence of progress is limited.
2. Whilst pupils with autism find considerable difficulty understanding chronology the majority are making progress in developing a sense of the past based on their own immediate experiences. In Key Stages 1 and 2 history is offered through 'circle time', the use of schedules, photographs and occasionally incidental learning. In Key Stages 3 and 4 it is through direct teaching and the inclusion of historical facts into topic work.
3. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils make progress and can sequence their days events using pictorial prompts and some can name the days of the week. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are aware of the order of the days in a week, some understand the concept of yesterday and can recall events from their own lives through the introduction of diaries.

4. By the end of Key Stage 3 further progress is evident and the majority of pupils understand about the passage of time and some can recognise changes in people from babies to children and adults. A few pupils have studied the Vikings, the life and times of the Tudors and currently the Victorians gaining first-hand experience of conditions of life from that time by visiting the Killhope Mine. Some pupils can recall important historical dates, understand a time-line and have produced a family tree based on a book read in English.
5. Attitudes to learning are generally good. Pupils participate well in sequencing daily events and filling in the calendar. They listen well and remain on-task supported by the skilful use of classroom assistants.
6. In the small number of lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory or good. Lessons were planned, objectives were understood and records of achievement were regularly updated. There is no history policy and the subject is not co-ordinated across the school.

### **Information technology**

1. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can switch on a computer and have some control of the mouse. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can trace a line on a VDU using a Touch Screen. More able pupils can create simple text using the keyboard and space words using the spacebar and, with support, can delete incorrect text.
2. Progress in Key Stage 3 is good and occasionally satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils can use the spacebar to separate words. More able pupils can access a wordprocessor and can create maps using software over which they can write text. They can use a mouse with some independence and with guidance can access a database to seek information for a topic and then operate the print command. In Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils can move simple text on the screen using the mouse and can caption pictures with text, again using the mouse. Progress for post-16 students is never less than satisfactory and frequently good. More able students can independently load and run software and can illustrate text with pictures from the computer. Students can print text and pictures independently.
3. Attitudes to learning when using information technology are generally good, occasionally very good and never less than satisfactory. The most able pupils will persevere and sustain their interest. Good relationships predominate with examples observed of pupils cooperating in the use of information technology.
4. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good and in Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. In Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching is good and in Key Stage 4 it is good and never less than satisfactory. In the post-16 provision the quality of teaching is, on occasion, very good and never less than satisfactory. Where the quality of teaching is good or better there is good short term planning with software well matched to the very particular needs of individual pupils needs, interest level and the curriculum area being studied. There is good pace to the lesson and a progressive sequence gradually introducing new features. The small steps planning approach used by the teachers reinforces the pupils' confidence in the structure of their own schedule. Communication is good with appropriate prompts to guide the pupil. Teachers and non-teaching support staff are confident in using the hardware and have good knowledge of the software. Finally, pupil outcomes are accurately recorded for future reference and are well used to inform planning.

5. There is no scheme of work for information technology and the medium term planning structure for the school is not secure. Planning for the use of information technology is generally on an individual basis and often short term. Structures are in place for recording. These structures are sound and there is considerable uniformity across the school.
6. The use of information technology can promote social development and this was evident when two pupils co-operated to interrogate a database for information on a history topic.

### **Modern foreign language**

1. The school has recently introduced a modern foreign language into the curriculum. Whilst this is available to all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4, those who partake are those from whom the school feel the experience is particularly appropriate.
2. In the small number of lessons seen, the pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 3 they have an understanding of a different language structure and an awareness of aspects of French food and geography. Pupils know how to greet each other in the target language and can use it confidently to greet visitors and ask about their well being. They can count to ten, ask for food and a drink and name three colours. As they approach the end of Key Stage 4 pupils pronounce words well; can count consistently to twenty; identify and name a range of classroom objects and read key words.
3. The pupils who learn French enjoy the experience, respond to the challenge with enthusiasm and persevere with their learning. Pupils collaborate well and frequently work together effectively in pairs and small groups. They behave well and celebrate the successful work of their classroom peers. The most able can take some responsibility for simple tasks and work independently for surprisingly long periods of time.
4. In the small number of lessons observed the quality of teaching on both sites is good. Lessons are clearly planned with full regard to the National Curriculum. The use of classroom support assistants is well planned. The learning environment is well managed to create a specialist French atmosphere. The pace of learning is brisk; resources are well managed and appropriate. Work is beginning to be matched to the progress made by individual pupils and assessment strategies are clear and well maintained. These do not currently reflect the generalised use of skills by the most able pupils. Both staff and pupils use the target language confidently, and the good support provided by the experienced, enthusiastic and well qualified co-ordinator is valued.

### **Music**

1. Progress in music is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show enjoyment and take a pride in their work. They choose songs to sing, associate them with a theme, complete the songs with appropriate body actions and take turns when asked to.



2. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing a welcome to each other. They sit together and take turns waiting patiently until it is their turn. Some pupils do not like loud noises or singing and are developing skills to enable them to join in with the group.
3. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils choose taped music from a music file, they ask for tapes in an appropriate way, listen quietly, concentrate and show enjoyment at the sounds. Some sing along with the tapes. They recognise different songs, express preferences and more able pupils write out some of the words of the song. Some pupils can recognise different rhythms, change of pace and beat. Some move in time with the beat, moving slowly or quickly as they need to. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils can recognise different songs and express a preference for the song or music they like. They like to play a sound lotto game and show enjoyment and satisfaction at naming the sound correctly.
4. At post-16, students select and use music well to relax. Most pupils respond well to the moods of the music, participate well and evaluate pieces of music. The less able students show obvious enjoyment when listening although not able to evaluate the music.
5. Most pupils' attitude to music is good. Some pupils use their initiative well when ask to choose tapes or music and identify the music they want by recognising a simple colour code system. The majority of pupils concentrate and sustain effort, listen well and the more able pupils contribute ideas to the group. Relationships in classes are very good, behaviour is generally good, due to high staff ratios, staff expertise, vigilance and early intervention when unacceptable situations arise.
6. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good or very good and, on one occasion, excellent. Lessons are well planned to take into account pupils' individual needs. There is good use of support staff, the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils' knowledge extended. There are high expectations of both work and behaviour in all lessons. There is good use of technical language, reflection and evaluation of music by many pupils
7. Music is co-ordinated by separate primary and secondary co-ordinators who work well together to co-ordinate the work on four separate sites.

## **Physical education**

1. Pupils progress in physical education is almost always sound and often good. From video, photographic and written evidence pupils make good progress in water confidence and aspects of swimming, and in their involvement in outdoor and adventurous activity. By the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils have achieved the first grade of the nationally recognised award scheme; one pupil has achieved at each of the next two grades, and one has swum ten metres. In successive key stages pupils swim distances up to 200 metres. Pupils from Thornhill Park school make good progress in their ability to behave appropriately and make use of public facilities and spaces in a wide range of settings from leisure centres and riding stables, to adventure playgrounds and hill walks. Many pupils across the key stages make sound or good progress in independent dressing skills. In the example of unsatisfactory progress pupils were responding to poor adult modelling and less carefully structured and managed experience. In hill walking pupils recognise the need for safe walking in lines and some are able to walk at the front of columns. Progress is satisfactory in gymnastics, in the pupils' approach and acceptance of hygiene issues, and the use of appropriate clothing and equipment including exercise machines.

2. Pupils' attitudes towards physical education are good. They enjoy activity and are prepared to overcome anxiety and use a wide range of school and public experiences. Behaviour is generally sound and often good, particularly among older pupils. Turn-taking is good and pupils will leave particularly pleasurable activities with the minimum of fuss when asked. Individual inappropriate behaviours rarely lead to loss of involvement by others. They develop good levels of physical confidence and experience the need to work well together as groups.
3. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall it is at least sound with half of all teaching seen being good or very good. Teaching that is good or very good is well planned, based on secure subject knowledge and positive relationships with pupils and between members of staff teams. Care is taken over risk assessments with challenging activities presented in a way that ensures success. Great sensitivity is displayed towards pupils who show less confidence, securing their eventual full participation. Resource preparation is well done and changing and travelling time is well managed. Great care has been taken to explore and select an appropriate range of external venues to support the school's limited accommodation. Sound teaching, particularly in swimming, shows good staff skills in developing water confidence, and in supporting individuals, but is limited by the lack of developed coaching skills once the initial steps have been achieved. This applies equally to teaching and support staff. Unsatisfactory teaching is too loosely structured and allows some inappropriate pool behaviours to take place.
4. The curriculum is well developed with good breadth and balance. Pupils experience a good range of taught experience covering swimming, gymnastics, athletics, games, dance, swimming and outdoor and adventurous pursuits utilising a wide range of facilities in the community. Systems of planning, recording and evaluating performance are developing well making a good blend between the school's essential curriculum and the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Records of achievement are well developed and certificates and photographs are regularly used to celebrate achievement with pupils and their parents and carers. There is an appropriate attention given to leisure choices for the oldest pupils. All residential pupils benefit from extension activities within the twenty-four hour curriculum. Care staff make a sensitive and valuable contribution to pupils physical well-being, development and enjoyment.
5. Physical education across the twenty-four hour curriculum contributes positively to pupils' social development, and their ability to participate in public leisure facilities with their families and carers.
6. The subject is strongly led. The ethos for learning is good and there is a clear sense of direction for future development. The school has insufficient accommodation for physical education, and considerable travel time and resources are expended in extending access by well planned use of community facilities and the countryside. Staff development requires further work, particularly if the potential for success in swimming is to be fully realised. There is a particularly well developed resource base.

### **Religious education**

1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and occasionally this progress made by some pupils is good. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils participate fully in 'circle time', identify themselves verbally or by sign and symbols and are beginning to appreciate and celebrate the achievement of others. They are beginning to share photographs and books with their friends. By the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils listen attentively, relate to characters in their stories and try to anticipate events and outcomes. All respond to greetings from staff, some verbally and some by sign or symbol, one by using her 'lightwriter' effectively.

They take turns and wait patiently during 'circle time'.

2. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils sitting together create a 'togetherness' atmosphere which is well promoted by staff. They show more tolerance to each other and are beginning to co-operate with each other. Some more able pupils at Key Stage 3 can name and identify parts of a church, remember a visit to the church, recall experiences and design and build, in card, a three-dimensional model church with appropriate support from staff. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 4.
3. Students at post-16 make satisfactory progress. They name people who are special to them and explain why these people are so special. They record their work well and have good relationships with staff. They concentrate and persevere to complete their work, drafting and redrafting if necessary, showing a desire to improve their work, taking a pride in it and very willing to show it to visitors.
4. Most pupil attitudes to religious education are good. They are interested and participate well, actively encouraged by teachers and support staff. Behaviour is generally good which is enhanced by the high staff ratio, the expertise of the staff and skilful early intervention to prevent unacceptable behaviour becoming a more serious situation.
5. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Lessons are well planned in detail, there is a pleasant, purposeful atmosphere in class and pupils show enjoyment in their work. There is good differentiation of task and pupils responses and achievements are recorded in detail and effectively used to inform future planning. Resources are well organised in advance, are appropriate to the pupils' needs and readily available. When required the co-ordinator enhances resources and artefacts from a local teachers' centre. Relationships in class are good, pupils, where appropriate, help each other and celebrate each others successes. Class assemblies and whole-school assemblies are done well, pupils' successes are celebrated and the tone is set for the day. There are short readings, prayers, music and singing. Pupils and students participate appropriately showing a sense of fun and enjoyment.
6. There are separate primary and secondary subject co-ordinators who are at present working together revising the policy and schemes of work to make it more appropriate to the needs of the pupils. As each class teacher teaches their own class for religious education this revised resource would be a great help to teachers on the four separate sites and enhance the quality of education provided.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### Summary of inspection evidence

1. During the inspection a team of seven inspectors including a lay inspector spent twenty-nine inspector days in the school.
2. Prior to the inspection, the team scrutinised timetables, curriculum plans, schemes of work and a range of school documentation. The whole team met to discuss and agree the key issues and the organisational issues required to inspect the four centre complex site.
3. During the inspection, the team scrutinised further documentation, lesson plans, evidence files, registers, school finances, day and residential duty rosters, security, welfare and medical arrangements, residential and day school records relating to pupils, statements of special educational need, IEPs, transition arrangements, the arrangements for visiting, support personnel, previous inspection/accreditation documentation, National Curriculum assessments, videos of performances and progress and all appropriate health and safety documentation.
4. A formal meeting was held with parents which was attended by 29 parents. Discussions were held in the school with parents at arrival and dismissal time, and during the Friday morning routine parents' support meeting.
5. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the director, members of the senior management team, head of care, bursar, domestic and welfare co-ordinator, subject co-ordinators, key workers, class teachers, catering, administrative and maintenance staff.
6. During the inspection, 128 lessons or parts of lessons were observed and graded. Seventy general observations were made of pupils throughout the twenty-four hour curriculum, rising, transferring to school, play times, lunchtimes, on planned visits at the end of the school day and throughout all aspects of the evening activities occupying a total of 58 inspector hours. Security arrangements were also checked.
7. Pupils' work was scrutinised in all key stages and at post-16 in relation to all aspects of the National Curriculum. Fourteen pupils read formally to the inspectors and a number of pupils were observed using reading skills in lessons, developing and using numeracy and information technology competencies.

### Data and indicators

#### 1. PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y13	85	85	85	N/A

## 1. TEACHERS AND CLASSES

### Qualified teachers (YR - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6

### Education support staff (YR - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked each week	111

Average teaching group size:

KS1	3
KS2	6
KS3	10
KS4	6

## 1. FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year: 

1996/7
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	£
Total Income	2868740
Total Expenditure	3087650
Expenditure per pupil	36325
Balance brought forward from previous year	N/A
Balance carried forward to next year	N/A

The school has a varied and very competitive fee structure which is not fully conveyed by the overall unit costs in the above table.

# 1. PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:  
 Number of questionnaires returned:  
 Percentage return rate:

85
43
51

## Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	44	44	5	5	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	70	26	2	0	2
The school handles complaints from parents well	35	42	23	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	58	32	5	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	51	42	3	2	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	63	33	2	2	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	70	18	5	7	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	26	30	37	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	58	35	5	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	56	37	5	0	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	63	33	4	0	0

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