

INSPECTION REPORT

**The Sybil Elgar School
Southall**

LEA area : Ealing

Reference Number : 101953

Principal : Ms Chloe Phillips

Reporting inspector : Linda C. Rhead

Date of inspection : 23 - 26 June 1997

Under OFSTED contract number : 400473

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

Information about the school

Type of school :	Special
Type of control :	Independent
Age range of pupils :	11-19
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Havelock Road Southall Middx UB2 4NR
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Appropriate authority :	National Autistic Society
Name of chair of Service Support Committee :	Mrs. Elaine Kay

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Main Findings of the Inspection

1. Sybil Elgar School is a good school which is improving. It has many strengths and a small number of weaknesses. It is well led by the principal. All staff are committed to supporting pupils with autism and related difficulties, minimising their anxieties and difficult behaviour, improving their social and communication skills and enabling them to engage in learning.

Standards

2. *It is not appropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom the school caters in relation to age-related national expectations. However, the report does give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements of special educational needs and annual reviews.*
3. Pupils enter the school aged eleven or older with significant learning difficulties and with a range of challenging behaviours. Given their low starting points and different abilities and levels of behaviour difficulties on entry to the school, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress over time. Pupils make very good progress in developing communication and social skills and good progress in improving their behaviour.
4. Between the ages of eleven and fourteen, at Key Stage 3, pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, science, geography, art, French, religious education and design and technology. Good progress is made in music, physical education and geography. Pupils do not make satisfactory progress in information technology.
5. Between fourteen and sixteen, at Key Stage 4, satisfactory progress is made in English, science, humanities, art, French, music and physical education. Progress is generally satisfactory in information technology but there are significant weaknesses. Progress is satisfactory for most pupils in design and technology, but for a small number, it is unsatisfactory. In mathematics at this key stage, progress is unsatisfactory.
6. Most students in post-16 provision make satisfactory progress and some make very good progress. Although, for many, progress is slow, a few students approach independence and most are developing appropriate competencies. Some students have a secure grasp of key skills and a significant number are working well towards City and Guilds Wordpower and Numberpower qualifications. Some students can travel independently on known bus routes and socialise with students they meet at college.
7. In English in Key Stage 3, younger pupils can identify letter sounds and recognise them in words. Some older pupils gain pleasure from reading simple texts or being read to. At Key Stage 4, the most confident can read simple texts accurately and with some fluency but their understanding is still limited. A significant number of post-16 students are working towards City and Guilds Wordpower qualifications and some have attained key skills securely. Higher attaining students have achieved foundation levels in Basic Skills.
8. In mathematics, in Key Stage 3, younger pupils are able to count and recognise numerals within ten. Some pupils are able to select three dimensional shapes and match these to line drawings. By year 11, pupils can sequence and do simple addition. Many make good progress in consolidating their skills in counting, working with money, making choices and recording their work.
9. In science, by the end of Key Stage 3, many pupils can make informative observations of objects and events and have some knowledge of living things and materials, although their understanding is limited. By the end of Key Stage 4, in science, pupils' knowledge and understanding are more detailed and they can, with guidance, carry out practical tests.

10. In design and technology, pupils learn to follow instructions and develop skills. Progress in information technology is limited by the inadequate organisational arrangements and unsuitable accommodation. Some older pupils gain sufficient competence in information technology to work with some independence. In geography, pupils extend their knowledge and awareness of geographical concepts by using photographs, maps and pictures and, through the use of tactile materials, develop the concept of map-making. Pupils show a growing awareness that the past is different from today. In French, pupils learn a range of appropriate vocabulary reflecting everyday needs. In art, pupils progress from learning to select colours, explore patterns and designs, follow instructions and use tools to being able to draw with increasing skill, produce two- and three-dimensional work make strong representations, for example of heads, in different styles. In music, pupils learn to use a range of percussion, to vocalise, to respond to music and to improve their ability to listen. In physical education, they are developing confidence and competence, especially in ball control, in swimming and in co-ordinating movements. Older pupils are making gains in spatial awareness and post-16 students are beginning to appreciate the idea of team games and the importance of rules and procedures to ensure fair play. In religious education, pupils are developing social and moral awareness, although their spiritual understanding is less well developed. They are learning about special symbols, clothing and religious buildings.
11. Pupils' attendance at school is good. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and concentrate on their work. On the occasions when pupils show unsociable or unpredictable behaviour, they are almost always able to re-focus on their work with help.

Quality of education provided

12. The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in four out of ten lessons and good in a further four out of ten. There is a small amount of very good teaching. However, in just over one in ten lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching is better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4 in mathematics, design and technology and humanities.
13. Post-16 students receive varied and challenging provision, which focuses effectively on personal and social development. The school provides a good introduction to vocational education. Teaching at this stage is sound, with positive contributions from school staff and college tutors.
14. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and often good. In lessons, most pupils concentrate well on their work and follow staff directions. A few show unpredictable or unsociable behaviour. Around the school, pupils follow routines well and show good standards of behaviour. Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to encourage responsibility and independence.
15. All teachers show skill in managing difficult behaviour and in supporting pupils' social and personal development. Teachers' expertise and subject knowledge are good in art, English, humanities and physical education at both key stages and in mathematics at Key Stage 3.
16. In good lessons, in art, humanities and physical education at both key stages and in design and technology and mathematics at Key Stage 3, teachers make the learning intentions clear. They design tasks carefully to achieve these intentions. Praise is used to keep pupils engaged in the task. They are given clear guidance about what to do and how well they are doing it. Resources are well used and support staff are deployed effectively. Expectations are high but realistic.
17. Sound teaching includes lessons where there is a simple but effective sequence of tasks which enable pupils to build their learning step by step. Teaching and support staff act as a team to keep pupils engaged on the tasks and there is a review of the work to check pupils' understanding.

18. Of the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, at Key Stage 3 in information technology and at Key Stage 4 in mathematics and design and technology, some is directly linked to teachers' inexperience and lack of appropriate qualifications. Some is the result of weak planning, with inappropriate tasks, which are poorly suited to pupils' needs and reflect a lack of accurate assessment. A common weakness is that of having pupils take turns carrying out an activity and frustrating the rest of the class by requiring them to wait and watch, under-using the available support staff and inhibiting learning.
19. Although the school has some procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, these are not yet effective in achieving consistency across subjects and key stages. The school does not yet have procedures for monitoring the quality of the curriculum.
20. There is a good understanding of the needs of pupils with autism in the school. Effective strategies are used for engaging pupils in the learning process, and pupils are successfully encouraged to develop good work habits.
21. The statutory requirements are met to review pupils' statements of special educational needs annually and objectives are set in each pupil's review report. However, individual education plans are repetitive and are not used to set clear targets for each pupil. They are ineffective as tools to help to measure the progress pupils make.
22. Planning in some subjects is detailed and clear. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to curriculum planning and development that will support less experienced staff and enable them to identify goals for learning so that pupils build on their existing knowledge and skills systematically and make appropriate progress. Assessment is not sufficiently detailed nor is it used effectively to inform planning.
23. Pupils are managed very well, with excellent behaviour management programmes developed by the school psychologist and implemented by her in co-operation with school and residential staff, and with parents. Further education students are given a range of good opportunities to gain independence and these are effective in many cases. These programmes have a significant positive impact on pupils' behaviour, personal development and the standards they are able to achieve.
24. Residential provision is of a high quality. Programmes are carefully planned to meet each pupil's needs. There is a wide range of activities and care is good. There is good communication and co-operation between school and boarding staff and this supports pupils' learning.
25. The contribution of the school's psychologist, speech and language therapist and support staff has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved. Tutor time, at the beginning of each day, is effective in promoting independence, but is too long. Teaching time is less than that recommended by the Department for Education and Employment. These two together restrict the amount of time available for teaching the subjects, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 4. This limits the progress pupils make.
26. The ethos of the school is very positive, with a strong commitment to enabling pupils to achieve as highly as they can. The school environment is used well to promote learning and is kept in good order, with attractive and relevant displays.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

27. The school is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Good opportunities are offered to students over 16 to extend their personal development. Pupils are given support and encouragement, using well-planned activities to learn how to co-operate with each other.
28. Staff deal with pupils with great sensitivity and respect, offering good models of behaviour. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. There is a clear sense of purpose and a common approach to working with pupils. Communication and co-operation between staff, especially between school and residential settings, are exemplary.
29. Relationships with and the quality of information provided for parents are good. The school tries hard to achieve a real partnership with parents.
30. Although the school holds daily assemblies, these are poorly planned and do not constitute a daily act of collective worship.

Efficiency

31. The principal offers the school strong leadership which provides a clear sense of direction for its work. Despite this clarity of leadership, development planning is weak. The school development plan is produced by the principal after audit and consultation within the school. The current plan does not focus sufficiently clearly on a limited number of priorities. Evaluation of the development targets is not related to outcomes for pupils' learning. There is currently no system for assessing the impact of policies, in particular, on the quality of pupils' learning.
32. The school is managed smoothly and efficiently. Staff and resources are well deployed and financial control is very good. Routine administration is also very good and visitors are given excellent care and attention.
33. The progress pupils make in subjects of the curriculum is sound and in personal development and behaviour, it is good. The progress made in social development and communication are very good. Taking account of the significant difficulties which pupils face, the sound progress they make and the high quality of education provided, the school gives good value for money.

Key Issues for Action after the Inspection

34. In order to improve the standards achieved and the quality of the education provided, the National Autistic Society, the principal and staff should:

- within the context of the whole school development plan, establish a small number of clear priorities so that all those involved in the school community can have opportunities to discuss and share in important developments and put them into practice; evaluate these in the context of the effect they have on pupils' learning;
- introduce a system of curriculum planning which is consistent for all subjects and which guides staff in identifying curriculum goals which will promote progression in learning;
- introduce a system for assessment in which teachers identify what pupils can do, what they know and what they understand, record the outcomes and use them to inform the next stage in planning so that each opportunity for learning is designed to build on the last;
- improve the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and devise a system which will address inconsistencies in teaching quality and monitor delivery of the curriculum to ensure that all areas of learning are covered and that there is a rolling programme of curriculum development;
- introduce individual education plans which identify routes towards measurable targets, based on the objectives set in the annual review, which are specific to the pupil concerned and which are progressive;
- increase the amount of taught time to meet those recommended by the Department for Education and Employment and reorganise the timetable to ensure that key subjects, for example, mathematics, have sufficient time allocated to allow the curriculum to be covered;
- plan a coherent programme of assemblies which aims to develop pupils' personal and social development and introduce a spiritual element so that pupils receive their entitlement to a daily act of collective worship;
- improve the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 4 and remedy the weaknesses in all areas of technology.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

35. The school is maintained by the National Autistic Society. It takes weekly and termly boarding and day pupils between the ages of eleven and nineteen. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and are diagnosed as having autism or with needs on the autistic spectrum. Many present behaviour which is very challenging and most have significant learning difficulties. The school population reflects the national incidence of autism with more than four boys to every girl on roll. The school has recently undergone a number of major changes. The roll has increased from 40 to 72, with a proposal to increase further to 80 students in autumn 1997. The school is multi-cultural in composition with thirty pupils coming from a variety of cultural and racial backgrounds. There have been significant changes in both school and residential senior staff, with principal, deputy, curriculum co-ordinator and head of care all appointed within the last 15 months. In addition, the school is still adjusting to the benefits of its new accommodation, to which it moved three years ago.
36. The school aims to realise the National Autistic Society and school mission statements. In addition it has comprehensive school aims which include the provision of education appropriate to the needs of pupils with autism but also including the National Curriculum, preparing students for adult life, raising awareness of autism and keeping abreast of research in the field.
37. The school has set itself an ambitious programme of development in the three years from 1996 to 1999. Emphases include the 24 hour curriculum, autistic-specific approaches to teaching including the TEACCH¹ method and the development of language and communication, social skills and imagination, in the context of the 'triad of impairment' as an interpretation of the needs of children and young people with autism.

38. Key indicators

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed		% Y7 - 11
through absence for the latest complete reporting year :	Authorised	School 6.5
	Absence	National comparative data None available
	Unauthorised	School 0
	Absence	National comparative data None available

¹ Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Impaired Children

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	4
Satisfactory or better	88
Less than satisfactory	12

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational Standards Achieved

Attainment and progress

39. Targets set by the school, as objectives in annual review reports, are generally being met. These targets are not always sufficiently rigorous for the school to measure progress against them with accuracy. Individual education plans do not set clear targets arising out of the reviews which are specific to each pupil, measurable and precise enough to show progress and on which the next individual education plan targets can be based.
40. There is some evidence of progress over time in pupils' work. There is no consistent approach to setting curriculum goals from subject to subject. Some clear assessments made by the school's psychologist show that significant progress is made by some pupils in achieving behavioural targets for which they have an individual behavioural programme. Progress in communication skills is evident in assessments over time made by the school's speech and language therapist.
41. At Key Stage 3, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, science, geography, art, French, physical education and religious education and most design and technology lessons. Some good progress is made in mathematics, music, physical education, art, geography and design and technology. In a small number of lessons in science and design and technology and in information technology, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Progress is better where classes are well organised, with high and appropriate expectations, where the learning intentions are clear and subject specific, where lessons are carefully planned and where staff manage behaviour with skill. The poor accommodation and confused organisational arrangements limit progress in information technology.
42. At Key Stage 4, good progress is made in a small number of lessons in science, art and humanities and in half the lessons in physical education. Satisfactory progress is made in English, science, humanities, art, French, music, in half of all lessons in physical education and in one third of mathematics lessons. Progress is generally satisfactory in information technology, with some good and some unsatisfactory progress. However, in two-thirds of mathematics lessons and in some design and technology lessons, progress is unsatisfactory.
43. Most students in the post-16 provision make satisfactory progress. Although for many this progress is slow, a few students approach independence and most are developing appropriate skills and gaining in competence. Some students have key skills, securely and confidently attained, so that they can act with some independence, for example they travel on known routes independently, or can socialise with strangers on the college links. These and other more-able students complete significant amounts of work and reach Foundation Levels in Basic Skills. They possess relevant knowledge about certain vocational skills for example computer work, and construction. The lower attaining students have some of these same skills, but need considerable help at each step in any application. Their number and communication skills are very limited. The progress of students is, at best, very good in relation to prior attainment in the secondary stage, or earlier in the post-16 Unit. For some students, progress is very slow and they still require prompting, support and direction to apply what they know and can do. A significant number of students do not become independent learners.
44. The use of the TEACCH approach is positive in defining learning tasks clearly and discretely. However, when tasks are not linked in a progressive sequence, the approach has an adverse effect on learning. Once a task has been completed some pupils are allowed a

longer period than is reasonable to engage in self-selected activities. In some cases, this leads to long periods when no learning is taking place.

45. In general, pupils of all abilities make appropriate gains in learning. However, there is some evidence that higher attaining pupils do better in reading and writing but less well in science. There are no indications of variations in the progress made by pupils of different ethnic origin, gender or background.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

46. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is satisfactory with no exclusions from school during the past twelve months. In lessons most pupils behave well, listen to guidance and instructions provided by teaching staff and concentrate on their work. There are occasions, across the school, when individual pupils engage in the unsociable and unpredictable behaviour associated with autism. However, the skill with which staff manage these situations nearly always results in pupils being re-focused on their work.
47. The attitudes of students in post-16 provision are good. The strengths are the amount of work completed by some, and the steady completion by them of practical tasks; for example, the construction work in the business module at the school, or the sound development of ideas in art. For others, lapses occur in behaviour and attention, sometimes enough to prevent learning, but most typically that the student waits patiently until named by the teacher and then gives attention and makes a reasonable effort, needing help to do so.
48. In and around the school pupils generally behave well and follow school routines. During mealtimes they show developing social skills and help catering staff with mealtime routines and duties. They use recreational time well and show appropriate standards of social behaviour. With encouragement pupils form positive relationships and there are examples of pupils helping each other as well as showing concern about pupils who are hurt or distressed. As a community, they treat each other, staff and visitors well, irrespective of gender or background.
49. Generally there is a very good respect for the school buildings, resources and the outside environment, although there are a few occasions when damage occurs. This is always dealt with promptly.
50. Pupils respond well to the school's efforts to encourage responsibility and independence. They enjoy the many responsibilities they are given in the school. These include allotted tasks throughout the school day; for example, helping in the dining room, as well as domestic responsibilities in the residential provision. A further feature is the positive and mature contribution pupils make to the school committee where they are able to raise issues as well as undertake projects; for example, discussing the most appropriate lunchtime menus.
51. Overall, the standards of good behaviour, the positive relationships at all levels and the developing levels of social responsibility help to create a learning environment in which pupils can successfully make progress in their learning and development.

Attendance

52. Although figures for the last reporting year reveal that attendance levels were poor, the school has recognised that this was due to a recording error when pupils who were late for school were incorrectly shown as being absent without authority. This matter has now been rectified and latest indications show that the school's overall attendance level for all year groups is above 90%. Current levels of unauthorised absence are low whilst only a few pupils are absent with proper authority. Unauthorised absence figures are quoted in the school prospectus.
53. Whilst pupils' attitudes to punctuality at the start of the day are good there are problems with

the late arrival of pupils from the residential provision due to transport problems. This reduces the available teaching time. The school is monitoring this situation with a view to improving the performance of the contractors.

54. When pupils move into school at the start of the day they do so quickly and show an eagerness to start lessons. Similarly after breaks and when moving about the school they show the same sense of purpose.
55. Registration sessions are efficiently conducted and details of pupils' attendance and absences are accurately recorded. Details recorded in class registers are transferred twice daily to a master register which is regularly monitored by senior management. Absences are effectively followed up and where necessary the involvement of the social services and education transport sections are sought to resolve problems with non-attendance. The school complies with legal requirements in respect of registration and maintaining accurate details in attendance registers.
56. The parents and pupils show positive attitudes to punctuality and attendance but the school needs to ensure that transport arrangements ensure that pupils arrive for school in good time for the start of the day, in order to obtain maximum benefit from available teaching time.

Quality of Education Provided

Teaching

57. The quality of teaching during the course of the inspection was satisfactory in four out of ten lessons and good in a further four out of ten. There is a small amount of very good teaching. However, in just over one in ten lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. In some subjects, a very small number of lessons was seen.
58. At Key Stage 3, most of the teaching in mathematics, art, French, humanities, design and technology and physical education was good. Sound teaching predominated in English, science, music and religious education. Teaching in information technology was unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3.
59. At Key Stage 4, good teaching predominated in humanities and physical education. Teaching was generally satisfactory in English, science, art, information technology, French and music but it was unsatisfactory in mathematics and, for some pupils, in design and technology.
60. Teaching of students over 16 was mainly good, with some good collaboration with tutors during off-site visits to college.
61. There are a number of good features in the teaching. These include good knowledge of the pupils' special educational needs and secure subject knowledge in English, science, art, physical education and religious education. This is seen operating well when, in a lesson on identifying initial letter sounds, the teacher insists on pupils looking closely and taking turns, uses a mix of initial sounds, phonics and whole word recognition to suit each pupil's needs, keeps repeating what is expected in terms of behaviour and praises good behaviour and appropriate responses. In a series of art lessons constructing mobiles, pupils are well supported and behaviour is managed well. They are encouraged to look at each other's work and given many opportunities for developing independence and making choices. Some planning is detailed and identifies what pupils are intended to learn. Goals for learning are shared with support staff and this enables them to assist more effectively in the learning process. A significant strength is the skill with which teaching and support staff manage difficult behaviour and keep pupils focused on their work. In physical education, activities are well structured, instructions are given clearly and repeated often and support staff are fully involved in lessons so that every pupil is engaged in the learning process. Teaching of

communication and social skills is particularly good and happens consistently across the curriculum.

62. Weaknesses in teaching in the small number of unsatisfactory lessons include planning which fails to set long term learning goals and tasks which are poorly matched to pupils' levels of learning. In a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, pupils completed a simple task matching coins quickly, but then waited without having a further task or activity in which to engage. Some lessons make poor use of time and do not engage pupils in active learning either because pupils become self absorbed when allowed time for free choice or because they are required to wait and watch while others take turns. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Key Stage 4, the whole class watched and waited as each took a turn in carrying out the small steps in preparing a meal despite there being three support staff available.
63. Strengths in teaching outweigh weaknesses and the quality overall is satisfactory and successfully promotes the learning of the majority of pupils. Most teachers have an adequate knowledge of their subject and a good grasp of the needs of pupils with autism. They have high expectations but not all are skilled in assessing the needs of their pupils and matching the tasks they design to meet those needs. Although most teachers plan their work in detail, the absence of clear guidelines for planning and the variable extent to which the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are used as the basis for planning lead to inconsistency across the school. Most teachers use good organisational strategies, manage pupils' behaviour well and deploy support staff and resources effectively.
64. The emphasis on personal and social education in the school is appropriate. Pupils are given responsibility during tutor time at the beginning of each day for planning their daily programme. Although this is generally effective in promoting independence and reducing anxieties, the time devoted to tutor time is excessive and limits the amount of subject teaching time available.
65. Teachers and support staff manage pupils very well and standards of behaviour and discipline in the school are good. Teachers pay careful attention to pupils' special educational needs and are successful in enabling pupils to engage in learning. The needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language are properly considered. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils within the school, regardless of their ethnicity or gender.

Curriculum and assessment

66. All pupils have access to a broad curriculum which includes the National Curriculum, with the exception that music and a modern foreign language are available to some, but not all, pupils. The current arrangements do not provide co-ordinated provision for music, which is given as a therapy to approximately 60% of pupils. Modern language teaching has been newly introduced and provision is being piloted for a small number of pupils before it is extended across the school. Most, but not all, pupils have access to the National Curriculum as a requirement on their statement of special educational needs. It is the school's intention to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with all Programmes of Study based on the National Curriculum, as well as providing a communication and social skills curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with autism. The balance and content which currently constitute the curriculum contribute to the educational standards achieved though there are some significant shortcomings in the time given to mathematics, in music and in technology, where related areas of the subject currently operate in isolation from each other, for example, design and technology and food technology. Closer liaison is needed to provide consistency of approach.
67. English, mathematics, science, design and technology and information technology, religious education, art and physical education generally meet pupils' needs and show a satisfactory correlation with the National Curriculum requirements. Some aspects of humanities (history and geography) are not planned with enough regard to the needs of individual pupils. There

is not enough provision for science attainment target 3, materials and their properties, to be taught. Modern foreign languages and music, even in its limited form, are not taught to every pupil. In addition, the amount of time available for the curriculum is too short. At present, curriculum time at Key Stages 3 and 4 is just under twenty three hours per week, which is well below the time recommended by the Department for Education and Employment. Further erosion of this time takes place due to the time needed to calm pupils who have become distressed or resistant to joining in the learning activities. Too much time is allocated to tutor time and personal, social and health education at the beginning of each day and some subjects are given inadequate time to allow the curriculum to be covered, particularly mathematics at Key Stage 4. This inhibits pupils' learning. For post-16 students, the college link provision is a significant enhancement to the breadth of the curriculum.

68. The school, historically, has sought to develop a curriculum which will address the impairments of social interaction, communication and imagination, which are characteristic of autism. Recently, the school has undertaken a new planning process, designed to expand from this basis and include the full National Curriculum, and has plans to achieve this target. Provision for design and technology and religious education began at the start of the present academic year. The process of curriculum development has been aided by the appointment of a curriculum co-ordinator whose main task is to prioritise and monitor essential curriculum development. All the staff are involved in this process including other professionals in the school such as the speech and language therapist and the school psychologist who give invaluable support for learning from their own areas of specialism. Planning for post-16 students is good and the responsibility of further education staff who meet regularly. There is currently little monitoring of the effectiveness of the post-16 curriculum.
69. The subject policies and schemes of work are satisfactorily planned to meet the needs of all pupils. They have regard to progression and continuity in most subjects except humanities, information technology and music. There are some weaknesses in planning for science which though detailed does not meet the need to ensure progression. There is a sex education policy but it needs clearer guidelines. There is a need to ensure overall that the use of the TEACCH programme, whilst offering discrete and finite tasks which reduce pupils' anxieties by making learning predictable, does not inhibit planning for progression.
70. There is good provision for personal, social and health education which is a major area for the school. Personal and tutor time is timetabled every day and residential pupils have further opportunities as part of the twenty four hour curriculum. The personal, social and health education curriculum was developed this year but a scheme of work still needs to be completed. Although the links with the twenty four hour curriculum are in place, they have not yet been formalised nor the content and format monitored. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency in order to ensure a consistency of approach by all the staff involved.
71. There is an extensive programme of extra-curricular activities for residential pupils both on and off the premises. Other extra-curricular activities for day pupils are more difficult to provide, as most pupils have to leave immediately after school finishes. The common room is available for all pupils, some of whom chose to watch Wimbledon during the week of the inspection, and boxes of activities are taken to the playground at each breaktime. Plans are in place to enable pupils to join a chess club run by the school psychologist or a football club.
72. The school regards preparation for becoming independent in the community as a high priority. Pupils have good opportunities throughout their time in the school to help them develop their independence skills. They have access to the careers service formally from Key Stage 4. All pupils have access to impartial careers guidance and a specialist careers officer attends all transitional reviews as well as being available on other occasions.

73. Assessment of pupils' work and the ineffective use made of this to promote learning is a weakness in the school. There is no systematic approach to identifying assessment opportunities, to assessing work consistently and regularly in all subjects and to using assessment to inform future planning. This should be addressed.
74. The school has good systems for reviewing pupils' progress through the annual review processes and statutory requirements are met. Information from annual reviews clearly indicates that pupils are making progress over their time in school. This is helpful, but it is not generally used to inform further curriculum planning. Staff make detailed daily records of lessons for each pupil. This mainly focuses on subject content and pupils' behaviour or response and it is not sufficiently focused in what pupils have learned. Much of the assessment carried out is informal and there is no consistency from subject to subject. There is insufficient evidence of detailed, regular and precise assessment being used to inform planning. Assessment of behaviour is more secure than the assessment of progress in learning. There is some useful development of self-assessment during lessons, which helps pupils to understand what they have learned. Records of achievement support this involvement of pupils in judging the quality of their own work. Post-16 students work towards nationally recognised and assessed standards of achievement.
75. Individual education plans are usually well linked to the scheme of work or the termly topic but are less well tied into meeting the specific, identified needs of each pupil. There is some confusion about the targets which are set and in many cases these state what a pupil has to do rather than being focused on what the learning outcomes should be. The school should continue to develop its assessment strategies to show clearly what pupils can do, what they know, and what they understand. This information should then be used to plan targets which set clear learning outcomes for individuals based on their identified needs and with agreed criteria to indicate when this learning has been achieved.

Post-16 provision

76. Students work towards nationally recognised and validated awards. In the previous year three students attained NVQ² Level 1 in Sport and Recreation Management, and about half the cohort are working well towards ASDAN³ Workright and Towards Independence awards. A significant number of students are working well towards City & Guilds Numberpower and Wordpower qualifications.
77. The post-16 curriculum focuses well on empowering students, over three years, with a well-designed balance of activities and experiences. Time is spent off-site including college links, local shops and restaurants, and sport centres. Basic skills are interpreted broadly covering specific skills - such as number, speech, handwriting, and communication work - broadened by yoga and drama activities. Subjects such as design and technology, art and humanities are continued. Personal, social and health education is maintained well. The organisation of the work allows different patterns of activity for different age or ability groups. Assessment usefully includes external accreditation, operated with suitable procedures to improve the accuracy against external standards. The students benefit from the feedback and negotiation about future targets as all work and progress is monitored daily.
78. The staffing and resources for the post-16 provision are good. There are sufficient teaching staff, and further teaching is covered by the lecturers on the college link courses, supported well by the school teachers. School support staff are deployed very well in lessons, and also take considerable responsibility very effectively, such as for instruction in construction skills on the business module, or supporting students on the college links. The accommodation is appropriate and used well, including some specific adaptations for on-site construction skills work. Extensive and very beneficial use is made of off-site provision. The expenditure on

² National Vocational Qualification

³ Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network

post-16 provision is good value for money.

College links

79. College links are available to all students from the start of Key Stage 4, continuing through the three years of post-16 provision. The courses cover construction, information technology, horticulture, and sport and recreation management. Achievements lead to nationally recognised accreditation.
80. The college link provision is a significant enhancement to the breadth of the curriculum. The assessments are thorough, using national standards, and conducted with appropriate moderation and control to ensure accuracy. In addition to the learning about the content of their courses pupils respond to the new, adult environment. The response is good, with attention and concentration sufficient to cover the needs of the external accreditation, and with behaviour acceptable within life of the college. Lapses in behaviour occur but are contained. Overall there is good progress by pupils in learning about the new environment. For example some students integrate into college break-time activities with a reasonable degree of independence. The school deliberately uses the links to provide a challenge which effectively enhances pupils' personal and social development, whilst maintaining oversight of the progress, attitudes and behaviour of its pupils with great care.
81. Approximately half the post-16 students are progressing well to complete the ASDAN Workright and Towards Independence programmes. Students are able to co-operate with each other and some can usefully assist others to carry out tasks in a work situation. These achievements represent significant progress in terms of the pupils' skills and attitudes. College staff who teach these programmes are effectively supported and guided by the school staff. The lessons are well planned, assessed well, and suitable strategies are followed to sustain good progress. For example, post-16 students studying information technology complete considerable amounts of work and some gain confidence with a sound range of computer applications. A year 11 pupil works effectively with a group of adults, becoming more capable of sustaining work over a full day, and gradually realising the need to co-operate and learn as a member of a group.
82. Liaison with the college is effective, both administratively and in guiding college staff to respond well to the needs of autistic students. The proposal to broaden the range of college link work is good, being likely to involve an additional college of further education, to accredit some NVQ Level 2 achievement, and to include photography, media, and food and cookery classes. Staffing levels are appropriate, and good use is made of support staff with students whilst at college, including the support for some more capable students as they attend classes at colleges at which they may enrol after leaving the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

83. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and prepares them well for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The school's personal, social and health education programme makes a satisfactory contribution to this. However, the overall effectiveness of these approaches is not yet evaluated fully by the school. The work carried out in the residential setting enables pupils to become more socially skilled. Pupils have good opportunities to look at life through their own culture and that of a multi-cultural society, different belief systems and religions. However, the daily act of collective worship is unsatisfactory, and does not meet statutory requirements, since the spiritual elements are limited.

84. Pupils develop some self knowledge and insights into widely held values of society, through discussions about rules and laws in English and religious education. In all subjects teachers value pupils' work and ideas openly. Pupils are successfully encouraged to think about their own lives, not only through assemblies but in personal, social and health education and tutor time. Occasionally, pupils have the opportunity to reflect imaginatively in English art, drama, music. This is not extensive elsewhere in the curriculum. Pupils are taught to think of others and their beliefs, particularly in religious education when learning about Buddhism. Work carried out in the residential setting also enhances pupils' social development. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to their spiritual development and the school is making good progress in meeting the needs of pupils of different religious beliefs.
85. Pupils are made aware effectively of the difference between right and wrong. The school provides a clear moral code as a basis for this which supports pupils' moral development and which underpins much of the personal, social and health education programme. Important emphasis is put on establishing good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils. Positive intervention by all staff in improving pupils' moral education is evident. Good encouragement is given to pupils to be appropriately assertive about their personal feelings and they respond well to this. Within the TEACCH programme, many pupils learn to value the positive rewards that can be gained by completing tasks within lessons. Some older pupils effectively consider moral issues of rules and laws, within English and religious education. Attitudes of respect, care and concern are promoted throughout all areas of the school, both during lessons, at mealtimes and in residential provision. Sex education is effectively taught, but the policy does not reflect what is taught and needs to be revised.
86. The school offers good encouragement to pupils to help them to relate to each other and to staff. Good models for behaviour are apparent from adults who work and visit the school, through their calm supportive and sensitive attitudes. Older pupils within the Further Education Unit improve their use of social skills, for example with shopping trips. They also take responsibility for their own learning and self development through the ASDAN programme. Good attention is paid to pupils' personal development not only through the personal, social and health education programme and tutor time, but in lessons where working in pairs and groups to take turns in discussion is evident. In food technology, pupils learn the basic skills of cooking competently. Pupils improve their social skills by learning in real life situations with time in the community, and through the school committee. The day-to-day routines in which pupils preview their timetable schedules and make choices from the menu are developing well. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are evident, particularly at meal times by clearing away plates and by taking messages around the school. In science, pupils learn to care for animals thoughtfully, and to tend plants in the horticultural sessions.
87. In several areas of the curriculum the pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about the values and beliefs of their own and other cultures. This enables them to gain a better understanding of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and social traditions through religious education, English, French and geography. Some external visits are made to art galleries, and visiting musicians and theatre groups contribute to developing pupils' knowledge of other cultural activities. These should be extended further. Knowledge of other cultures and religions is actively and thoughtfully promoted. The richness and diversity of a multi-cultural society are clearly celebrated through prominent displays, particularly the Japanese display and the world map of different materials.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

88. The school provides well for the support and guidance of its pupils. All staff know each pupil well, especially their individual needs. Records detailing pupils' behavioural development are effectively maintained and are closely linked to behaviour programmes. Through systematic monitoring these programmes are reviewed and where necessary changed to meet the current circumstances. Educational development is less well recorded. Although

staff have some understanding about pupil achievement there is little systematic recording about what pupils know and can do. The school must further develop this area of support.

89. A strong feature of the school is the skill with which all staff manage autistic behaviour. There is a good understanding among staff about the behaviour management policy and its implementation is effectively and skilfully managed. Success in this area is further enhanced by the daily exchange of information between all staff, including those in the residential provision, about behavioural issues affecting individual pupils. Unsociable behaviour associated with autism is calmly and efficiently managed by staff showing a degree of skill, patience and sensitivity.
90. Personal development is at the core of the school's values and work. Staff have a good knowledge about individual targets and work hard to achieve improvements in behaviour and capabilities. Information from parents indicates that the school successfully achieves improvement in a number of cases.
91. The school takes seriously its duty of care for the pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff understand the procedures and are alert to potential issues in this area. Throughout the school site as well as in the residential provision, every care is taken to ensure that pupils are free from risk or harm. Risk assessments are carried out as preliminary activity prior to any external visit and effective measures put in place to avoid harm. During the inspection no apparent risks to health or safety were evident.
92. The school's success in creating a learning environment, in the school and in the residential setting, in which unsociable behaviour is well managed and where staff take active steps to ensure the well-being and care of pupils creates a well ordered, happy environment and makes a significant contribution to learning.

Boarding provision

93. The school can accommodate up to 32 pupils as boarders in residential houses about five miles from the school site, providing that the need has been identified on their statement. Currently there are 20 weekly and 10 termly boarders, 5 girls and 25 boys. They are all appropriately housed with separate accommodation for the girls, the weekly boarders and the termly boarders.
94. The quality and level of staff are good and pupils are well supervised. A new, well qualified and experienced head of care was appointed five weeks prior to the inspection after a protracted period of recruitment. The residential care team includes seven qualified residential workers who are deployed across all the houses as team leaders or in senior management positions. Pupils are well supervised and there is always a qualified team leader on duty in each flat, frequently working with a senior residential worker. Night-time supervision is good and efficiently organised.
95. Residential provision makes a satisfactory contribution to the personal development and learning of pupils and in time, as new arrangements are fully implemented this is likely to be good. One flat is now used as an activity centre for all the residential pupils. There is a homework room equipped with several computers and facilities for a range of art and craft including sewing, as well as other recreational facilities and space for whole group meetings. Pupils are given the opportunity to practice cooking, including ethnic dishes or to do gardening. Some of the provision is very new, as the whole site had undergone reorganisation immediately prior to the inspection, and not all the books and other equipment had been unpacked. Each pupil has a planned programme of leisure and personal, social and health education activities which is reviewed and changed after six weeks. Activities also include outings into the community to use facilities such as the library and local cafes and for bowling, football, athletics and walking. There are opportunities for pupils to attend religious services. Time is given each evening for tutoring in personal skills by the key workers. There is a need to ensure that the planned programme of personal, social and

health education is efficiently monitored and co-ordinated as subjects are covered by both educational and residential workers. Current arrangements could lead to inconsistent messages being given to pupils.

96. Communication between educational and care staff on a daily basis is good. Both sets of staff have access to the pupil's communication file which contains a daily record of experiences and events, as well as other long term documents such as their communication and behavioural programmes. The residential staff send a fax each morning to the school with essential information which is read out to educational staff as part of their daily briefing. There are timetabled twice-weekly hand-over meetings between school and residential staff and the principal and deputy visit the residential houses at least weekly as well as assist in delivering training for staff. Next term more extensive arrangements will ensure that all class teachers can meet residential staff each week in order to improve liaison further. There is a need to simplify written forms of communication as it is unlikely that care staff have sufficient time each evening to read documentation. The school should review the format and use of the individual education plan and targets so that all staff were working on the same priorities for each pupil.
97. Training and induction programmes are available for all staff. This includes training on the job as well as separately. The programme works well.
98. Residential accommodation is generally of a reasonable standard, though some was being refurbished during the inspection following a recent site move. General health and safety arrangements are good.

Partnership with parents and the community

99. The good partnership with parents ensures that families can support their child's learning and personal development well, and sometimes very well. Parents are very well informed about the work and progress of their child. They receive considerable amounts of information, including some every time a child returns home. The school provides termly reports covering all key elements of the provision, which is described briefly and with a mainly positive tone. These reports are usefully bound together so that parents can identify progress. The report sent annually, linked to the annual review of statements, is very precise and detailed about what a pupil knows and can do in the subjects, therapies and other elements of the provision. These annual review reports give teachers' judgements clearly and unambiguously about the progress made by the pupil. In addition, parents' evenings are arranged so that parents can meet staff.
100. Remarkable efforts are made to ensure parents understand and use the information and the opportunities for partnership. Distant parents are contacted by telephone or visited, and parents who appear not to be responding will be encouraged to become active partners. The duties of several staff include contacting homes, including visiting. The school psychologist and the school social worker take on such work, and the principal and deputy are very active in promoting home-school contacts. These contacts complement the arrangements for support and welfare well, including help over arrangements with social care or support bodies which parents may use. The school has a fine record of responding carefully to all contacts initiated by parents. As children are considered for admission to the school, visits are made to their previous school or provision, sometimes involving contacts with parents. The school uses its expertise about autism well and is a useful resource for prospective parents and professionals. A satisfactory range of social events is arranged which parents attend in good numbers. Specialist workshops are offered on educational matters of interest to parents. All parents are fully aware of the behavioural strategies used by the school and some apply them at home. A few parents co-operate with specific targets set in annual reviews. The school is aware that significant numbers of parents do not find opportunities to support the school with work children can accomplish at home.
101. Although it is not appropriate to set homework in the conventional sense, the school shares

learning objectives with parents and co-operates closely with them in implementing behavioural programmes at home, at school and in the boarding provision. There are proposals to enhance this aspect of the partnership with parents.

102. Links with the community contribute well to pupils' progress and personal development. Selected pupils in Key Stage 4 and all current post-16 pupils attend courses at a local college of further education. This allows the school to seek to develop attitudes and social skills which prepare pupils to move on, as well as gaining external accreditation for achievement. Sound use is made of the resources in the local community such as shops, sports facilities, sacred buildings, and galleries. Pupils using the residential accommodation have a good range of contacts with the local community, including some which enhance pupils' personal and social independence.

The Management and Efficiency of the School

Leadership and management

103. Leadership and management in the school are generally sound, with the recently appointed principal providing strong leadership and acting as an effective manager. The principal is determined to ensure the best for the pupils and this contributes to the high quality of education being provided and the high standards attained. The commitment of staff to high standards, particularly in behaviour, social and communication development is a reflection of the principal's determination to facilitate the best opportunities for the school's pupils.
104. The school's service support committee does not have the same role and responsibilities as a governing body. They have not played any part in development planning. The principal has carried out an audit within the school, from which priorities have been set for a whole school development plan. The plan contains too many areas for development in a single year and, although much has been achieved, too many achievements are superficial and have yet to be firmly embedded in school practice. Although the National Autistic Society provides advice and support, mostly through its two school group managers, substantial responsibility rests with the principal and too little support has been offered to enable clearer priorities to be set from the large area of work which needs to be accomplished.
105. The senior management team and members of the service support committee undertake observations of lessons to monitor the quality of teaching. Observations by the school's education adviser have been effective in identifying areas for development, but the school has not yet developed a mechanism for effecting change in these areas. There is no comparable attempt to monitor and evaluate curriculum development.
106. The school employs a range of professionals whose role is to provide specialist support for teachers and pupils. The school psychologist is particularly effective in designing programmes to enable staff to work systematically to reduce and ultimately to eliminate difficult behaviour. The nature of the students' special educational needs has led the school to concentrate on social, behavioural and communication issues as a means to enabling pupils to have access to learning.
107. The school has put a great deal of energy into developing comprehensive aims and a wide range of policies. Its values are clear and the interests of pupils are paramount. The school is striving to meet its aims and is largely successful in this. Staff work together effectively in meeting communication, social and behavioural needs but there is less clarity in relation to identifying learning needs and objectives.

108. The strong ethos of the school has a positive impact on learning. Staff deal with all challenges and outbursts with calmness and respect for the dignity of the student. Lessons are mostly orderly. Relationships are very good and pupils receive equal access to learning opportunities, with some appropriate exceptions.
109. The school has determined to provide an organisational structure appropriate for pupils of secondary age. Collaboration between teachers responsible for related subjects and the establishment of appropriate curriculum links are not yet in place and this has an adverse effect on learning. The school has recognised the problem and has recently appointed a senior teacher responsible for curriculum co-ordination.
110. A strength of the management of the school is the effectiveness of its provision in meeting pupils' specific special educational needs related to autism. Provision as outlined in pupils' statements is carried out and annual reviews are conducted systematically and properly. Objectives are set at annual review and reviewed the following year.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

111. The school is adequately staffed to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively to all pupils. Pupils benefit from the experience, skill and care of all staff. Teachers' qualifications, expertise and interests enable them to meet the requirements of teaching religious education and all National Curriculum subjects apart from music. At present music therapy is offered to some pupils and the school is in the process of appointing a teacher to teach National Curriculum music. Each teacher has a tutor group but teach their specialist subject for most of the day. This has a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and learning. All staff have subject co-ordination responsibilities. At present, many teachers lack expertise in subject planning and assessment. The related training needs must be tackled.
112. There is an adequate number of support staff many of whom are well qualified. They are generally of considerable benefit to the learning and social development of pupils working in close partnership with teachers. On occasions when their partnership role is less clearly defined, for example, in lesson planning, they are less effective in supporting pupils learning. The whole school is very well served by the secretarial and catering staff. A wide range of professional specialists work in the school. Pupils benefit from drama, art and music therapy. The partnership between the speech and language therapist, psychologist and the staff is very close and of considerable benefit to all pupils on a day-to-day basis.
113. Procedures for the induction, appraisal and professional development of staff are good. New staff are very well supported by clear policies, in-service training as needed plus ongoing help from a mentor. Appraisal for all staff, teaching and non teaching, is annual and the school has a strong commitment to helping staff develop their professional potential. There is regular whole staff in-service training plus meetings when teachers and therapists discuss curriculum issues. Recent in-service training in English has had a beneficial effect on the development of the English scheme of work. Teachers in the further education department have had training in accreditations, for example, ASDAN which has enabled them to offer a distinctive and appropriate curriculum to their students.
114. The school's accommodation is adequate. It presents a welcoming, comfortable and purposeful educational environment. It is well looked after with a high level of cleanliness and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classroom sizes are adequate and pupils' learning benefits from specialist rooms for science, art, design and technology, food technology and music therapy. Acoustics in the music room are inadequate to prevent disturbance in adjacent classrooms. The art room is small for its purpose and is also a through way for pupils going to the design and technology areas. This is unsatisfactory. The hall is used for assemblies, dining as well as physical education. It is a small area for physical education but the school makes good use of local sports centre facilities. The designated information technology room is unsuitable. There has been recent investment in

playground equipment and these areas are pleasant and include a wildlife area.

115. Teaching resources in the majority of subjects are satisfactory and support pupils' learning. There is a small library which has been developed recently. Resources for reading are inadequate. There is a need for more books in classrooms. Resources for mathematics and humanities are barely adequate with a lack of practical, age-appropriate materials to assist pupils' understanding in these subjects. There is an adequate number of computers in the school. Most are located in classrooms and subject areas and this benefits the development of pupils' computer skills. All equipment is safe and secure. Basic classroom resources are at least adequate and teachers make good use of them. Overall, the school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory and support pupils' learning.

The efficiency of the school

116. The school plans and manages its finances effectively. The principal, supported by officers of the National Autistic Society, has a clear view of the major areas for development and is seeking ways of achieving them.
117. The school is supported and governed by the National Autistic Society, complemented by a recently-appointed non-executive service support committee composed of lay members. The Society acts as employer and discharges its legal responsibilities accordingly. It provides educational guidance and support through its school group managers. The service support committee also offers guidance and support but, unlike a conventional governing body, has no statutory duties or executive powers. This arrangement provides support and professional guidance for the school but does not guarantee that parents and interested members of the public can influence decisions in the conventional way.
118. Educational developments are suitably planned and supported. There is a detailed and comprehensive school development plan which is based on the result of widespread consultation. This plan provides an effective basis for budgetary planning, but its contents are inadequately prioritised across the three-year period to which it applies. As a result, too many initiatives are commencing simultaneously. Clear structures and procedures are in place to monitor the implementation of the various elements of the development plan. As yet, these do not include a systematic evaluation of the effect of the various initiatives on pupils' achievement and behaviour.
119. Staff, resources and accommodation are effectively deployed. The high level of staffing provides good support for pupils. The grouping of pupils allows lessons to be planned to meet the particular needs of pupils. The accommodation is attractive and meets most of the students' curriculum and social needs. Where this is not the case, as for example in the requirement for swimming and indoor sports, the school buys into local facilities, recognising that this incurs some inconvenience and loss of teaching time. The school has not yet secured sufficient benefit from its investment in information technology.
120. Financial control and day-to-day administration is very good. Overall, accounts are systematically kept and expenditure by the various budget holders is routinely monitored and checked. The National Autistic Society is audited and audit visits are made to a sample of the society's institutions. The school has not been visited within this system recently.
121. Effective systems and routines ensure that all staff are aware of matters that relate to the school and its pupils. Particularly effective procedures exist to ensure that information is shared between the school and the distant residential accommodation. Regular meetings also contribute to the exchange of relevant information and ideas.
122. The quality of teaching in the school is satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the subjects of the curriculum. In behaviour and personal development, pupils make good progress and in communication and social development they make very good progress. Taking account of the significant difficulties which pupils

face, the sound progress they make and the high quality of education provided, the school gives very good value for money.

PART B : CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, Mathematics and Science

English

123. The school places significant emphasis on improving communication skills and is making satisfactory progress in achieving this through an appropriate English curriculum. Even though many pupils have severe developmental delay in their expressive and receptive language, the majority make satisfactory progress overall, with the best progress evident in speaking and listening skills.
124. In both key stages, pupils have good opportunities to talk and communicate in all lessons. Many can use speech, signing (through MAKATON) or gesture with confidence. The more able can talk confidently about what interests them, for example their weekend activities. A few can explain opinions about what they think to be fair or unfair, and how rules and laws help and support them both in school and outside. Pupils learn to listen well, but this is not always sustained. Older pupils show confidence in speaking in assemblies, often describing holiday visits or explaining other school activities. Equally, pupils' speaking skills improve with sustained and well-planned work from speech therapy. Use of drama therapy is having a good impact on pupils' ability to describe or explain ideas and feelings, especially in Key Stage 4.
125. In reading, a few more able pupils can read simple texts clearly, including instructions. Several others recognise familiar words and can repeat them. Lower attaining pupils recognise individual letters and can express their response to poems and stories they hear. Overall, skills are developed well, with pupils learning initial letter sounds or gaining pleasure from reading simple texts or being read to in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the most confident can read simple texts accurately and with some fluency but their understanding is still limited. However, a growing number are keen to read in public and do so confidently. Very few read books independently yet, but this is improving.
126. Progress in writing is most evident in the work of the more able. In Key Stage 3, pupils learn to write clearly in distinct sequences for different purposes, yet are more confident at writing answers to set questions rather than writing independently. In both key stages, a few can organise their ideas without considerable support. Some pupils still find difficulty in forming letters or words clearly and benefit from using word processing. Older, more able pupils can write descriptive and informative pieces with increasing accuracy.
127. Across the curriculum, most pupils make good progress in communicating by speech and signs. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and audibly. Most speaking tasks rely on the giving of information. In many lessons pupils listen to each other and respond appropriately with increasing confidence as they mature. Pupils try hard to explain their ideas. This is evident in whole school assemblies. In reading, only the most able are wholly confident in using texts for learning, but this improves as pupils grow older. In most subjects, pupils have supported access to texts to gain information. Library skills are taught effectively using materials from several subjects, mostly picture based texts. In science, for example, pupils are keen to make written records of their work and this is also evident in geography and food technology. Writing is often limited to responses on worksheets. Whilst little extended writing is in place in English, word processing allows several pupils to write effectively in science, geography and technology. Post-16 students are able to write communicating meaning, using phrases and sometimes sentences. Occasionally, narrative and non-fiction pieces of writing feature in their work.
128. Pupils' attitudes to learning are always satisfactory and sometimes good. In most lessons, pupils try hard to make progress and show good levels of concentration, but sometimes

require support to do so. Nearly all pupils take pride in their work. They learn to take turns with speaking and are keen to speak when they have the opportunity. Pupils show enjoyment, for example, when they identify correct letter sounds or complete tasks accurately. For many pupils, using information technology enhances their attitudes to work. In some lessons, pupils are able to work independently without support when reading and writing. Behaviour is usually good and some pupils encourage others to work hard. Relationships are good between pupils and adults.

129. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have good knowledge of individual pupil's needs and set work appropriately. The best lessons are well prepared with support staff well briefed. Lessons usually continue at a good pace in a sensible working atmosphere. On a small number of occasions, pupils have difficulty completing the activity as the teacher has not established the aim of the lesson clearly enough. Praise is used effectively. Adults use a range of strategies to enable pupils to remain engaged in learning and to behave well. Occasionally, tasks set do not challenge the most able, but teachers do ask good questions of individual pupils to improve achievement. Resources are used thoughtfully, although reading materials are limited in quality and quantity.
130. Overall planning for English is detailed, extensive and thorough. It complements much of the personal and social education in the school. Assessment of what pupils know and can do is conscientiously carried out, but there is not sufficient focus on what pupils understand. Teachers are improving their knowledge of the demands of the National Curriculum and would benefit from more training on the teaching of reading and writing. Regular monitoring of the curriculum is developing so that its effectiveness can be improved.

Mathematics

131. Progress is at least satisfactory in the majority of lessons, particularly at Key Stage 3 where progress is always satisfactory and often good. At Key Stage 4, progress is satisfactory in a minority of lessons, but unsatisfactory in most lessons. Many pupils are able to count and recognise numerals within 20 but are less secure up to 100. Some are able to select three-dimensional shapes and match these to line drawings. They can sequence, do simple addition and many make good progress in consolidation of their skills in counting, working with money, making choices and recording their work. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of some number concepts by using them to solve problems.
132. Pupils improve their numeracy skills in a range of other subjects such as counting in assemblies or registration periods. In science, they develop skills in number recognition, counting, in collecting and organising information and in producing graphs. In French, pupils are able to count forwards and backwards between 1 and 15. Those in the further education department have consistently planned opportunities for applying number concepts related to units, money and distance. The outline schemes of work across the school indicate where there are cross-curricular links with numeracy and though these do not yet precisely define what the links actually are, pupils nevertheless are increasing their ability to count, use money and tell the time, both in school and within the local community. The best students in further education are able to use calculators to manipulate numbers using thousands, hundreds and tens, show data in pictograms, carry out work using the four rules and handle money. Lower attaining students practise skills in number recognition and carry out tasks relating to money with support.
133. Attitudes and responses are satisfactory or better throughout the school, particularly at Key Stage 3 where responses are generally good. Pupils concentrate well, are keen to take part and enjoy the activities. They behave sensibly in the face of sometimes inappropriate behaviour by individuals. Many pupils are able to work well alongside each other, and opportunities are planned and given for them to work collaboratively. There are some instances, particularly at Key Stage 4, where pupils are passive unless directly in contact with an adult, and these pupils are less able to work independently than many of the younger

ones.

134. The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in the majority of lessons. At Key Stage 3, teaching is mainly good and often very good. At Key Stage 4, some teaching is good, but most is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons are well planned in line with the National Curriculum and pupils' individual education plans. There is good classroom control and sensitive, consistent behaviour management. High expectations are evident and pupils are encouraged to work independently. Pupils are given helpful comments to guide them through the activities and support effective progress. Classroom assistants are well deployed. They work well as members of the team, have a clear understanding of the teacher's requirements and are effective in enabling pupils to make progress. Where lessons are unsatisfactory, planning does not sufficiently ensure that all pupils are involved throughout the lesson, so time is wasted waiting for adult attention. Introductions do not always ensure that pupils are paying attention and insufficient attention is paid to the needs of the whole group.
135. Progression is planned across both key stages through the outline plans which are currently in place and through the detailed schemes of work which are being developed. All the attainment targets within the National Curriculum are addressed and work appropriate to pupils' levels of cognitive development is planned using the Programmes of Study. All pupils have access to the subject but insufficient time is available to develop pupils' mathematical skills and understanding. This is a serious issue at Key Stage 4 where only one session each week is available, and further erosion of this time means opportunities for reinforcement and progression are limited. The situation is only slightly better for Key Stage 3 pupils, who have two lessons each week.
136. Informal assessment of the work covered and pupils' responses and behaviour is carried out after each session. There are currently no systems in place for making accurate judgements about what individual pupils know, understand and can do, and this is acknowledged by the school as an important area for development. The individual education plans are mainly linked to the topic and due to the lack of precise assessment, do not fully reflect individual needs.
137. The subject is well led. Development planning is good but the lack of clear monitoring means that consistency of approach cannot yet be guaranteed across the school. Staffing is only adequate to meet the current time devoted to mathematics. The resources available are effectively managed and deployed, well stored and easy to access. However, there is a need for more resources which are prepared to meet individual needs, and the current range should be broadened to offer opportunities for wider choice and decision-making by pupils.

Science

138. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in science. By the end of Key Stage 3, many pupils can make informative observations about objects and events, and are able, for example, to compare the structure and movement of small garden animals or the changes that take place when chocolate melts or table jelly dissolves. They understand that there are many different kinds of living things and can name the main parts of the human body, of a plant and of some garden animals such as insects and snails. They appreciate, through their studies of germinating seeds and the movement and feeding habits of small animals, that living things have particular requirements if they are to stay alive. Pupils' knowledge of substances is more limited, but they are aware that everyday objects are made from a variety of materials, chosen because they have different properties.
139. Pupils have a basic understanding of a number of physical processes. For example, they know that magnets attract some objects but not others; that a complete circuit is needed to make a battery light a bulb; that there are a number of sources of light, such as the sun, lamps and flames; and that light passes through some materials and not others.

140. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils have widened their experience of science so that they can now, for example, carry out, with guidance, practical tests to determine whether different materials dissolve or how the movement of small trucks is affected by the nature of surface that they run over; appreciate that animals have different diets and that this affects how they live; know that materials differ in their ability to shed water; and understand that a push or a pull is needed in to start something moving or to stop it again.
141. The school offers its post-16 students some scientific experiences through a validated horticultural course, provided in conjunction with a local college. It was only possible to judge the effectiveness of this through an examination of a limited number of students' records. In this course, students gain some practical understanding of the conditions necessary to ensure the propagation and growth of a variety of plants.
142. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make better progress in understanding living things and physical processes than in gaining knowledge of materials. They make the least progress in understanding and using the investigational methods of science. There are no significant differences in the progress of girls and boys or between different ethnic groups in the school. Lower-attaining pupils are well-supported to ensure that they make suitable progress but some higher-attaining pupils could achieve more if provided with better sequenced work.
143. The response of most pupils to science is at least as good as expected. They usually arrive at lessons expecting to work, participate in the activities provided and show satisfaction in what they achieve. Most pupils respond well to staff and the activities provided in lessons. They are particularly interested by the practical aspects of the subject, such as watching the movements of animals, or testing the behaviour of materials and objects in water. They are able to work sensibly and, encouraged by staff, show a good sense of responsibility, treating living specimens and other resources carefully and tidying up after themselves. They are able to work alongside each other, sharing and taking turns when necessary. For a few pupils such responses are extremely difficult to achieve. Despite this, staff employ appropriate strategies to help them, and it is rare for a pupil not to engage in some of the work, even if fleetingly.
144. In nine out of ten lessons the quality of teaching is satisfactory or better; in almost a third it is good. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between adults and pupils, and by particularly sensitive and consistent behaviour management. This usually results in a good working atmosphere. Lessons are fully-planned and provide pupils with activities which are clearly linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum.
145. In the best-taught lessons, good quality resources are used to motivate pupils and support their learning. Examples include the use of a collection of live garden animals as a basis for studying the variety of life, and the provision of small samples of test materials to record the results of a study of waterproofing. Another feature of good teaching is the use of effective questioning to direct pupils' thinking, for example, when staff explored children's ideas about the composition of different everyday objects.
146. Unsatisfactory features seen in some teaching result from planning which concentrates on content rather than the development of pupils' skills and ideas. As a result, some lessons show a lack of progression, use over-complicated examples or miss opportunities for developing aspects of investigational work. Examples include lessons in which pupils have insufficient knowledge of the properties of materials before being asked to identify them in different objects; studies of solubility in which some substances also bubble, float or colour the solution; and prediction which is based on uniformed guesswork rather than prior experience.
147. Science is provided through a suitable range of general topics. The planning of these topics is clearly related to the National Curriculum Orders and meets statutory requirements, although the emphasis given to the study of materials is low. Appropriate use is made of the

discretion available to use Key Stage 1 and 2 Programmes of Study. Suitable resources in reasonable quantities have been developed to support each topic, although the amount of measuring equipment is inadequate. A useful range of attractive books on a variety of scientific and technical topics is held in the school library.

148. The content of the curriculum is thoroughly planned, but not enough attention has yet been given to developing investigational work or to ensuring progression in pupils' scientific understanding. Staff have not received sufficient in-service training in these aspects of planning. Inadequate time is allocated to the subject at Key Stage 4 to allow pupils to reinforce and develop the ideas that they have learnt at Key Stage 3.
149. Day-to-day teacher assessment of the work of pupils is sufficient to enable National Curriculum levels to be deduced and to meet statutory requirements. However, formal assessment is at an early stage of development and as yet provides an unsatisfactory basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum.
150. Science is taught in an attractive room which provides suitable facilities for the delivery of the subject. The school has developed a useful environmental studies facility within its grounds.

Other Subjects or Courses

Art

151. Individual pupils show remarkable progress in what they can do. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can choose from a range of colours, explore patterns and designs, follow instructions and use simple tools, although most of them cannot yet work independently. By the end of Key Stage 4 some pupils can use a greater range of colours with more confidence and identify them with more precision such as 'maroon red' or 'lighter blue'. They choose colours to make designs on materials, some can work independently and show practical skills in two- and three-dimensional work and in drawing. Post-16 students can explore colour and make a range of collage works including very strong representations of heads in the style of Picasso.
152. Pupils generally make sound progress but there is also good evidence that over a longer period of time some of them have made particularly significant progress, in the light of prior attainment. Sometimes it is progress in gaining control of the tools used, pencils, paint brushes and spatulas, for example, a pupil who has progressed from weak pencil lines in year 7 to fine pen work with good observational skills by year 9. A year 10 pupil has developed from repetitive drawing of a Mickey Mouse head to very detailed and accurate caricatures, and draws accurately from a picture of a work by Giacometti. Other examples include a pupil who can use a range of subtle water colours to create atmosphere and interest in a picture of a group of buildings, having started at the school drawing only simple outlines of a house.
153. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject and have good levels of concentration, although many need continued help and support from the subject teacher and classroom assistants to stay on tasks. Their attitudes are commendable as the art room is also used as a corridor. Older pupils can listen to reviews of each other's work.
154. Teaching is good in a majority of lessons and always sound. Behaviour is managed well and with a calm persistence in supporting pupils to stay on task but with a recognition of the appropriate time to change an activity. Classroom assistants work well with the teacher. They anticipate the difficulties pupils may have in co-operating and responding appropriately and plan the strategies they will use in advance to give pupils the best possible levels of support. Constant praise and feedback during lessons give encouragement and reassurance to pupils and assist them in becoming more independent learners. Individual planning identifies areas for development for pupils. The variety of teaching styles and techniques

taught is limited. These should be extended and assessment should be made more precise.

155. The subject is described by the school as art therapy but the subject specialist does use National Curriculum Programmes of Study in planning. This includes work for both attainment targets although there is more emphasis on investigating and making. The scheme of work is based on providing experiences in several areas and assessment opportunities are identified. In order to develop the subject further, in addition to the therapeutic aims, there should be more careful development of learning opportunities as some programmes of work are too similar to those for a previous year group. However, displays of pupils' work around the school and the enjoyment pupils show in lessons, illustrate the considerable contribution this subject makes to learning in the school.

Design and technology

156. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are able, mostly with considerable help and support, to complete stages in the making of a meal, or of an object in metal or wood. Some pupils understand what is being made, but rarely decide how the overall task should be handled. Strength and control in the use of tools and equipment is a problem for many. Progress is satisfactory for most, as they comply with the direction set by staff to consolidate skills and slowly acquire an independent competence, often needing a term or more to do so. A small number of pupils make clear progress more rapidly. Progress is occasionally unsatisfactory for individuals when too little new work is accomplished. Post-16 pupils include some who learn skills only very slowly, and others who have made sound progress to attain skills which are measurable and which can be recognised as a basic foundation level.
157. Pupils are often interested in the making process. Some use the equipment quite confidently. Even so, concentration often lapses so that prompting and support are needed. Pupils mostly respond well to this. A few pupils do not settle to work, and behave erratically when working with wood and metal. Almost all pupils work steadily, with direction, during the meal-making activities. Relationships with staff are mostly good. Pupils wait patiently for their turn and a significant proportion are able to relate courteously to each other. Equipment is treated with due care, and some responsibility can be allocated for tidying up and for hygiene and safety issues under supervision.
158. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Food technology is very precisely planned, assessment is detailed and provides a sound basis for the next work. Expectations of progress are realistic, and pupils' behaviour, skills and enjoyment are managed skilfully. Craft work is planned to relate well to the National Curriculum, though sometimes over-ambitiously. Assessment seeks to measure progress but is not clear enough to be the basis for planning. In both these aspects of technology, teachers predominantly work one-to-one with individual pupils. The use of support staff for both subjects is too often ad hoc during the lesson, rather than planned. Pupils are quite often left inactive, waiting for attention. Both subjects, but especially the food technology, have a significant beneficial impact on pupils' personal and social development.
159. Design and technology is not yet sufficiently well led to secure a consistent approach to either the National Curriculum or to achieve the best effects on personal and social development. Post-16 technology is led from within the Further Education Unit, with insufficient reference to secondary provision. The pupils benefit from the investment in three suitably equipped and resourced specialist rooms for food, craft and post-16.

Humanities

160. Humanities (history and geography) are taught to all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 using a modular programme. During the inspection week, the geography module was being taught. Judgements are also based on scrutiny of pupils' past work in history and geography.
161. In geography, pupils at Key Stage 3 are able to recognise and identify elements of their local environment for example, house building materials and different parts of the school grounds. Those learning about maps are able to mark the position of windows and furniture on a map of the classroom, and they are making progress in understanding the concept of maps representing a real place. Older pupils at Key Stage 4 can observe and record with photographs of contrasting environments and some can use pictorial resources to consider the journey of a letter from writer through the postal service to delivery. In history, pupils have talked about their own autobiography as well as the biography of a famous person in the past. They show an awareness that past times are different from today.
162. The progress pupils make is satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good or very good at Key Stage 3. Progress is better when the teaching is focused on clear and specific learning objectives and assisted by tactile materials; for example, using Lego blocks to build a model of their classroom led pupils to make progress in understanding the concept of map-making. The assessment and recording system does not yet focus on recording progress over time and it is not possible to make a judgement on progress in history.
163. Pupils' response is always at least satisfactory and often good at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Pupils are co-operative, they listen and concentrate well and are motivated to learn. Many pupils are able to work independently with only a little support and there are good examples of pupils working together and sharing resources.
164. The quality of teaching is generally good. It is never less than satisfactory and on occasions, is very good. Where teaching is good, lesson objectives are specific and achievable, explanations to pupils are clear, and focused questioning by the teacher keeps pupils on task throughout the session. Where teaching is less good pupils are not challenged enough to observe their environment and learning objectives are not specific to pupils' individual needs. Where teaching is very good, the pupils' past work and skills are used to good effect in understanding the new work, and tactile materials are used effectively to enable all pupils to gain an understanding of difficult concepts.
165. Subject planning in humanities is not well developed and a co-ordinator for the subject has been appointed for the next academic year. The present scheme of work does not ensure full National Curriculum coverage for all pupils in either history or geography. The scheme of work is appropriately based on the programme of study for Key Stage 1 but not all elements are included. This seriously inhibits opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning experiences. There is an embryonic assessment system which has good features, for example, pupil self-assessment, but it is not yet a useful tool to record and plan for pupils' progress.

Information technology

166. Most pupils in Key Stage 3 make insufficient progress in information technology. A few pupils in Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress but for others progress is unsatisfactory. The satisfactory progress includes competently presented short units of work using word processing, paint programmes and spreadsheets. Progress for many in Key Stages 3 and 4 is limited by problems over organisation which mean that pupils sometimes arrive late or are interrupted, and over new equipment that is not yet functioning reliably or is not ideal for the needs of pupils. The pupils for whom progress is most impaired are low-attaining pupils or those with poor motor skills. Some of these pupils have little capability to use the present equipment, and do not gain sufficient access to information technology. Post-16 pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress, several gain sufficient competence with word

processing and paint programmes to allow them to work with some independence. Information technology is used as a tool in several subjects. This use of information technology supports pupils progress in art, mathematics and English as well as in information technology.

167. A minority of pupils enjoy using the computer and take pride in the work they produce. A few pupils find the change from the classroom environment to the information technology room difficult to cope with and this results in some reduced co-operation. Most work steadily and respond to staff direction. All Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils need support and prompting to sustain a focus on a task and, most especially, to move on to new tasks. A significant proportion of the post-16 pupils complete a lot of work as part of their college programme. Most rely on help to do so but do have a degree of independence. In general, equipment is treated with reasonable care by all. Some pupils co-operate, when shown how, in looking after work and equipment.
168. Information technology teaching is mostly sound, with a significant minority of unsatisfactory lessons. Many weaknesses reflect difficulties in planning to overcome constraints over equipment and organisation in order to secure steady progress. Expectations about the pupils' work are sound, and suitable strategies are in place to suit the needs of the more-able pupils. Assessment lacks detail, and is under-used to plan future work. Though all pupils have some access to information technology, a significant number have insufficient time. Information technology provision is not well integrated across the school. There are too few links between the use of computers within subjects and the teaching of the skills within the dedicated room, leading to fragmentation and inconsistency.
169. The school has recently invested in new equipment. Planning for the use of the equipment, for example, to be sure that all pupils can make progress, is weak. Other problems remain unresolved; for example, how to license software so it can be used in all classes. The room provided for specialist information technology is too small and its shape makes supervision difficult. It is inhibiting learning for many pupils. The use of external facilities for post-16 students is working well.

Modern foreign language (French)

170. The school is making sound progress in its aim to introduce pupils to France and the French culture. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their work, and learn a range of appropriate vocabulary that reflects everyday needs and extends their knowledge of French life. In Key Stage 3, pupils learn to count to fifteen, know days of the week and can also name a range of common objects. All can respond briefly to questions with single words and short phrases, and can understand the teacher's speech clearly. In writing, many pupils can select appropriate words to complete short sentences naming people or objects. In Key Stage 4, progress is also satisfactory, with pupils considering aspects of French life, for example, some foods and expressing their opinions about likes and dislikes. Satisfactory progress is made in knowing how to greet people.
171. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to learn another language. They can concentrate well on adults speaking to them and are able to recall what they have learnt previously. With support, they can use that knowledge to learn new vocabulary. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. The majority of pupils are actively engaged in lively lessons which keeps pupils interested in what they are learning. As yet, not all pupils in the school benefit from learning another language.
172. A clear overall policy for teaching a modern foreign language is in place, but a scheme of work has not, as yet, been completed. Suitably matched work according to pupils' needs and understanding is taught and resources are positively used to support learning.

Music

173. Music therapy is currently seen as complementary to the educational provision of the school. During the inspection, some group sessions were seen but it was judged to be inappropriate to go to individual therapy sessions. The principal aim of the therapy is to promote the overall emotional, social and personal development of pupils and it is currently received by about two-thirds of them. Judgements are based on observation at group sessions, scrutiny of individual records and discussions with the therapists.
174. Although musical skills and musical awareness may develop in the therapy, that is not its principal aim. Pupils can use a range of musical, mainly percussive instruments, can respond in time to tempo and rhythm and develop a willingness to listen to others as well as take their turn. Some pupils make progress in confidence in using instruments as well as in vocalisation. Teaching is generally satisfactory, particularly when two therapists work as a team. Very good records are kept of each session. There is informal feedback of outcomes to class teachers but, to some extent, music therapy is relatively isolated from other provision in the school. Despite this, it is highly valued. However, the school plans to provide a full curriculum in music to all pupils in the next academic year, based on the National Curriculum.

Physical Education

175. For almost six months prior to this inspection the school had been unable to recruit a suitable candidate to fill the vacant post of co-ordinator of physical education. As a result, evidence of the long-term management and planning of the subject was limited to an examination of existing documents and discussions with the very recently appointed temporary teacher of the subject.
176. Pupils' attainment and long-term progress in the subject is low. However, in virtually all lessons progress is at least satisfactory, and in more than half it is higher than would be expected in relation to pupils' identified abilities.
177. Pupils make clear gains in confidence and competence when carrying out activities such as trapping, travelling with and passing a ball in football, practising elements of the backstroke in swimming, and co-ordinating movements in body-awareness exercises.
178. At Key Stage 3, pupils are able to follow commands and obey written and oral instructions in order to carry out activities safely and effectively. They are learning to move freely and some show satisfactory levels of competence in ball control and co-ordination. They are beginning to be able to work in pairs and small groups for some work, and to predict and evaluate their own performance in simple activities. Encouraged by the teacher, they are able to demonstrate their skills to each other and to appreciate the efforts of others.
179. At Key Stage 4, pupils show very similar levels of competence to those seen at Key Stage 3, but they have made useful gains in their spatial awareness. Post-16 students are beginning to appreciate the idea of team games and the importance of rules and procedures to ensure fair play.
180. Pupils' response to the subject is good or very good in well over three-quarters of lessons at all stages. They join in lessons willingly, follow instructions and work enthusiastically to achieve what is asked of them. Sometimes, pupils show obvious signs of pleasure in what they can achieve. They often exhibit good levels of patience when taking turns or waiting for others to complete tasks. As yet, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop a problem-solving approach to work in the subject.
181. The quality of teaching is good in almost all lessons; in the remainder it is satisfactory. Good features of the teaching include: the use of very clear instructions to enable pupils to understand the purpose of their work; highly structured and carefully sequenced activities that allow progress to be made in easy stages; target-setting that matches the potential of each pupil, for example, when pupils are asked to predict and evaluate how far they could

jump; and helpful feedback that enables pupils to improve their performance. High levels of sensitivity to the particular needs of pupils were also evident, particularly in the flexible approach taken to the behavioural difficulties of individuals and groups.

182. At present, the majority of work is necessarily aimed at evaluating pupils' attainment, so that opportunities for individualised and more extended work and are limited. Management and long-term planning of the subject have been adversely affected by the lack of a subject co-ordinator. Bearing in mind the educational benefit of this subject for pupils, this is a matter that needs urgent resolution.
183. An appropriate curriculum has been planned which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Suitable use is made of the discretion to use the Key Stage 1 and 2 Programmes of Study for older pupils. However, the schemes of work on which these documents are based are not entirely appropriate and fail to meet the particular needs of all pupils.
184. There are plans to extend the extra-curricular aspects of the subject. A scheme is in place to monitor the progress of pupils in the subject but this is insufficient to act as a basis for curriculum monitoring and planning.
185. The on-site accommodation is limited and has some impact on what the school can offer, for instance, in terms of some gymnastics activities. It is supplemented by appropriate use of local sports and swimming facilities, but travel to and from these sites is time-consuming and inefficient. It does, however, offer some opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development. There are satisfactory levels of most resources but there is a continuing need to expand the range of small items to support group activities.

Religious Education

186. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress. No religious education is evident in the further education unit. Many pupils acquire a good moral and social awareness, yet their spiritual understanding is less well-developed. In Key Stage 3, pupils know about symbols for different religions, for example the cross for Christianity. In year 8, pupils have learnt about different clothes worn as symbols of different religions, such as the colour orange for Buddhists. Fewer pupils are able to express their special feelings or understand the significance behind the story of creation. However, a few understand the differences between specific symbols in religion, as well as why different religions use different buildings to worship in. At Key Stage 4, pupils have learnt about patterns and their connections with various religions. The majority know the basic story of Easter as part of the life and work of Jesus. Some pupils can express an opinion about their religious beliefs. Their knowledge of religious rituals is enhanced by considering Christmas, Hindu and Moslem festivals. The more able pupils know about different major belief systems in the world and a few had learnt some of the work that Jesus did.
187. Pupils show interest in their work and enjoyment in completing tasks, particularly where they are active, for example, when asked to carry out task of plotting a journey around school. Where opportunities exist to work independently, the more able cope well with it. The majority can listen carefully to instructions, yet still require considerable support. Pupils showed respect by handling an artefact of Buddha with great care.
188. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Planning is sound, and activities usually match pupils' needs effectively but the more able could be challenged further. Satisfactory use is made of pupils' individual learning targets. Resources, including artefacts, are well managed in supporting pupils' learning. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is slow. Behaviour management is satisfactory.
189. The co-ordinator has sound knowledge of the subject, and has effectively adapted the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus to suit the pupils' needs. Improving subject expertise and

knowledge will further enhance pupils' progress. Whilst detailed systems are in place for assessment and recording individual pupil's progress, they do not sufficiently inform curriculum planning. Resources are reasonable but could be improved.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of Inspection Evidence

190. A team of eight inspectors spent a total of 26 days in the school. During this time, 98 lessons were observed and recorded. The inspectors also observed the arrival of pupils in the morning and their departure. Registration, lunchtime, breaktimes and assemblies were observed. A scrutiny of all the work of a sample of pupils was made. Inspectors talked to pupils informally. Checks were made of teachers' planning and records and the school's resources. A sample of pupils' statements of special educational needs, annual reviews and individual education plans were examined. Interviews and discussions were held with the chair of the Service Support Committee, the Director of Finance, School Group Managers, the Principal, teachers with management responsibilities, the school psychologist and speech and language therapist and with support staff.
191. Before the inspection began, the team examined the school's curriculum, management and financial documentation. A meeting was held in which parents were given the opportunity to express their views about the school. Questionnaires were sent to every parent. Forty six were returned to the registered inspector and the views expressed in them were studied by the inspection team.

192. Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	Number of boarding pupils
Y7 - Y13	70	70	0	29

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7

Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	31
Total aggregate hours worked each week	908

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	96/97
	£
Total Income	2,187,701
Total Expenditure	2,160,132
Expenditure per pupil	31,766
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,569
Balance carried forward to next year	21,545

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

70

Number of questionnaires returned:

46

Percentage return rate:

65.7

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	46.7	51.1		2.2	
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	58.7	37.0	2.2	2.2	
The school handles complaints from parents well	48.8	41.5	7.3	2.4	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	41.3	52.2	4.3	2.2	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	54.3	41.3	2.2	2.2	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	46.7	51.1		2.2	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	48.9	44.4	4.4	2.2	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32.4	35.1	18.9	13.5	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	53.3	40.0	2.2	4.4	
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	40.9	52.3	4.5		2.3
My child(ren) like(s) school	63.0	34.8		2.2	

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