

INSPECTION REPORT

The Loddon

Hook

LEA area: Hampshire

Reference Number: 116589

Headteacher: Marion Cornick

Reporting inspector: Christine Grice
T12157

Dates of inspection: 29th September - 2nd October 1997

Under OFSTED contract number: 401088

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

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Information about the school

Type of school	Special
Type of control	Independent
Age range of pupils	8 - 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
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Main findings

As a consequence of their special educational needs the attainments of the pupils are below age-related norms. Comparisons will not be made with national expectations or averages, although this report will refer to what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, reviews and individual education plans.

The Loddon School successfully achieves its aim of providing a safe, enjoyable environment where pupils can grow towards independence. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent. This is a major strength. Given the severe and complex nature of their learning difficulties, pupils develop good communication skills. Planning for curriculum development especially in mathematics and history is unsatisfactory.

Educational standards achieved by pupils

The pupils' attainment is in line with their special educational needs. Pupils' progress in managing their own behaviour is good. Over time, they learn a range of strategies to help them achieve some degree of independence in making their own choices. Some pupils inevitably have periods where they regress. The school helps those pupils to counter some of the negative effects of regression through careful monitoring and management. Overall the pupils make satisfactory progress in the subjects of the National Curriculum, and their progress in English is good. Younger pupils are learning that text and symbols have meaning through the books that they use and the stories that they listen to.

The pupils use white on black picture symbols (PIC symbols) to help them communicate their needs. Many pupils use symbols to record their work. Some can hold pens and overwrite. Some of the older pupils' can use the PIC symbols to explain that they need to use the lavatory. Pupils progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory because insufficient time is given to it. Some pupils can order numbers to five and match by colour and shape. Younger pupils work on recognising coins and some can match coins to the value of twenty pence. Older pupils use money when they go shopping. However, they have an insufficient range of planned practice in these and other mathematical skills. In science their progress is satisfactory overall. Their learning includes experiences to help them understand that animals need food and water. Older pupils have helped to make electric circuits. Some of the oldest pupils observed tested the effect of different degrees of friction to help them gain an understanding of forces.

The pupils make good progress in religious education and design technology and satisfactory progress in art, music, geography, physical education and information technology. Pupils' progress in history is unsatisfactory because the National Curriculum programme of study is not sufficiently well interpreted in terms of the pupils' individual and complex learning needs. In information technology the pupils make sound progress in their understanding and use of computers. However some who need simpler devices to help them develop their understanding of cause and effect do not have suitable equipment to help them do this. Pupils with additional needs such as pupils with visual impairment make sound progress.

Given their difficulties, the pupils have good attitudes to their learning and their personal development is very good. They respond well to the order of the day and lessons. When an individual pupil's behaviour breaks down it is well managed and the order of the school is maintained. This has a positive effect on the pupils' learning. The punctuality of the pupils and their carers is good. The full time attendance and good time keeping has a very good effect on the progress of their pupils.

The quality of education provided

The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching of the youngest pupils is satisfactory, for the oldest students it is good and for the senior pupils' it is very good. All but four of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and half of all lessons observed were good or better. The scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans confirmed the lesson observations. The teaching of English, design technology, geography, art, music and religious education is good. The teaching of science, information technology and physical education is sound. Where mathematics is planned the teaching is sound. The teaching of history is unsatisfactory.

The strength of the teaching lies in teachers' professional understanding and interpretation of the structure of support for learning developed within the school. Timetables using PIC symbols help to reinforce the order of the day for the pupils. The teachers ensure that learning tasks have clear beginnings and ends. This helps the pupils to feel more secure within the structure and it helps their learning. The school's decision not to disapply pupils from the National Curriculum is appropriate. However the teaching weaknesses lie in insufficient planning of a range of mathematics activities and in insufficient reflection on how the National Curriculum in history can be used to select worthwhile learning activities suited to pupils' learning abilities. This is linked with little recent in service training on how this might be done. The school is developing sound work using information technology. However it does not always provide simpler forms of technology to help pupils understand cause and effect.

All staff manage the pupils' behaviour excellently and the teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of ways of teaching communication and personal and social education which are the major needs described on pupils' statements. The planning of subjects in the National Curriculum, while satisfactory overall, is not as effective as it could be. Teachers select from programmes of study that are age related and this sometimes results in them selecting content that is too difficult for pupils. Nevertheless, teachers are often courageous in setting stimulating activities. Pupils with the most challenging behaviour are taken shopping in the community, they use expensive equipment and sharp tools in a well supervised setting.

The school's curriculum is broadly based but its balance is affected by inadequate time given to the teaching of Mathematics. The school's decision to offer international studies instead of a modern foreign language is appropriate given the complexity of pupils' learning needs. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' personal progress and communication is very good but the same attention is not given to monitoring the outcomes of the rest of the curriculum in order to develop curriculum planning. The systems for the assessment of the National Curriculum are sound except in mathematics and history. The quality of the residential provision is good.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Their social development is very good. The profound nature of many pupils' autism and associated extremes of behaviour make the teaching of right and wrong very difficult. However the excellent example set by adults in their respect for the individual and their gentle but determined response to challenging behaviour creates a strong and positive moral ethos. Pupils develop their spiritual awareness through daily reflection times. They celebrate different festivals. There are multi-faith assemblies and staff and visitors help them to have some experience of their own and others cultures. It is not appropriate to have a daily act of collective worship. It is carried out weekly and is of a good quality.

The efficiency with which financial resources are managed.

The leadership of the school is sound. The principal has a clear vision of the care and support needed by pupils in the school. Her leadership has been effective in enabling the school to achieve its aims of providing a safe, enjoyable environment where pupils can grow towards independence. Together with her deputy and three process managers who also deputise in the principal's absence, she has created an effective departmental structure that is valued by the staff. Staff are managed well and they receive good training in behaviour management and personal development. However professional development does not include sufficient focus on interpreting the National Curriculum, particularly in mathematics and history, in the light of the pupils' needs.

Over the past two years, the trustees have become more involved in the work of the school and this is beginning to have a positive effect. The trustees take responsibility for planning the budget overall and for decision making on larger scale spending. These are carefully planned. The recently built barn is having a positive effect upon developments in physical education, music and art. However, the curriculum development plan does not detail how each of the core and foundation subjects will be developed. Spending on some areas of the curriculum is not based on systematic reviews of previous work in order to check the cost effectiveness of proposals. The school uses a good quality management manual to aid financial planning. This helps the school to manage its finances satisfactorily.

The school offers sound value for money. This judgement is made on the basis of the good progress made in pupils' behaviour and personal development, the satisfactory progress made in the subjects of the curriculum, the high unit costs and the overall sound management of financial resources.

Key issues for action

1. In order to build upon the existing strengths of the school the trustees and senior management should:
 - increase the time given to mathematics and develop a policy for promoting numeracy across the curriculum. Monitor pupils progress in mathematics;
 - ensure a better match between the pupils' learning needs and curriculum tasks set by reviewing the national curriculum planning arrangements;
 - improve history teaching through in service training to help teachers use the programmes of study in the light of their knowledge of pupils' learning needs;
 - link financial planning more directly to curriculum development.

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1. Loddon school is a non-maintained residential school approved by the Department for Education and Employment for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The pupils' on entry have limited speech, expressive language and comprehension. The school has a board of trustees who oversee the work of the school. It is situated in a rural area of Hampshire. There are currently 27 pupils on roll, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. The pupils are aged from eight to nineteen. The pupils are drawn from all over the country.
2. The pupils attending the school have all experienced a breakdown in their previous placement. Many have been excluded from their special schools and may have had periods with little effective education. All the pupils exhibit severe and challenging behaviour and nearly all the pupils have autistic spectrum disorder(ASD). Some have extreme behaviours including self injurious behaviour and all require a high level of supervision and care.
3. The school's aims are the provision of care, a safe and enjoyable environment where pupils can grow towards independence. Its priorities include the improvement of accommodation, staff development, links with the community and educational psychology support.

1. Key indicators

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	8.5
Unauthorised absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

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	6
Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

1. The attainment of the pupils is in line with their special educational needs. On entry into the school, the pupils are assessed against the school's own essential assessment criteria which include aggressive and disruptive behaviour. A significant number of pupils exhibit self injurious behaviour. Many pupils have been excluded from special schools and have had periods without effective education. This has had an adverse effect upon their learning. On entry, some pupils are unable to recognise their names, make eye contact or understand the need to take turns. Their linguistic development is very poor. Their attainment in mathematics and science is very poor and has been affected adversely by disruption in their schooling. The behaviour of the pupils does prevent them from learning, and appropriately, behavioural targets are the main priority in all of the pupils' individual education plans. The targets in the pupils' individual educational plans are sound although in some subjects they are set at too high a level. The three monthly and annual reviews are carried out to a high quality and are making a positive effect upon pupils' learning.
2. Pupils' progress in managing their own behaviour is good. Over time, they learn a range of strategies to help them achieve some degree of independence in making their own choices. The school's procedures for recording and assessing behaviour are exemplary and are having a positive effect upon the pupils' progress in this area. The very careful analysis and recording of behaviour enables targets to be set which, over time, enable pupils to gain more control. For example, within the period of the quarterly review, one pupil's targets progressed from three minutes sitting calmly to fifteen minutes sitting calmly. Through their stay in the school, the pupils learn strategies to regulate their behaviour, for example, by requesting periods of time by themselves. Some pupils inevitably have periods when they regress. The school helps those pupils to counter some of the negative effects of regression through careful monitoring and management.
3. Given their low starting point pupils' make good progress in English. They learn that symbols convey meaning. They learn to communicate their needs through the PIC symbols and some of the older pupils can use the symbols to explain that they need the lavatory. Younger pupils learn that text and symbols have meaning through the books that they use and the stories that they listen to. They are learning to enjoy books. Some pupils are able to write, often with the aid of an adult's hand over their hand. The pupils' progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory mainly because insufficient time is given to the subject, records of pupils' prior learning indicate that they make limited progress over time. Some pupils can order numbers to five and match by colour and shape. Younger pupils work on recognising coins and some can match coins to the value of twenty pence. Older pupils use money when they go shopping. However, they have an insufficient range of planned practice in these and other mathematical skills. In science, they make sound progress in line with their abilities but there is limited progress over time. Their learning includes experiences to help them understand that animals need food and water. Older pupils have helped to make electric circuits and some

of them have tested the effect of different degrees of friction to help them gain an understanding of forces.

4. The pupils make good progress in religious education and design technology in relation to their abilities. In food technology, they can follow a recipe matching symbol with symbol and one or two pupils are able to match symbol to word. They have experience of their own and other cultures through religious education and they are beginning to understand about an external world. In art, music, geography, physical education and information technology the pupils make satisfactory progress. Progress in history is unsatisfactory because the National Curriculum's programmes of study are not sufficiently well interpreted in terms of the pupils' individual and complex learning needs. In information technology, the pupils make sound progress in their understanding and use of computers. However, some pupils need simpler devices to help them use the computers.
5. The progress of those pupils with additional needs is satisfactory. The careful management of the pupils enables some learning to occur. For example, when two pupils' became distressed in a sensory session, the teachers and assistant skilfully managed the situation so that some learning could continue for the pupil remaining who was able to indicate a preference by smiling. There is no significant difference in the progress being made by boys and girls or by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

1. Pupils are admitted to the school because of their extremely challenging and often violent behaviour. From this starting point, pupils respond well to the teaching and provision made by the school and they learn strategies to cope with their difficult behaviour, for example by requesting time alone.
2. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning. They respond to the careful communication and to the structure of activities and tasks. The pupils' make satisfactory responses in the majority of lessons. Some pupils can follow instructions and make eye contact. Pupils with complex learning difficulties can indicate a preference and respond to sensory stimuli and to familiar adults.
3. Given the severe nature of the pupils' special educational needs, behaviour is good. With the support of their helpers, pupils move about the school freely. They participate in a wide range of activities in school and in the local community facilities. When an individual's behaviour breaks down the general order of the school does not suffer.
4. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and are a significant strength of the school. Pupils enjoy being with the familiar adults in their lives. Although the needs of the pupils make it difficult for them to show initiative, some of the older pupils are given supported work experience activities within the school.
5. The personal development made by pupils is good. They understand that poor behaviour may have the consequence of preventing them taking part in an activity. They learn to sit, wait, take turns, share and to greet each other. Many pupils clean up after meals, look after their own bedrooms and put their own laundry away. Some pupils make a contribution to the community by litter picking, recycling wine bottles and making contributions to Harvest Festival.

6. Pupils respect others' beliefs and cultures. There is no bullying and there is a high degree of racial harmony.

Attendance

7. The attendance of pupils at The Loddon, a residential school where pupils are supervised around the clock, is excellent. There is no statutory requirement to maintain registers, but the school completes an annual return of pupils on roll. Detailed records are kept of when pupils and staff leave the premises for outings. Parents return children on time after days or weekends at home. The priority for pupils is to make a calm start to the day, but this does not prevent a prompt start to lessons. The punctuality of pupils and their carers is good as they move purposefully between activities. The full time attendance and good time keeping have a very good effect on the progress of pupils.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

8. The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes the progress that pupils make. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all but four of the 62 lessons observed and, in half of them, teaching was good. The scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans confirms the judgements made on lesson observations, that the teacher of the youngest pupil is satisfactory, for older pupils it is good and for the senior pupil, it is very good.
9. The teaching of English, particularly of communication skills, is good. Lessons are well planned and activities are well suited to the needs of the pupils. Where mathematics is planned the teaching is sound. The teaching of design technology, geography, art, music and religious education is good. The teaching of science, information technology and physical education is sound. The teaching of history is unsatisfactory, because the teachers have not been able to adapt the programmes of study to match the learning needs of the pupils.
10. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent and a significant strength of the school, enabling effective learning to take place for some of the time. Teaching assistants are skilled in the management of behaviour and are deployed effectively. On the many occasions when the behaviour of the pupils interferes with learning, the staff enable pupils to return to task or they isolate individuals, thus causing less disruption to the other pupils. Careful monitoring and assessment of pupils' behaviour enables realistic and achievable targets to be set.
11. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of ways of teaching communication and personal and social education which are the major needs described on the pupils' statements. However the planning of subjects of the National Curriculum, while satisfactory overall, is not as effective as it could be and teachers knowledge and understanding of some subjects is not secure. The teachers select elements of the programmes of study which are appropriate to the ages of the pupils. This sometimes results in the selection of material that is too difficult for the pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the objective was to create a variety of modes of transports using squares, circles and triangles.
12. The teachers have high expectations. They often show courage in their lessons by setting pupils' stimulating learning activities. For example, the pupils with the

most challenging behaviours are taken shopping in the community and they use expensive equipment and sharp tools under close supervision. The teachers generally make very good use of time and resources.

13. The main strength of the teaching lies in teachers' professional understanding and interpretation of the structured systems to support learning developed within the school. Timetables using PIC symbols help to reinforce the order of the day for the pupils. The teachers ensure that learning tasks have clear beginnings and endings. This helps the pupils to feel more secure within the structure and it helps their learning. Classrooms have individual work stations for the pupils so that distractions are kept to a minimum. There is a team of teachers and teaching assistants within each department. This structure is highly effective for reviewing and planning teaching approaches and has a positive effect upon pupils' learning. The support provided by the teaching assistants is of a high quality
14. The school's decision not to disapply pupils from the National Curriculum is appropriate. However, the teaching weaknesses lie in insufficient planning of a range of mathematics activities and in insufficient reflection on how to select worthwhile learning activities suited to pupils' learning abilities from the programmes of study for history.

The curriculum and assessment

15. The school provides a curriculum that is broadly based but its balance is affected by the inadequate time given to mathematics. The arts are well represented through full provision for visits to art exhibitions and museums and visits to the school from professional musicians. Opportunities to participate in work with visiting artists, to experience music or to visit to HMS Victory and other places of historical interest during 'fun' history weeks are included as part of the curriculum. The school has made an appropriate decision not to offer a modern language as part of the modified National Curriculum but, as an alternative, provides lessons on international studies. These frequently include valuable sensory experiences for the pupils.
1. For pupils aged 14-19 there is a suitable Royal Society of Arts (RSA) course, "Accreditation for Living and Learning", which the school introduced earlier this year. This covers all the relevant areas of learning for this age group. The further education group has a separate base and elements of vocational and life skills are included in their programme.
 1. The curriculum promotes the intellectual and physical development of pupils satisfactorily and pupils' personal development and behaviour very well. It teaches the sex education programmes sensitively, on a personal level, using PICs and prompts to help pupils. Parents are fully informed and the programmes are discussed at reviews. The school has decided appropriately that drugs education would not be relevant given the pupils' disabilities. The personal, health and social education (PHSE) programmes provided are very comprehensive and each pupil has an appropriate individual plan that is reviewed regularly. The school provides well for religious education. The school does not have a daily act of collective worship which is appropriate given the pupils' needs.
 2. Planning for life after school is carefully managed over a period of time and the Careers Service is involved in the fourteen-plus transition reviews. Although careers education is not appropriate for this group, contact is maintained until the pupil

leaves and great care is taken to identify placements. Post-19 options are explored well.

3. The curriculum reflects the aims and values of the school well and is planned effectively to take account of any pupil's additional special educational needs. For example, this planning is fully implemented for a pupil who is blind. The school provides very well for equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and no pupil is excluded from any lesson or activity. The length of the school day is appropriate and pupils engage in planned activities that take them out into the community. Some pupils go swimming in Eastleigh, use the local running track, go to the remand centre in Reading for gymnastics and to the local community centre for recycling and litter-picking activities.
4. Much time and commitment has been given to the planning of the curriculum. The school was prompt in its initial response to the National Curriculum and revised and updated the curriculum in 1995. Themes are determined over a four-year period and much thought goes into finding strategies to teach the curriculum in an interesting and imaginative manner. Targets from the National Curriculum programmes of study are cross-referenced to every subject and pupils' individual learning objectives are linked to these targets. However, these are sometimes set too high. In mathematics, for example, pupils can not build upon their past learning securely because they have not consolidated basic counting and number skills. Although much of the curriculum planning is sound, a clearer focus and monitoring of the match between the National Curriculum elements and pupils' abilities is required.
5. There are efficient systems for day-to-day assessment and information arising from the assessment is used effectively to plan future lessons. Information gained from the three monthly and the annual review is used well to prepare pupils' individual PHSE, behaviour management and educational plans. Annual reviews are carried out very effectively and assessments on behaviour, PHSE and English are very good. The systems for assessment in the National Curriculum are sound in most subjects except mathematics and history.
6. A range of extra-curricular activities planned by the care staff enriches the curriculum. Bat and ball games, swimming, football, visits to the athletics track are the main sporting focus, but there are also painting activities, the bouncy castle, walks and rides after school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

7. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and it is very good for their social development. The teaching of moral development presents a difficulty for the school. The profound nature of many pupils' autism and associated extremes of behaviour make teaching the concept of right and wrong difficult. However, the splendid example set by staff, their expectations of good behaviour and their gentle but determined response to challenging behaviour create strong shared values and a positive ethos. Within this ethos, pupils are taught ways of coping at difficult times rather than hitting out. They understand that some behaviours have consequences. They are asked to apologise when someone is hurt. They are helped to look after the school animals and, through this, to develop a sense of care. The staff show respect for the individual and this promotes well the pupils' social development.

8. Celebrations of different festivals in school, the use of the local church, bible stories, daily opportunities for peace, calm and reflection help pupils to develop spiritually. Religious education, work with animals, music and the sensory curriculum provide further opportunities to explore the natural world and experience awe and wonder. Greeting times are used well to help pupils engage with staff. School acts of collective worship are well managed, and are of a high quality
9. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and a significant strength of the school. Very detailed and comprehensive programmes ensure that independence skills are systematically built. These skills, which lead pupils towards becoming self determining, are linked with the residential aspects of the school. The school involves pupils in the community very well. Local shops, guides, cinemas, public houses, churches, restaurants, pools, bowling alleys and libraries are all used.
10. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is good. It is successfully made through multi-faith, multi-cultural assemblies, and by international studies. Visiting performers and others have provided pupils with experience of African drumming, harp playing and puppeteering. Fun days and fun weeks have given pupils a further range of experiences. Some pupils have had their bedrooms decorated to reflect their ethnic background.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

11. The school makes good provision for the support and guidance of its pupils. Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting pupils' individual needs. They know their pupils well and are particularly committed to helping them overcome their behaviour and communication problems. They make tremendous efforts to help pupils understand what is happening and what is going to happen. For example, a pupil is signed 'finish' to show collective worship has ended and is then shown a picture symbol to show it is time to have a drink.
12. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress is very good. The three-monthly reviews are very effective. They draw in good quality, well researched information and encourage debate between different professions and the parents. Worthy of special mention is the compilation of behaviour data by the psychology assistants and its analysis. The mainly photographic records of achievement support the more formal assessments and provide a parent-friendly system of monitoring. The systems used to set, monitor and assess goals for pupils' social, personal and emotional development are effective and ensure pupils progress well. These systems are of a high quality.
13. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are based on a very strong philosophy combining positive approaches, good relationships and totally non-aggressive intervention measures. The methods used include a mixture of systems that provide structure, rewards, therapy (music, massage and work with animals) and an analysis and explanation of behaviour. The comprehensive and regular training of staff ensures that the approach is consistently used and results in the effective management of pupils' behaviour. The school's success in dealing with this behaviour underpins all pupils' progress.

14. Policies, procedures and practice for dealing with medication, accidents and emergencies, including fire, are good. There are sound child protection procedures which staff are trained and clear about. The school has good relationships with a number of doctors and with medical and non-medical support services. There are independent advocates for pupils who have no one else to speak for them. All support and contribute to the best interest of pupils. The Health and Safety policy, procedures and practice are thorough. Several members of staff have responsibilities within it.

Partnership with parents and the community

15. The school's partnership with parents and the community is very effective. Home and, to a certain extent, the local community are welcomed to understand and share in the care of the pupils. Both the quantity and quality of information provided for parents by the school is very good. Regular newsletters give details of events allaying parents' potential concerns. Parents are given information about the curriculum and sex education. There is no formal annual report from the Board of Trustees but parents are kept up to date with management decisions through letters from the principal. The parents' meeting and the results of their questionnaires showed that parents are extremely appreciative and very supportive of all that The Loddon provides.
16. The majority of contact with parents is co-ordinated by one of the process managers and his assistant. They are generally the first point of contact between parents and school. They are very effective in ensuring that the organisation of letters and telephone calls home and the management of weekends and holidays away run smoothly and without distress to the pupils or their families. Although many parents live at a distance from the school, they are encouraged to be involved as much as possible in the education of their children. They are invited to training sessions and workshops and are always given positive encouragement to attend the three-monthly reviews of progress. The annual summer picnic is a warm and friendly occasion when families, friends, staff and pupils enjoy a day together at the school. The links with parents make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning.
17. For those pupils who have little or no contact with their families, the school has a system of advocates and befrienders. These are individuals who build up a special relationship with a particular pupil and provide a beneficial and welcome programme of special trips and outings. The continuity between the classteachers and the residential care workers is very good. They are kept informed of good work and behavioural incidents at the end of the day.
18. The links with the local community are many and various and contribute very well to the pupils' personal development. The village church and shops all have frequent contact with the pupils. The local hairdresser cuts many pupils' hair and supervised visits are made to the public house. Further afield the school uses a gymnasium at Reading Remand Centre. Some pupils go riding, bowling, or visiting other special schools or they join the Girl Guides, all of which contribute well to their social development. Pupils contribute in return to the local community by taking part in litter-picking schemes, providing gifts for Harvest Festival and participating in the local horticultural show. Pupils are not shielded from public view but taken out positively into the community and this is of invaluable benefit to their personal and social development.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

19. The leadership of the school is sound. The principal has a clear vision of the care and support needed by pupils in the school. Her leadership has been effective in enabling the school to achieve its aims of providing a safe, enjoyable environment where pupils can grow towards independence. The practice throughout the school supports the school's aims. Parents, staff and trustees are supportive of the school's aims. The implementation of the school's aims and philosophy is good.
20. Over the past two years the trustees have become more involved in the work of the school and recent priority has been to increase the communication between the senior management team and the trustees. A new system of allocating individual trustees to oversee specific areas of the school is proving to be beneficial. A recent development has been to receive regular reports from members of the senior management team. This increased involvement is allowing trustees to have an accurate view of the school's work which is enabling them to carry out their responsibilities more effectively.
21. The senior management team consists of a deputy and three process managers who also deputise in the principals absence. The school is organised into four departments. The teachers and teaching assistants within each department meet regularly to review and plan the work of the department. This is a an effective structure and much valued by staff. The curriculum is managed by co-ordinators who plan across the departments and, within each department, there is a member of staff who helps teachers plan lessons. This works satisfactorily on all subjects except mathematics and history.
22. The school operates a quality management system in which all its procedures are audited and monitored. This system is accredited by external assessors audit is very effective in ensuring the smooth day to day management of a complex school which operates for 24 hours a day 52 weeks a year. The monitoring of pupils', behaviour, personal development and communication skills is very good. The monitoring of pupils' development in curriculum subjects is sound except for mathematics and history. Monitoring of teaching is carried out through the quality management system which focuses upon meeting set procedures. This system does not adequately inform curriculum planning and development.
23. The school development plan is not in a form that would allow effective monitoring, for example timescales and success criteria are not identified, consequently the trustees have not been able to evaluate systematically the impact of decisions upon pupils' learning. Priorities for development have been set in the areas of accommodation, staff development, links with the community and educational psychology support. The trustees take responsibility for planning the budget overall and for decision-making on larger scale spending, this is carefully planned. Some recent developments have had a beneficial impact upon the curriculum. For example, the newly constructed barn has had a positive effect upon the art, music and physical education curriculum's. However, the curriculum development plan does not address how each of the core and foundation subjects will be developed. The lack of this is having an adverse effect upon standards in mathematics and history.

24. There is an enabling and caring ethos within the school which encourages a climate of mutual respect and understanding. Wherever possible the school's curriculum reflects the diversity of life in a multi cultural environment. The school manages the additional needs of pupils with additional needs well.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

25. The large number of staff on the payroll at the school reflects the need for twenty-four hour a day supervision, fifty-two weeks of the year. It is adequate and has a positive effect on the education and care of the pupils. Turnover of care staff is high, but understandable and acceptable in a school of this nature. There are still many teaching and non-teaching staff with long experience and service in the school. The teaching staff include only six teachers qualified for service in this country but this has no detrimental effect on the good quality of teaching provided. All staff have suitable training for pupils with special needs. Often departments and teams are ably led by teachers unqualified to teach in the UK. The qualifications and experience of the teaching assistants and residential care workers are good.
26. The school has effective arrangements for the induction of new staff. Induction is well documented and monitored, particularly that concerning management of pupils. The senior process manager is also the deputy principal and acts as an effective mentor and guide to the newly qualified teachers. Appraisal is not required by statute in this school, but teachers and other staff are supported by regular interviews with more senior staff. Appraisal does not have sufficient impact on education in the classroom through target setting and identifying appropriate training. The training programme is co-ordinated by the training department and the deputy responsible for training. The training in behaviour management and personal and social themes is very good, and there is an emphasis on this rather than on improving the teaching of the curriculum in the classroom. Professional development does not include enough exposure to National Curriculum training to enable teachers to adapt it to match the needs of pupils at The Loddon.
27. Accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The large outside areas include animal paddocks, an assault course and an orchard, which contribute well to the personal development of pupils. The main house was originally a vicarage and has been effectively converted to include most of the residential part of the school but some of the corridors upstairs are cramped and narrow. Other pupils reside in houses away from the main building, where they can effectively experience life as if they were at home. The building of a new "barn" has proved most beneficial, providing a recreational area and specialist rooms for music and art. All the premises are well maintained.
28. The school is well resourced in all areas of books, materials and equipment necessary for the special population of pupils. Pupils often make use of resources outside the school, particularly in history and geography. The lack of access to a swimming pool affects development of the curriculum in physical education but the school is striving hard to overcome this. Overall the adequacy of resources for the curriculum and for the range of pupils successfully promotes opportunities for learning.

The efficiency of the school

29. Loddon is an independent school with a board of trustees, approved by the Department for Education and Employment for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The budget is set according to the fees received from individual local authorities and some directly paid disability living allowances. According to the figures provided to the inspection team, the budget is currently in deficit. Recent large capital expenditure has been spent on building a recreation and physical education barn and on the purchase of a further residential house. In reality, the projects have been astutely funded from advance fees and careful payment of contractors' instalments in arrears without the need for significant borrowing. Large-scale educational developments are supported well through careful financial planning.
30. On a day- to day level, the lack of a detailed curriculum development plan prevents educational developments having direct links to finance. Plans for educational developments are taken a year at a time and there is little systematic review of previous patterns to establish cost-effectiveness. The regular monitoring of departmental spending is not sufficiently rigorous to establish a tight connection with the educational needs of the pupils. The good practice identified in the quality-management manual aids financial planning. Overall, the school manages its finances satisfactorily.
31. Financial control and administration is good. The trustees are effectively involved in auditing large projects and take a keen interest in the budgets. The financial manager is responsible for daily financial transactions and rigorously questions the reasons for irregular or over-costly purchases. Limits are set on the spending of all individuals and departments. There is a close link with the accountants, one of whom attends important project meetings. Recommendations from the most recent auditors' report have all been taken up.
32. The use of staff is good and promotes pupils' progress well. Apart from the principal there are four process managers who are not based in classrooms. They are deployed satisfactorily in a business management structure designed for a twenty-four hour day and fifty-two week year residential school. The day care and residential care workers are particularly well used and are vital partners in the smooth running of education and of the daily life at the school.
33. The use of learning resources and accommodation is good. The school is well resourced with the specialist equipment needed for pupils with severe learning difficulties audit is all used well to promote pupils' progress. Extensive grounds include animal paddocks and an assault trail. They are frequently used for effective educational and recreational purposes. All the rest of the accommodation is used well.
34. The unit cost for the school is very high and, although major financial decisions are efficiently checked, the departmental planning for educational areas is not sufficiently monitored for efficiency and cost-effectiveness. However, overall there is sound management of financial resources. Taking into account the good progress made in pupils' behaviour and personal development and the satisfactory progress made in most of the subjects of the curriculum, the school provides sound value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science

English

35. On entry into the school, pupils' attainment is very low. Some are unable to recognise their own name or establish eye contact. From this base, the pupils' progress in English is good throughout the school. This is mainly due to the use of white on black picture symbols (PIC Symbols), used by nearly every pupil in the school. All pupils are working towards clear individual goals.
36. When pupils need to understand instructions or find out what is going to happen next, or if they need to make a choice or a need known, symbols are available. Symbols are used with a combination of signs and speech. Pupils thus make very good progress in communication,. Over the whole school, those with little or no language can usually understand the communication through symbols being shown to them. Often they will respond with a 'yes' or 'no' sign or gesture, or by pointing to a symbol. By the nature of the pupils' disability, they often are unable to understand simple verbal communication and are often confused by change and the sequencing of future events. Symbol timetables are extensively used to support pupils at times of change. The successful work in communication therefore impacts on all areas of learning and particularly on behaviour.
37. Few pupils read conventionally. All symbols carry the written word and a very few pupils are beginning to recognise the written word. The youngest pupils enjoy sharing books by listening to stories and looking at pictures. Older pupils have books and magazines which have a single theme that has a particular fascination for them. This fascination extends their ability to use text and pictures to gain information.
38. Few pupils write conventionally. Some hold pens and write over text with adult assistance. Many use symbols to record work done, to write letters home to parents and to write sequences of activities. The senior pupils are able to match symbol to symbol and one or two can match symbol to word. The symbol system used in the school is available to pupils on the computer. Some are beginning to use the computer to arrange the symbols. The link between reading, writing and communicating is clear because of the consistent symbol use.
39. Pupils' response to their lessons is usually satisfactory and often good. Their attitudes to the symbols being used are positive. Pupils gain confidence through their ability to communicate. This is a significant factor in pupils' overall progress.
40. Teaching in English is good. In observed lessons it was at least satisfactory and in six out of ten lessons it was good. The total commitment to the communication system and its consistent use are very good features. The management of pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent. The staff have high expectations and lessons are challenging. The speech and language therapist

and assistants make a very positive contribution to the overall teaching.

41. The English curriculum is broad and balanced with a clear and relevant focus on communication. The National Curriculum has been appropriately modified to meet pupils' individual learning objectives. Teachers take full account of these goals. There is effective day-to-day assessment of goals which informs future teaching programmes.

42. The English curriculum is well led and managed. Co-ordination of English is shared between the speech and language therapy department and the English co-ordinator. There is a good range of books both as a central resource and in classes. There is further appropriate software to use on computers.

Mathematics

43. Pupils' progress in mathematics is unsatisfactory. The pupils' attainment on entry is low, however, scrutiny of the pupils' records confirms that the pupils make limited progress over time. Some pupils are able to sort and match by colour and recognise numbers. Few pupils are able to count and order numbers from one to ten, some have difficulty matching two dimensional shapes.
44. In the junior department, the pupils progress is limited. One boy is able to recognise coins to the value of twenty pence. In the senior departments some pupils are able to match by shape and colour. The pupils are able to collect information, for example, how staff travel to work. They use PIC symbols effectively to record their findings and can make a mark to represent one. In the further education department, the students are able to experience using money in real situations such as shopping. This is developing their social skills.
45. The pupils' attitudes to this subject are satisfactory. In the structured sessions they are able to complete learning tasks. The pupils lose interest in some lessons, especially when the tasks are too hard, for example, the calculation of time.
46. The teaching of mathematics in planned activities is sound. In most lessons, teachers manage the pupils very well. Resources, including teaching assistants, are well used to support learning. The structured teaching sessions are particularly effective. In a few lessons, the teaching is less successful because pupils are not able to build upon past learning.
47. Planning for the National Curriculum is not satisfactory. There is an uneven allocation of time to teach this subject across the school. At post 16, numeracy is taught through the life-skills programme. Whilst this is appropriate, an audit is required to ascertain whether the students are receiving sufficient instruction in the subject. The shortage of curriculum time allocated to the subject is having an adverse effect upon the progress of pupils. Day-to-day assessment monitors pupils' progress against individual targets. This system is not sufficiently refined to track what pupils' know, understand and can do and is not informing future teaching plans. The opportunities to develop numeracy across the curriculum are inconsistent and, on occasions, opportunities are lost. For example, the pupils are given the choice of two drinks and the opportunity to reinforce the concept of two is not taken.
48. There is a subject co-ordinator and a member of staff in each department responsible for planning the subject. The co-ordination of the subject does not include the evaluation of teaching or monitoring the amount of mathematics teaching. The co-ordinator has good initial qualifications but has not had recent training in the subject. The resources to teach the subject are adequate although little use is made of information technology to develop pupils' learning in mathematics.

Science

49. The pupils' progress in science is satisfactory overall. Pupils make progress towards their individual learning goals and in line with their abilities. However, there is limited progress over time. Despite limited progress pupils at all ages learn about water and its effect upon different surfaces, and, by collecting plants and animals from different ponds, learn about ponds and pond life.
50. When working on a project about "Our Community", the oldest students successfully make electrical circuits. The youngest pupils roll wheels down ramps or carry out a series of tests to see if it is easier to move a box filled with sand when it has four wheels on it, one, two or three wheels or no wheels. These tests are all part of work on friction in the transport topic. As part of their work on forces, senior pupils throw pieces of tissue and sugar paper to see which travels farthest. They then check the results to see if the lighter paper has actually gone further than the heavier one.
51. In environmental science, senior pupils make good progress in learning about animals' requirements by mucking out, providing food and water and collecting fresh bedding for the chickens and donkey. When collecting eggs from the hen house, they use skills learned in mathematics to count and compare the sizes of the eggs. They learn the skills of sweeping up and using a wheelbarrow successfully when mucking out in field and shelter and groom the pony correctly and gently. Older pupils grow runner beans and prepare hanging baskets for the local flower show, activities in which they show interest and pride.
52. Pupils often work well for short periods with adult direction. Some pupils are able to maintain their concentration even when others are not involved or are unable to continue with the activity. They enjoy time spent outside with the animals.
53. Teaching in science is sound overall and one in three lessons seen were good. Staff work well together, encourage pupils to work as independently as possible and intervene effectively when necessary. In the best lessons, there is a good choice of strategies and resources for the activity and lessons are selected at an appropriate level for the pupils. The management of the pupils' behaviour is excellent.
54. The science curriculum has been modified to meet the needs of the pupils. There are two aspects of science at the school. One is based on access to the National Curriculum programmes of study and the other is environmental science. National Curriculum science is taught through a series of termly topics. The science curriculum has a positive effect upon the pupils' social and spiritual awareness. Assessment of pupils' progress is made against the individual learning objectives which are completed regularly.
55. The newly appointed co-ordinator is monitoring the curriculum carefully. The subject is well led. The school's system of review at the end of each topic is a very useful one. The information provided can be used effectively to monitor the resources required for the various topics and the content of each scheme of work. The system ensures that the targets set are appropriate for the pupils and there are always adequate resources for each topic.

Other subjects or courses

Art

56. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art at all key stages. They use a range of techniques, media and materials and participate in a balanced programme of activities. They explore the properties of paint by dropping it on to wet silk to produce attractive designs. As part of a project on Egypt they paint with reeds, and, in project on Rome, they use cutting and sticking skills to produce interesting mosaics. A topic on transport gives opportunities for pupils to create "road" patterns. They print with rulers dipped in paint, then trail material soaked in paint across their lines, before blowing paint with a straw across the page to produce designs. In the playground, younger pupils cycle or roll tyres across paper to produce a large wheel design. All experience the choosing and use of primary colours when undertaking these activities and there are valuable opportunities to work with plaster of Paris and clay. Older pupils have also prepared attractive paintings in the style of artists such as James Whistler.
57. Pupils respond well in their art lessons. Cycling around with paint on wheels is fun: so is making a footprint. In sessions in the art room, most pupils are co-operative and willing to select materials for a task and then attempt it. Some watch adults very carefully before attempting their own work.
58. The teaching of art is good. Lessons are appropriate, well planned and prepared. Teachers have high expectations and the management of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff work well together and there are good strategies to help pupils maintain concentration.
59. The school's adaptations to the National Curriculum's programmes of study is appropriate. The art curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils and has a broad content. The use of sensory stimuli is both appropriate and valuable for these pupils. Most lessons are linked to topics and knowledge of art is covered in a practical manner, using sculptures and models that can be touched and grasped by the pupils. Good use is made of photographs to record pupils' involvement, response and acquisition of skills.
60. Pupils' contributions are evident, in displays and arrangements around the school, and in the houses. These are bright and attractive and contribute to the surroundings. Art lessons are generally taken in the specialist art room, although some are, quite appropriately, taken outside. There are visits from artists and an art therapist, who supervised the construction of the wire, wood and plaster sculpture of the dog, which is now in the grounds, works regularly with the further education group. Pupils have also visited the Horniman Museum and other places to look at art sculptures and mosaic designs. These activities contribute well to the pupils' education.
61. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. There are good resources and the specialist art room recently built as part of the barn development is having a positive impact upon pupils' learning.

Design Technology

62. Not enough lessons were taught during the week of the inspection to make reliable judgements about progress in different key stages. However, observations of lessons, displays around the school, pupils' files and teachers' records enable overall comments to be made. The overall progress made by pupils in design and technology is sound. Pupils have successfully explored wheels and cogs, made simple musical instruments and used construction toys to make models. Students in the Further Education Department can use a range of tools to dismantle bicycles and are able to sort components. In food technology senior pupils can chop vegetables, use spreads and grate cheese. They can use electric frying pans and microwave ovens.
63. The attitudes and responses of pupils in design and technology are always satisfactory and usually good. All pupils show an interest and enjoyment in working with food. Senior pupils, for example, shown keen motivation to fry vegetables in an electric wok and then assemble a pizza. A group of further education students showed great application when dismantling bicycles with spanners and screw-drivers.
64. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good. In observed lessons, it was always satisfactory, in five out of ten lessons it was good and in two out of ten it was very good. The very good relationships between all members of the school community and pupils give pupils the confidence to engage in practical activities. Teachers have high expectations and allow pupils to use sharp tools. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent. Teachers successfully set clear tasks and accurately assess and record the outcomes for each pupil. These assessments and individual objectives ensure activities in lessons are well matched to pupils' needs.
65. The curriculum is well planned and balanced. The National Curriculum has been modified to meet the needs of the pupils and there is an appropriate emphasis upon food technology. In design and technology the focus is appropriately on practical tasks through which skills and knowledge are developed. Other opportunities are provided for pupils to explore and work with different materials and to understand simple mechanisms. It enables pupils to consolidate and extend their skills in other areas, particularly communication. All pupils receive a progressive experience in design and technology. The setting of individual objectives for pupils and the regular use of review and assessment are sound features. The subject is well managed and led.

Geography

66. Not enough lessons were taught during the period of the inspection for judgements about progress to be made for each of the key stages. However, limited lesson observations, displays around the school, pupils' files and teachers' records, which are particularly well kept and informative, enable overall comments to be made.
67. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography. They can use simple maps using PIC symbols to find their way around the school and with support they can follow directions left or right to locate buried treasure in the school's grounds. This

is helping them to understand right and left directions. The oldest students learn about different cultures, for example, by cooking Nigerian yam potage. The lessons for the older pupils and students focus appropriately on aspects of life in the community, for example, travel and shopping skills. This is helping to develop their social skills and cultural awareness.

68. The pupils' attitudes to geography are good. They are responsive to the teachers and willing to take part in the activities. The pupils enjoy the opportunities to work outside of classrooms.
69. The teaching of this subject is good throughout the school. The school bases its plans on the National Curriculum programmes of study. The teachers have high expectations and lessons are organised well. This helps to maintain the pupil's interest. The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent and this is having a positive effect upon their progress. The setting of individual learning objectives that are regularly reviewed is a positive feature.
70. The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for this subject. There is a member of staff in each department responsible for planning lessons for that group of pupils. Arrangements for the management of the subject are sound. Learning resources are adequate and the school makes good use of its extensive grounds and of the community around it.

History

71. Not enough lessons were taught in the period of the inspection for judgements about progress to be made for each of the key stages. However, limited observations, displays around the school, pupils' files and teachers' records, enable overall comments to be made.
72. The pupils make limited progress in history. The concept of the past is very difficult for them to understand. Nevertheless, the school does provide a range of experiences which are stimulating for the pupils. Last term, they visited Old Basing and made a model Roman wall. This term, the pupils in the intermediate class visited a railway station which was a stimulating and new experience for them. As a follow up they had to identify pictures of old trains and new trains. This task proved too difficult.
73. Pupils' attitudes to learning history are satisfactory. Photographic evidence indicates that the pupils respond well to the practical activities such as making a model Roman wall and to visits to museums and other places of historical interest.
74. The teaching of history is not well developed and is not satisfactory.. History is taught as part of a series of different topics. During the week of the inspection the topic was transport. The school's adaptation of the National Curriculum programmes of study is inappropriate. Whilst attempting to maintain an age appropriate approach, the programmes of study selected are often too difficult for the pupils. Learning activities are built around pupils' individual learning objectives but these often prove too difficult.
75. The subject co-ordinator is a new teacher who had been at the school for only a few weeks at the time of the inspection. Consequently, the management of the subject is currently not effective. There is a scheme of work and within each department there is a member of staff who plans the subject for the department. However, there has

been little training to develop the teachers' subject knowledge in this area. There are some resources but these will need to be improved as the subject becomes more developed. The school makes good use of areas of interest in the community and surrounds.

Information Technology

76. Pupils' progress in information technology is generally satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils' use of picture symbols (PICs) particularly to communicate and handle information is a key strength of the school. However, not all pupils experience the full benefits of information technology because they are unable to use a mouse and there are few alternative devices for them to use.
77. Nearly all pupils use symbols as a means of non-verbal expression, to gain information like finding what is the next activity on the timetable and to sort information like sequencing a recipe. Pupils use photographs to display and collate work. Some pupils use a fax machine to send messages, kissing them before they leave, to parents. Computers are successfully used to understand cause and effect, to answer yes and no questions, to put objects into categories and to look up information. The youngest pupils use computers to look at reading books. Senior pupils understand that images can be copied from the screen to paper and use programmes to make pictures.
78. Most pupils are keen to use information technology. Symbols help pupils to understand a world that is often puzzling for them. For some, computers are a motivating technology. These pupils, respond well when engaged by favourite programmes, they are excited by their printed work and delighted with the success.
79. Teaching of information technology is generally sound. All staff have a good knowledge of how to use symbols effectively. The pupils with additional needs benefit from computers. For example, a blind student is enabled to use a programme with the use of sounds and directions; a student with extremely challenging behaviour is able to use the computer by staff using sensitive restraints. However, some pupils spend long periods using the mouse hand-over-hand. Simpler methods of using the computer would aid their development.
80. Information technology is given a high profile within the school. A new information technology co-ordinator has just been appointed. The trustees have an information technology task force team to oversee hardware purchase. A video-conferencing facility has been installed. There has been inservice training for all staff. The setting of individual objectives for pupils and their review and assessment are positive features and will greatly help with future developments.

Music

81. Provision for music is good and pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress. They are becoming familiar with instruments and can identify the sound they make. Older pupils can make choices as to which instrument they prefer to play. Some pupils, who may have greater, difficulties in settling to the lesson, will join in with the group, playing instruments for a short time. When listening to Peter and the Wolf, pupils can recall the characters or instruments shown on the PICs. With encouragement, and often some assistance, they can tap name rhythms on a tambour or help to "strum" the

guitar as the teacher plays. They recognise familiar songs and join in the actions, clapping and stamping appropriately.

82. Pupils enjoy songs which include their names. These bring smiles of recognition and pupils respond to these very well, both in music lessons and in the start of the day sessions. They appreciate the calming sound of the small harp but are also enthusiastic when beating the drum or blowing a horn or recorder to make the noise of the hooter on a vehicle. Individual sessions give pupils the opportunity to interact well with the teacher and make good eye contact with him when playing or listening.
83. Teaching in music is good. Staff use their musical talents well and their enthusiasm for singing and playing adds greatly to group sessions. Adults work well together in individual and group lessons and praise and encouragement are used effectively. Lessons begin well, with the music room properly prepared and welcoming music being played; there is a recap of work covered previously. Lessons are well-balanced and carefully planned against pupil's targets.
84. The music curriculum is broad and balanced. The National Curriculum has been appropriately adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum enriches the pupils' experience and makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development and cultural awareness. Stimulating musical experiences are offered to pupils through visits ranging from a harpist from Live Music Now, African drummers and a folk-band, to a piper who is the father of one pupil and also a member of a pipe band.
85. The school is fortunate that so many members of staff have musical expertise in the playing of a wide range of instruments. The co-ordinator encourages their talents and they are quickly involved in music in the school. They are able to offer a suitable balance of live and recorded music in many different lessons and this is helpful in developing an awareness of sound, tempo, rhythm and pitch. The subject is well managed and led. Resources for music are good and the school has a range of interesting and stimulating instruments of good quality. The new barn has provided specialist accommodation which is having good effects. The co-ordinator works well with the music therapist who visits the school each week to work with several pupils who benefit from this additional input.

Physical Education

86. Pupils' progress in physical education is sound. They participate in a wide range of activities including gymnastics, games, dance, swimming, athletics and adventurous pursuits. Pupils usually work individually with a helper. They throw, catch and kick balls, they use a trampoline and can do tuck and star jumps. They skip, throw javelins and basketballs. On the school's excellent adventure trail they climb scramble nets, step through tyres, swing and negotiate balance beams. Some pupils go horse riding, others have experienced indoor rock climbing and all enjoy using the school's bouncy castle.
87. Pupils' responses in physical education are generally satisfactory. Responses are particularly good on the adventure trail and when bouncing, either on a

trampoline or on the bouncy castle. When physical education activities are challenging, pupils show they enjoy themselves and have fun.

88. Teaching of physical education is satisfactory. Praise, and encouragement from teachers and very good relationships are a valuable feature of the teaching in physical education. Pupils are managed very well. Pupils have individual goals, and the assessment and recording of past activity is thorough.
89. The physical education curriculum is broad and balanced. The National Curriculum has been modified to make it relevant to individual pupil needs. However, Key Stage 2 pupils do not have their curriculum entitlement to swimming. Despite the best efforts of the school, no local pool will provide facilities. Other than this, pupils are offered a wide range of experience which is well complemented by extra curricular opportunities. Good use is made of the school's own resources including the large hall now available in the barn. Community athletics, gym, ice skating, rock climbing facilities are used.
90. Physical education is competently led. All teaching staff have received some training in an aspect of physical education during the last twelve months. Planning is effective and the co-ordinator draws up areas of work each term.

Religious Education

91. The evidence base of this subject is observations of lessons, the start of day sessions, pupils' work and files and video recordings.
92. The pupils make good progress in this subject. The start of the day sessions provide a quiet reflection time and sets a calm atmosphere for the pupils for the beginning of their learning time. The youngest pupils enjoy listening to Bible stories. The senior pupils are able to sing hymns and sign to each other. The oldest students learn about the journeys of St Paul and can express their feelings by pointing at a happy face. All the pupils make progress in their experience and understanding of other religious festivals, for example Islamic and Hindu festivals. They visit the local church all together three times a year.
93. The pupils show interest and a significant level of engagement in this subject. The recent Harvest Festival service demonstrated their interest and enjoyment in religious activities. They listen carefully to a talk and their motivation is maintained by the effective use of a model butterfly. This helps them to begin to understand how things grow.
94. The teaching of this subject is good. Lessons are well prepared and the content is appropriate for the special educational needs of the pupils. Good use of resources ensures that lessons are lively and engaging. The management of the pupils' behaviour is excellent and teachers have high expectations.
95. The school's schemes of work are based upon the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development and cultural awareness.
96. There subject co-ordinator has initial qualifications in the subject. The subject is

well led and managed. The school also benefits from the experience and knowledge of two staff members who are lay preachers. Within each department a member of staff prepares lessons which are effectively broken down to small learning steps. Resources available for this subject are good and the school makes good use of the local church.

Post-16 provision

97. Provision at post-16 is good. Students make satisfactory progress in acquiring the skills necessary to prepare them for the next stage of their lives. They are able to continue their education in a group that caters specifically for students over 16 years of age. Here, in a separate base, they are able to prepare for transition to adult life through a curriculum that continues to focus on behaviour programmes, PHSE and key skills for living, with the important addition of vocational and social training. There is an emphasis on growing up and moving on into adult life and learning and students are treated as young adults. They have the opportunity to develop independence skills by undertaking work around the school. For example, students have their own lawn mower and mow the lawns at school, they pick litter at the local social club, whose members raised funds to buy the school the bouncy castle, and they recycle medicine bottles from the school as well as newspapers and other items. These activities form part of the vocational skills programme that aims to provide students with some understanding of the wider world.
98. The school is accredited to the RSA Accreditation for Life and Living programme and has recently introduced the appropriate modules. Mathematics is not taught as a separate subject. There is currently no way of knowing how much mathematics the students are being taught. Students have the opportunity to gain certificates awarded by the school for achievement in the animal husbandry Course and other elements of the environmental science programme. They have well-presented Records of Achievement which contain quality photographs, certificates and details of some of their achievements. Work is not always dated so does not provide a useful way to show progress over a period of time. The students are prepared as much as possible for life after school. For many students and parents this is an anxious time as placements after school are difficult.
99. Students' responses are generally positive. They can be very interested and participate well in the lesson, waiting for the rewards that they know will come; possibly a favourite song or the meal that is being cooked. Some co-operate well with staff and concentrate well at times.
100. The teaching is good. Lessons are well balanced and students are prepared for the next stage in the activity or events after it. The staff manage the students' behaviour very well. There is good use of time and resources and a range of strategies are used within the lesson.

Residential Provision

101. The quality of the residential support is good. The senior care manager and staff in charge are very effective. Each pupil has a clear care plan which is regularly reviewed, and has relevant links to a personal, health and social education plan. There are close links with parents, who are kept informed and are encouraged to telephone or visit the school. Pupils send home a weekly letter using PICs, which is much appreciated. There is good liaison between the care and teaching staff and between the day and the night workers, who have helpful and effective changeover procedures.

102. Staff have a good range of expertise and are given relevant and effective training. Teamwork is of high quality and staff undertake their duties efficiently and cheerfully. The supervision of shifts is good. Sufficient time is available for meals and evening and morning routines. Particular efforts are made to ensure that a calm start is given to the day and attention is given to ensuring that pupils' likes and dislikes are catered for. For example, they are given a choice between orange or blackcurrant drinks, or between two types of chocolate biscuits. Where choices are given to pupils, they are able to respond by gesture, use of signing, or by pointing to a PIC symbol, or, occasionally, by speech. Good use is made at breakfast time of the symbolised timetables, which enable pupils to see the structure of the day.
103. Bedtimes and rising times are appropriate to the ages of the pupils, although, on occasions, some older pupils choose to go to bed quite early because they are tired or wish to spend time in their room. Staffing at night includes staff who are awake all through the night and staff who are sleeping in the residential accommodation and there are regular checks on pupils during the night.
104. There is effective sharing of information and consistent approaches are used to reinforce acceptable behaviour and good responses. Careful attention is paid to pupils' behaviour management plans and individual targets. Attention is always given to maintaining the dignity and privacy of the individual and staff are caring and supportive.
105. The quality of the accommodation in the main house is satisfactory. Bedrooms are adequate in size and all are as personalised as possible, some having been decorated by parents, but all according to the needs of the pupils. The quality of the rooms and accommodation at the houses, where small groups of pupils live away from the main building, is good. There is a warm, welcoming atmosphere and evening activities are well organised. Considerable thought has gone into the preparation of "a trip around the world" for one group. They have "passports", which are stamped, and they engage in activities centred on a particular country at a time. In the recent "visit" to India, pupils have enjoyed painting, colourful tie-die work and Indian music, as well as the preparation and eating of Indian food. They have had opportunities to smell and taste an interesting array of spices and chutneys. In the main building, where the groups are larger, interesting activities are always planned for the evening and weekend, including the care of the animals but, on occasion, some of these do not occur and there is a lack of purposeful activity. There are several off-site visits and activities, such as guides, discos, and a trip to the public house for an older pupil. These extend the variety of experiences offered and as much use as possible is made of the attractive setting of the school.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

106. The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors. During the period of the inspection, 62 lessons or parts of lessons were seen for a total of 30hours 30minutes of observation. Additional observations were made of the arrangements for the residential aspect of the school, breaks and lunchtimes. Fifty per cent of pupils' files and records were analysed. Discussions were held with two trustees, the principal, teachers, teaching assistants, support staff, pupils and students. The documentation provided by the school was analysed before and during the inspection. A meeting attended by 21 parents was held and 18 responses to a parents' questionnaire were considered.

1. Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y13	26			

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3

Education support staff (YR - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked each week	692

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	97/98
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	£
Total income	2092142
Total expenditure	2319767
Expenditure per pupils	89221.8
Balance brought forward from previous year	-52839
Balance carried forward to next year	-280464

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	27
Number of questionnaires returned:	18

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	72	28	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	72	22	6	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	50	39	6	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	67	33	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	78	22	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	56	33	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	78	22	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	17	22	11	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	78	17	6	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	33	22	6	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	61	33	0	0	0

Some questions do not add up to 100% because not every parent answered every question