

INSPECTION REPORT

Mapledown School

Cricklewood

LEA area: Barnet

Unique Reference Number: 101397

Headteacher: Mr J. Feltham

Reporting inspector: Mr John Byrne
21137

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708294
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

Information about the school

Type of school	Special
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	11 - 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Claremont Road Cricklewood London NW2 1TR
Telephone number:	01814554111
Fax number:	01814554895
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Steene
Date of the previous inspection:	12 – 16 February 1996

This Report is Crown Copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the School Inspections Act 1996 the school must provide copies of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made to

others requesting a copy of the full report.

Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Byrne Registered Inspector	Geography, history and physical education	Attainment and progress, teaching and leadership and management.
Eric Langford Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development, attendance, support, guidance and pupils' welfare, partnership with parents and the community, special educational needs and equal opportunities
Rob Sammons	Maths, information communication technology, personal and social education	Efficiency of the school, and post 16.
Alan Tattersall	Science, design technology art and religious education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Vanessa Wilkinson	English, music and French	The curriculum and assessment

The inspection contractor was:

QICS
 "Ibsley"
 4 Westcliffe Road
 Dawlish
 Devon
 EX7 9EB
 Tel: 01626 867575

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised in writing with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London
 WC2B6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Main findings	
Key issues for action	
Introduction	1 - 5
Characteristics of the school	
Key indicators	
PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL	
Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school	6 - 21
Attainment and progress	
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development	
Attendance	
Quality of education provided	22 - 53
Teaching	
The curriculum and assessment	
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	
Partnership with parents and the community	
The management and efficiency of the school	54 - 70
Leadership and management	
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	
The efficiency of the school	
PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS	
English, mathematics and science	71 - 91
Other subjects or courses	92 - 150
PART C: INSPECTION DATA	
Summary of inspection evidence	151
Data and indicators	

MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Provides good quality teaching that ensures pupils make good progress. Teaching is consistently good and often very good for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3.

- Successfully achieves its aims that are based on providing a good curriculum and effective assessment procedures.
- Strong and effective leadership has resulted in significant improvement in most aspects of the school's provision.
- Pupils' and students' attitudes and the relationships they have with each other and adults are very good.
- Provision for pupils' and students' cultural development is very good and is evident in most aspects of school life.
- The partnership that exists between the school and parents is very good.
- Very good financial control ensures that planning is effective and the school achieves good value for money.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

The quality of teaching for some pupils at Key Stage 3.

- I. The effectiveness of behaviour management plans, for a minority of pupils, is reduced because detailed records are not kept of pupils' response to the methods used to manage their challenging behaviour. This makes it difficult for staff to judge how successful these plans are.
- II. Staffing resources are not always used to their full potential. The allocation of responsibilities within the senior management team is not balanced and learning support staff are not always fully involved in classroom activities.
- III. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Some classrooms are too small for the learning and physical needs of pupils. Changing and toileting facilities are inadequate and access to the hydrotherapy pool is not possible for some pupils.

The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well. However, they will form the basis of the governors' action plan. This will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection in most areas of its work and in most subjects of the curriculum. The best improvements have been achieved in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum and assessment procedures that now exist. There has been a clear focus on staff training linked to the improvements in the curriculum and this has had a positive impact on the progress that pupils and students make. Governors are now fully involved in the work of the school and they, together with senior staff, are beginning to monitor the effect that better resources are having on standards. The school is well placed to consolidate these improvements and continue to develop further.

WHETHER PUPILS ARE MAKING ENOUGH PROGRESS

Progress in:	By 16	By 19
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B
English:		
listening and speaking	B	B
Reading	B	B
Writing	C	C
Mathematics	B	B
Science	B	B
Personal, Social and health Education (PSHE)	B	B

Key

·
very good

A
good

B
satisfactory

C
unsatisfactory

poor

E

IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs

Overall pupils and students make good progress. Progress for higher attaining Key Stage 3 pupils is consistently good and sometimes very good. The good progress that pupils and students make is a direct result of recent changes to the curriculum. Where progress is unsatisfactory, for some pupils at Key Stage 3 and post 16 students with additional needs, the work they are asked to do does not take enough account of their individual needs.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------

11 - 16 years	Good	all lessons for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3.	lessons for lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 and in the use of information communication technology to support pupils' writing.
Post 16	Good	personal, social and health education and gymnastics.	English for students with additional special needs and in the use of information communication technology to support students' writing.
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education	Good		

Teaching was satisfactory in twenty six per cent of lessons, good in forty eight per cent, and very good in eighteen per cent. In eight per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Pupils and students behave well both in and out of school.
Attendance	Good. Little time is wasted and the prompt start to lessons has a positive impact on the progress pupils and students make.
Ethos*	Good. Relationships are very good and pupils and students work in a calm and purposeful environment.
Leadership and management	The management of the school is good. The head teacher, staff and governors have worked hard since the previous inspection. Procedures and practices ensure the school is successful in achieving its aims. Staff are not always used in an efficient way. Although good monitoring procedures have been implemented, evaluation of planning decisions is not always precise.
Curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. The modules of study together with appropriate accredited courses provide a good framework for planning work. Planning for individual needs is good. Access to the full curriculum is not always available for a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Arrangements to develop pupils' and students' spiritual, moral and social development are good. Provision for cultural development is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing is appropriate and well supported by good training opportunities. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts pupils' and students' learning. Good resources are well supplemented by the use of the local community.
Value for money	The quality of teaching is good overall and as a consequence pupils make

	good progress. These factors, together with the efficient use the school makes of its budget, ensures that value for money is good.
--	---

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
IV. The progress their children make in independence skills, self-control and confidence. V. The caring atmosphere encouraged by staff. VI. The comprehensive information provided for parents and the way parents are valued and supported. VII. The availability of very good physiotherapy	VIII. Lack of stimulation when pupils spend IX. The problems experienced accessing

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views expressed by parents. The concerns raised about hydrotherapy are justified and it is unsatisfactory that some pupils do not have access to the pool because of

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governors, head teacher and staff should:

- X. improve the quality of teaching for those pupils at Key Stage 3 where it is currently unsatisfactory. In doing so the school should take into account the strategies so successfully used in other areas of the school.
(paragraph 22 to 30)
- XI. ensure that implementation of the behaviour management plans of a minority of pupils are carefully recorded. For evaluation purposes written evidence should be detailed and include actions taken and pupil response;
(paragraphs 16,28,46)
- XII. ensure that all staff are used in an efficient way. In particular there needs to be:
 - a) a review of the role and responsibilities of the acting deputy head teacher
 - b) clear guidelines in place for the effective use of learning support staff;
(paragraphs 29,67)
- XIII. in consultation with the local education authority look at ways of overcoming the current inadequacies in accommodation to ensure that:
 - a) pupils and students with mobility problems have access to all areas of the school,
 - b) toileting and changing facilities are suitable for secondary aged pupils,
 - c) disruption to lessons by adults and pupils moving around the school is reduced.
(paragraph 27,62,63)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important areas for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan;

- XIV. ensure higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 have access to a broad and balanced curriculum in physical education;
(paragraph 34)
- XV. ensure incidents of physical restraint are recorded in a formal way;

(paragraph 49)

XVI. in the monitoring of school development planning ensure evaluation of success is based on measurable outcomes;

(paragraph 57)

XVII. ensure that pupils and students have the opportunity to develop word processing skills to support their work in all areas of the curriculum.

(paragraphs 74,78,106)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 Mapledown is a mixed day special school providing education for pupils and students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school is situated in Cricklewood which is in the south of the London Borough of Barnet. Its immediate environment consists of high commercial and industrial development mixed with a range of residential housing. Pupils and students, some of whom are admitted from other London Boroughs, come from a wide geographical area and travel to school on transport provided by their local education authority (LEA). The high ethnic composition of the pupil and student population (17 are supported through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grants) and their socio-economic background are representative of the catchment areas from which they are drawn. Just under a half of pupils and students are eligible for free school meals

2 Pupil and student numbers have risen steadily since the last inspection and there are now 58 on roll between the ages of 11 and 19. There is a ratio of 35 boys to 23 girls – a common pattern in schools of this type. The mix of pupils has changed with the result that the school has recently established a class in the post-sixteen area of the school for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Until very recently there has been a stable teaching staff with minimal movement. However, this situation has changed and currently three teachers were new to the school in September. There is an acting deputy head teacher and until very recently two teaching positions were occupied by temporary supply staff. This has now been reduced to one and as a consequence the acting deputy head teacher has a full time class commitment. A number of classroom support staff are funded directly by the LEA for pupils and students with additional needs.

3 The school is committed to the principle of providing the best for its pupils by ensuring that each one has an entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. In order to be relevant and meaningful, planning for access to the National Curriculum is based on individual needs.

4 Mapledown's philosophy is expressed through its aims which are to:

XVIII. develop pupils' and students' communication;

XIX. maximise pupils' and students' personal autonomy and independence;

XX. enable pupils and students to form social relationships;

XXI. encourage maximum mobility for pupils and students;

XXII. prepare pupils and students for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life;

XXIII.promote pupils' and students' spiritual and moral development;
XXIV.broaden pupils' and students' range of experiences.

5 The school expects to meet the above aims through the curriculum it makes available to pupils and students.

Key indicators

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.5
	National comparative data	8
Unauthorised absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	1.0

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	18
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

6 *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainments against age related national expectations or averages. The report does however give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at each key stage. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs and annual reviews.*

7 Overall pupils and students make good progress. Progress for higher attaining Key Stage 3 pupils is consistently good and sometimes very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when in a quarter of lessons pupils were judged to be underachieving. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls or in the progress of those pupils from minority ethnic groups. The good improvement that has taken place in the curriculum ensures that teachers' planning is good and takes full account of subject content and so ensures that progress pupils make in most curriculum areas is good. Rigorous systems also exist to ensure that relevant and precise personal targets are set for pupils. Planning and assessment takes good account of these and consequently most pupils are progressing well in relation to the individual targets identified for them.

8 Since the previous inspection improvements made to the English curriculum and assessment procedures have had a positive impact on standards in this subject. Pupils' progress in communication skills is good and lower attaining pupils benefit from appropriate use of communication aids. Higher attaining pupils recount experiences, listen attentively and respond appropriately during simple conversation. Progress is particularly good in lessons where signing is consistently used; this enables individuals to take a full part in discussion and make choices.

9 Good progress is made in pre-reading and reading skills. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to recognise objects of reference and symbols and most respond to their names. All pupils benefit from the emphasis that the school places on providing them with opportunities to listen to stories that develop skills of repetition, anticipation and prediction. This is particularly effective at Key Stage 4 when pupils' personal experiences are used to write stories, for example about a lost hammer. Currently the school does not use a reading scheme. This is unsatisfactory because higher attaining pupils who are capable of recognising and reading words cannot practise these skills by reading appropriate published material.

10 In pre-writing and writing skills pupils make satisfactory progress. Most pupils are at the very early stages of skill development when they make recognisable marks on paper and pretend write. Higher attaining pupils copy-write words or sentences and write their names independently. Progress is restricted in writing because pupils and students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to practise and use word processing skills across all areas of the curriculum.

11 Progress in mathematics is good overall. It is good at Key Stage 4 and post 16 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when many pupils were judged to be under-achieving. Pupils and students make best progress when they are given opportunities to use mathematical skills in different curriculum areas. For example, students at post 16 develop understanding of non-standard units of measurement when they use cups and spoons to measure ingredients in cookery. Pupils at Key Stage 4 develop their knowledge of the differences in shape when they make patterns in art. Progress in half of lessons observed at Key Stage 3 was unsatisfactory but was very good in others. Best progress is seen when pupils have activities which help them to practise skills; for example when they use a computer programme to play number games. New skills are appropriately introduced for example, when pupils are shown how to use switches to match colours.

Progress is unsatisfactory when the tasks do not match the needs and abilities of pupils.

12 In science progress is good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when a minority of pupils were judged to be underachieving. Curriculum planning in science is good. Pupils receive a balanced programme that ensures most of them progress well over time. The provision for pupils to investigate and undertake experiments has a positive impact on progress. For example, at Key Stage 4 when pupils make circuits they use appropriate vocabulary and begin to make predictions.

13 The development of pupils' and students' personal autonomy and independence is central to the aims of the school and the appropriate emphasis placed on these areas of the curriculum ensures that good progress is made. Lower attaining younger pupils are beginning to make choices and can express preferences through the use of simple communication aids, such as switches and picture symbols. As they move through the school the opportunities all pupils are given to make decisions in a variety of situations has a very positive effect on the progress they make. By the time they leave school higher attaining students have developed some of the life skills that are required to function independently in the adult world.

14 Progress is good in design and technology, art, and religious education. As some pupils do not have access to a full range of activities progress in physical education is satisfactory overall. However, it is good in swimming and gymnastics. The progress of lower attaining pupils with mobility problems is generally good and they benefit very much from the effective support provided by school based physiotherapists. It is unsatisfactory that the progress of a very small number of pupils is severely affected because accommodation problems deny them access to much needed hydrotherapy sessions. Progress is satisfactory in music, French and geography. Due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to make a judgement on progress in history and information communication technology.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

15 The very good attitudes and relationships that exist, together with the good behaviour shown by pupils, contribute significantly to the purposeful and well ordered atmosphere within the school. These judgements are similar to the previous inspection which judged behaviour and discipline to be good overall.

16 With few exceptions, pupils enjoy school and on occasions show genuine interest and pleasure in their learning. Most listen well and are able to sustain good levels of concentration during lessons. Even lower attaining students remain on task when listening to a very well told story in English. The majority of pupils are well motivated by appropriate teaching strategies and co-operate well with adults. Many demonstrate a willingness to think and act independently and require only minimal verbal or physical prompting to achieve success. However, on occasions a minority of pupils rely too heavily on adult support to carry out tasks such as moving to different parts of the classroom.

17 Overall the behaviour of pupils in school and in the local community is good. However, a minority of pupils occasionally display challenging behaviour as a consequence of their special educational needs. The very good behaviour evident at lunchtime in the dining hall and outside was consistent throughout the inspection and owed much to the quality relationships that exist between pupils and staff. Pupils show a pride in their school and there is no evidence of damage or graffiti. Although there are occasional disputes between pupils no incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection. No pupil exclusions were recorded last year.

18 Most pupils are polite and courteous, display good manners and relate well to each other. Of particular note is the way higher attaining and more mobile pupils are sensitive to the needs of those pupils with mobility problems. During the inspection there were many examples observed of unsolicited help and support being offered and given to other pupils, staff and visitors. During the

gymnastic session for post 16 students at the sports centre individuals behaved in a very mature way and showed that they were capable of successfully working with and supporting each other in the activities that they were asked to undertake. A feature of this lesson was the encouragement and spontaneous applause they gave to those individuals who were showing the group what they had achieved.

19 Pupils' personal development is good. They respond well to the opportunities provided to take responsibility within the classroom. For example, older students undertake responsibilities during the lunch break; they set out and clear the dining tables and do the washing up. The work experience programme and joint working initiative with the local secondary school are enjoyed by students and do much to enhance their personal development. Pupils consider the needs of others through their donation to charities and involvement in collecting and giving gifts to residents at the local old people's home.

20 The very positive attitudes and behaviour shown by the majority of pupils make a significant contribution to their personal and educational development as they progress through the school.

Attendance

21 Pupil attendance is good; levels of recorded absence are less than the national average for schools of this type. This judgement is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the few incidents of late arrival are the result of difficulties with transport. Punctuality within school is good and the prompt start to lessons has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

22 Overall the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection teaching was satisfactory in twenty six per cent of lessons, good in forty eight per cent, and very good in eighteen per cent. In eight per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The improvement in teaching over the last 3 years has been good; the previous inspection report judged teaching to be unsatisfactory or poor in one-third of lessons. Issues identified then included poor planning, activities not being matched to pupils' abilities and lack of schemes of work. In nearly all lessons these criticisms are no longer valid and improvements have been achieved because of good professional development procedures and thorough whole school curriculum planning.

23 There were differences in the quality of teaching across the key stages. In post 16 seven out of ten lessons were good or very good. In Key Stage 4 six out of ten lessons were good or very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In Key Stage 3 the quality of teaching for higher attaining pupils was at least good and often very good. However, there was more variation in teaching for other pupils in the key stage; in four out of the fifteen lessons observed teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. There were examples of good and very good teaching in almost all subjects but overall the quality of teaching was good in English, mathematics, science, design technology, physical education, religious education and personal, social and health education. Teaching was satisfactory in geography. There is no subject area where teaching is judged to be unsatisfactory. However, because of curriculum planning and timetabling it was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in art, music, history, information communication technology and French.

24 The knowledge and understanding that teachers and other adults have of pupils' individual needs is good overall across all key stages. Teachers are aware of what motivates pupils and very good strategies were evident to divert pupils' attention and bring them back to task. For example, in Key Stage 3 lessons for higher attaining pupils the teacher uses her knowledge of them to manage

potentially very difficult behaviours. A good balance is achieved between the effective use of praise and management which is firm and consistent. In geography at Key Stage 4 knowledge of pupils' home backgrounds and experiences are effectively used to introduce the lesson on Japan. Very effective use is made of the expertise of school-based therapists and outside instructors. Some very good story telling work led by the speech and language therapist was observed at Key Stage 4 and post 16. Physiotherapists provide valuable support in lessons and through hydrotherapy sessions. The good progress made by pupils and students in swimming, gymnastics and trampolining is a direct result of the very good coaching that they receive.

25 A feature of good and very good lessons, at Key Stage 4 and post 16 and for some higher attaining Key Stage 3 pupils, is the consistently high expectations that teachers have of pupils in terms of work and behaviour. They are encouraged, through good questioning and appropriate support, to become involved and contribute to the lesson. This approach was particularly successful in a science lesson at Key Stage 3 looking at heat and in religious education at post 16 exploring special times. In both of these sessions pupils responded to the age appropriate demands made of them and made good progress. Where expectations are inappropriate or too low teaching is often unsatisfactory and pupils fail to make progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson involving colour and pattern at Key Stage 3 the introductory game did not extend pupils and too much time was spent on turn taking activities which often required too much prompting to encourage pupils to become involved.

26 Planning, which is well supported by recent curriculum developments, is good. Staff rigorously follow school procedures and have worked hard to adapt subject modules to make them relevant to the pupils they teach. At Key Stages 3 and 4 in geography and history scrutiny of detailed planning revealed a good variety of approaches in terms of strategies and content to teach the same topic, for example The British Isles. The level of planning evident in some subject areas is very impressive. The success of a story-telling session to develop language awareness and anticipation for post 16 pupils was extremely well planned and implemented. The detail of the planning for those pupils and students following external awards in swimming, gymnastics and trampolining is very good and is a significant factor contributing to their high achievement.

27 Teaching methods and organisation are good. Most teachers use a variety of successful strategies to keep pupils interested and on task. In the majority of lessons observed little time is wasted and advance preparation ensures that the lesson starts on time and pupils are not kept waiting. Where there is a delay, for example to collect resources together, valuable time has to be spent settling pupils down. In the best lessons there is very effective use of questioning which sometimes involves drawing on pupils' personal experience to make the content more meaningful to them. Often parents' support is sought to provide information that can be used to support classroom work; for example in geography at Key Stage 3 and English at Key Stage 4. In some lessons teaching is hampered by inadequacies in the accommodation which makes organisation of the room difficult. Some good sessions were disrupted when furniture had to be moved in order to change from group to individual activities. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the start of lessons fail to engage pupils and there is an over-reliance on group work which is sometimes beyond the pupils' understanding.

28 Overall management of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Teachers' enthusiasm and sheer hard work ensures that classrooms are generally calm. Relationships are very good and in the majority of lessons most pupils are expected to conform to classroom routines and rules. This is achieved through good use of praise, providing age appropriate material and making the most of opportunities to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem. As a result of this approach pupils are developing independent skills and making progress. For a very small number of pupils the management of extreme challenging behaviours is not effective. Although there are behaviour plans in place these are not always followed consistently and for some pupils they are not rigorously monitored and evaluated. There is also an over-reliance on support staff to manage behaviour by removing the pupil from the situation. This results in several pupils spending too much time out of the classroom to the detriment of other pupils who miss out on adult input as a result. Although this approach resolves the immediate problem it

does little to help pupils manage their own behaviour.

29 Overall the use of time and resources is satisfactory. Teachers usually make good use of time. As a result lesson pace is brisk and changes of activity are designed to maintain pupil interest. However, in less successful lessons at Key Stage 3 and post 16 too much time is spent on group activities and pupils have to wait too long before they experience an activity. The majority of teachers make very good use of resources to achieve intended lesson outcomes. These are well organised and capture the interest of the pupils. Some very good resources, including a Japanese parent, were used to provide Key Stage 4 pupils with an experience of a tea ceremony. Good use is also made of outside resources to support the physical education curriculum. The excellent gymnastic and trampolining facilities available at the local sports centre are very well used and have a positive impact on the standards pupils and students achieve. Use of learning assistants is variable. Where it is effective they are fully involved in the lesson and keep pupils focused on the activity. They are particularly effective when they are used to question and assess pupils' understanding. However, in some lessons assistants appear not to be familiar with the planning and they have to be prompted to carry out tasks. Also they are not always used efficiently in group activities. For example, pupils have to wait relatively long periods to experience food from another culture. This delay could have been avoided if learning assistants had been more actively involved.

30 In all key stages teachers' use of assessment is good. Planning is based soundly on assessment which ensures that activities are matched to individual need as identified in pupils' individual education plans. Written evaluation of pupil response is an important part of planning and this clear and relevant written assessment is seen as an important part of teaching. It provides a good record of progress over time and is used well in future planning. In lessons most staff make very good use of direct questioning to assess understanding and develop knowledge. The school's approach to assessment ensures pupils make good progress.

The curriculum and assessment

31 The previous inspection identified the curriculum and assessment to be the school's major weakness. Good improvements have been made in these areas over the last three years. The acting deputy head teacher has played a significant role in bringing about this improvement by providing support to staff and leading them through curriculum development. Curriculum planning is now more detailed and the school has in place a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements in almost all subjects. In response to the previous inspection the school has also developed and implemented good formal procedures to monitor what is taught. Curriculum co-ordinators are now supported effectively, through professional development, to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Training is now more focused on the development of subject knowledge and understanding.

32 Assessment procedures have also been improved and are now implemented consistently and pupils' and students' individual education plans are now of good quality. The inappropriate amount of time pupils used to spend on non-curriculum subjects has been addressed. A well structured programme of personal, social and health education has been developed and implemented. Pupils are no longer withdrawn from classes for long periods of time for therapies.

33 The curriculum available to pupils and students is good; it reflects and supports the aims of the school. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. It covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the LEA's agreed syllabus for religious education. A good programme of personal and social education has been implemented which includes drugs and sex education. There is also a good programme that focuses on developing students' awareness of the world of work. Careers education is well covered and there is appropriate

involvement from the careers guidance service. The curriculum for students over sixteen is good and is significantly different to the curriculum offered to pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. Learning opportunities are appropriately developed to support the ASDAN key skills modules. Course materials are relevant to pupils' needs and abilities and ensure their achievements are appropriately accredited by an external examination body.

34 Equal access and opportunity across the curriculum is assured for the majority of pupils. However, higher attaining pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 do not have opportunities to learn and make progress across a balanced programme of study in physical education. In addition there is a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviours who spend large amounts of time out of class and consequently a balanced curriculum is not always available to them. The recent implementation of teaching strategies focused on meeting the needs of a small group of post 16 students with behavioural needs has resulted in them receiving insufficient opportunities to take part in activities that are focused on subject related knowledge, understanding and skill.

35 The educational needs of the majority of pupils with additional special needs are appropriately met. However, the current low levels of therapy provision sometimes has an adverse impact on their opportunities to learn and make progress. Available therapy support, particularly speech therapy and physiotherapy, are appropriately focused on developing the skills and expertise of staff to enable them to support pupils' therapy needs through the curriculum and through teaching. Pupils who come from homes where English is not the first language receive good support from the LEA's specialist support team. This allows them to participate more effectively in the curriculum opportunities and experiences offered.

36 Provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced by visitors to the school, such as theatre and music groups, as well as visits to places of interest in the local community. In addition, pupils and students have appropriate opportunities to visit local shops, art exhibitions and places of worship. Pupils also take part in a trip to France. Opportunities to take part in sporting activities and after school clubs are restricted currently by transport arrangements.

37 Assessment procedures are good and consistently implemented. Teachers effectively use the learning objectives identified in the subject modules of work to plan lessons. Progress is monitored and the lesson evaluations are used well to inform future planning. Teachers also take good account of the learning objectives identified in individual education plans. Progress made against targets is monitored effectively and ensures that pupils and students have appropriate opportunities to make progress in relation to their past learning and achieved skills.

38 Individual education plans are of good quality and they identify what the pupil or student can do and what the next learning objective is. Plans are generally clear and written in a way that enables teachers to assess gains in knowledge, understanding and skill. These plans are reviewed regularly and there are appropriate procedures to amend targets that have been achieved and delete targets that are no longer appropriate.

39 The school keeps samples of pupils' work throughout the year and examples are selected and retained in good quality records of achievement. Pupils' profiles are comprehensive and provide good quality information that is easily accessible to teachers. The recommendations of The Code of Practice for Special Educational Need are fully reflected in the schools' assessment, recording and reporting procedures. However, annual reports to parents do not contain enough information on what pupils and students know, understand and can do in each subject area. They often just refer to the experiences pupils and students have and the responses they make.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

40 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school values the pupils and the work that they do and consequently the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of school aims.

41 The provision for spiritual development is good. Significant efforts are made to help pupils to understand what is special about them and their peers. Achievements are celebrated through praise, awards and in record of achievement files. The curriculum is used well to promote spiritual development. Pupils have very good opportunities to experience very high quality art in the community and to use their experiences to produce work in a similar style. Some lessons in science give pupils the chance to wonder at the nature of materials such as ice. All classes have lessons in religious education. These enable pupils to look at each other's beliefs and see artefacts associated with these. Pupils can experience awe and wonder when they visit a local Hindu temple to appreciate the beauty of the architecture. School assemblies promote pupils' spiritual development when they reflect on choices and their favourite activities. Planning is good to provide opportunities for quiet reflection in class assemblies. However, the content of class acts of collective worship does not consistently promote spiritual development and on occasions these do not take place.

42 The provision to promote pupils' moral development is good. Staff provide good role models for pupils in this area. Lessons in religious education and informal discussions encourage pupils to reflect upon what is good and bad behaviour and how this can affect others. Pupils make suggestions about how behaviour can be improved and some can relate this to their own conduct. Considering examples of different types of behaviour also supports their moral development. They learn about codes of behaviour and understand that they must earn rewards. Lessons in personal, social and health education involve discussion on how people should be treated and the majority of pupils understand that bullying is wrong. Good efforts are made to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong and consequently they know when someone is misbehaving and will say so. If they are misbehaving the majority will accept the need to discuss this and to change.

43 The provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils have appropriate duties in class that they undertake to promote co-operation and sharing. They have limited, but good opportunities, for independent work; for example conducting experiments on their own in science or using switches to indicate a response. A few pupils were observed using the library or computers independently during the inspection week. Lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education emphasise the importance of forming good relationships and helping others. Pupils have good opportunities to support charities through activities such as providing gifts for a home for elderly persons and contributing to Children in Need appeals. Lunchtime arrangements do much to develop pupils' independence. They are encouraged to collect their own lunches from the hatch and make choices about what they want to eat. Arrangements to promote the social development of students at post 16 are good. They have a good area to sit and talk or they can choose to watch television during the lunch period. Plans have been made for students to take responsibility for running the tuck shop as an enterprise. Students undertake responsibilities by looking after each other and younger pupils at lunchtimes.

44 Arrangements made for pupils' cultural development are very good. A number of subjects make a very important contribution to this area of the school's provision. In art pupils have the opportunity to appreciate the talents and work of a good range of artists from the community who come into school to work with them. Visiting musicians, for example a Japanese drumming group, give them experiences of music from other cultures. The school makes very good use of the locality to explore the lives and beliefs of the inhabitants by visiting their places of worship. There is excellent provision for the pupils to understand the traditions of the faiths represented in the school population.

The school celebrates the diversity of cultures in the school by displaying places of birth on a map of the world. Family members, friends, and representatives from the local community come into school to deepen the pupils' understanding of each other's culture. The good display of writing in a number of different languages, reflecting the multicultural heritage of the pupils, shows the high regard the school has for the range of languages spoken at home. The partnerships with schools in Europe provide a good opportunity for an exchange of information about different cultures.

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

45 Provision for support, guidance and welfare is good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when this aspect was satisfactory overall. Good systems are in place to record, monitor and report on the progress achieved by pupils. Individual education plans are of good quality and are used well by staff to develop pupils' academic and personal skills. The effective and on-going assessment of pupils' targets provides detailed information that is used well by teachers to assess progress and plan future work.

46 The system of rewards and sanctions associated with behaviour management is generally understood by pupils. They are applied in a fair and consistent manner by staff and are consequently effective in promoting the good work and behaviour evident in the school. Good behaviour plans are in place for individual pupils. These are detailed and are generally effective in modifying behaviour. However, the effectiveness of these, for a small minority of pupils, is reduced because of the absence of detailed records outlining pupil response to the strategies used to manage outbursts of inappropriate behaviour. Although pupils relate very well to each other there are occasional disagreements. When these occur the situation is managed well by staff. However, it is unsatisfactory that there are no formal systems to record incidents of physical restraint in the management of pupils.

47 Very good procedures are in place to record and report pupil attendance and to monitor absence. The school benefits from the close working relationship established with the local education welfare service. Child protection procedures are very good; they are understood and followed by all staff. Sex education, along with personal safety and hygiene issues, are effectively implemented and all staff respond in a discreet and sensitive manner to personal issues raised by individual pupils.

48 Pupils benefit from the support provided by the health professionals working at the school. The very good relationships that exist ensure that physiotherapists and speech and language therapists not only support individual pupils but provide very effective support in lessons such as physical education and English. It is a concern to both the school and parents that there is no occupational therapy available to pupils. The school benefits from the presence of a full time school nurse and effective procedures exist for the management and administration of medicines. The majority of staff are first aid trained and good systems are followed to manage illness and injury that occurs at school.

49 Comprehensive health and safety procedures exist. The governors, through their committee structure, monitor work in this area and risk assessments ensure that any potential risks are clearly identified and appropriate action taken. Very clear procedures and good training programmes have been developed, with considerable support from the physiotherapist, that ensure manual handling is carried out in a manner which is safe to both staff and pupils.

Partnership with parents and the community

50 The school's partnership with parents and the community is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which judged this area to be good overall. Parents are welcomed in school and staff demonstrate an eagerness to work with them and involve them in their children's learning in subjects such as geography at Key Stage 3 and English at Key Stage 4. Parents appreciate this involvement and are very supportive of the school. They hold the staff in high regard

and are pleased at the standard of education and care that their children receive.

51 Very good use is made of the diverse ethnic background of parents to broaden pupils' experiences and knowledge of other cultures. Some parents are involved as volunteer helpers and staff appreciate the contribution that they make to improving the quality of pupils' learning opportunities. Monthly parent support group meetings provide valuable opportunities to exchange information and develop parental involvement in the education of their children. The school benefits from the activities of the "Friends of Mapledown" and acknowledges the valuable financial support it receives from their fund raising events.

52 Parents are very well informed of their children's progress through regular consultation meetings each term. End of year reports and annual reviews are well organised and conform to statutory requirements. There is a half-termly newsletter and regular correspondence on general and pupil specific matters. These, combined with a comprehensive school prospectus and a detailed governors' annual report, provide a useful source of information for parents. There are good support systems in place to familiarise parents with school routines when their child starts at Mapledown and to inform them of changes as their child progresses through the school. Students' transfer to placements in the local college and resource centres is similarly well planned and organised and parents appreciate the support and guidance they receive from the school during this time.

53 Visitors, such as the "Ragged School" drama group and St.John Ambulance representative, complement and enhance the school curriculum. These, together with the well organised visits out of school, make an important contribution to pupils' personal development and learning. Partnership arrangements with the neighbouring secondary school are very good and pupils benefit from this link. Staff, parent and governor contacts have been effectively used to establish very worthwhile links with the local community and business organisations. The school is keen to maximise these links and is justifiably proud of them.

- **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

- **Leadership and management**

54 The management of the school is good. The head teacher, well supported by senior colleagues and governors, provides strong and effective leadership. He has been very successful in establishing a shared vision and clear educational direction for the work of the school. Together with staff and governors he is committed to achieving success and has worked hard to rectify the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection. As a result there have been good improvements in most aspects of the school's work. For example, the quality of teaching and the curriculum are now good, the governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and management has ensured that there are now effective monitoring systems in place. The policies and practices that are in place ensure that the school has the capacity to maintain this improvement in the future.

55 The governing body is effective and actively involved. Governors are kept well informed through thorough reports from the head teacher and by the visits that they make to the school. They meet regularly and the effective committee structure that exists ensures that all planned developments are discussed and debated fully before implementation. They are fully aware of the important role they play in monitoring the curriculum and teaching and they understand the importance of undergoing training to develop further their expertise in this area. An example of the governors' active and committed support is the involvement they currently have in discussions aimed at providing occupational therapy in the school. All major statutory requirements are met. This was not the case at the time of the last report.

56 The monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is good. There are appropriate procedures in

place to ensure that teaching is effective and curriculum initiatives are supported and developed. Until recently formal monitoring of classroom practice was done by the head teacher and the school's link inspector. This good practice is now being extended to involve other staff and training to develop expertise in this important area is being provided by an external consultant. Currently the curriculum area which is the focus for monitoring is mathematics and it is appropriate that the curriculum co-ordinator is involved in this work.

57 The current school development plan is good. It was the product of staff involvement and governor consultation. The plan is well thought out and identifies clearly what needs to be done, when and by whom. There is now a clear link between identified priorities and spending requirements; this was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. An evaluation of the last development plan indicates that most of the identified targets were achieved. However, there is an absence of detailed success criteria based on measurable outcomes. This means that the school is not always in a position to objectively judge the impact that its work has on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils and students are making.

58 Recent whole school planning and development has been hindered by the long term absence of a senior member of staff. This, together with the recent departure of a supply teacher, has placed an extra burden on the current senior management team of three. It is to their credit that despite these staffing difficulties they have continued with identified targets. However, the extent of the current responsibilities of the acting deputy head teacher place unrealistic demands upon him and should be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

59 The school is successful in meeting its aims which are appropriate and relevant, based as they are on the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils. These aims are explicit in its policies and practices and are evident in the daily work of the school. The commitment and hard work shown by all staff, the quality of teaching and the much improved curriculum ensure that pupils make progress in what is generally a calm and purposeful environment. This, coupled with the very good relationship that exists between adults and pupils, ensures that the ethos of the school is good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

60 There is a good match of the number, qualifications and experience of teachers to the demands of the curriculum. They possess a good range of subject qualifications and experience to manage curriculum areas. The number of learning support staff working in classrooms is good. Additional staff supporting individual pupils enhances their numbers. Most of these staff do not have qualifications or significant school responsibilities. However, nearly all support staff have enrolled for appropriate training that will begin soon. It is to their credit that the response to the training opportunity has been so positive that the course will take place on the school site.

61 A small number of teachers have only just been appointed and they do not have experience in a school of this type. However, the induction programme they receive is good and provides the necessary support that ensures their teaching, is effective and promotes pupils' progress. Teachers from a similar local special school provide very good mentoring and the handbook and written induction procedures give good guidance for teachers. The head teacher manages teachers' professional development interviews to determine school and personal priorities for training. There is an ongoing programme of staff development and the school has focused appropriately on professional development linked to improvements in the curriculum. These arrangements have had a positive impact on the ability of the school to implement the good improvements in the curriculum that have taken place since the previous inspection.

62 Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The food technology room and multi-purpose craft room provide specialist areas but only for small classes. The library is a good facility but it is not quiet because staff and pupils move through it to avoid disturbing lessons in the hall. The classrooms are too

small in most parts of the school. This has implications for classroom organisation and teaching as there is significant disruption when furniture has to be moved to provide for small group and individual work. In some areas problems caused by a lack of space restricts pupils' movement especially when hoists or standing frames are required. The accommodation for students at post 16 is too small for the number of classes. One room used for lessons acts as a thoroughfare and staff wanting to gain access to other rooms disturb students. Similarly, the hall provides access to Key Stage 4 classes and movement through this area has a detrimental effect upon pupils' concentration in lessons such as physical education.

63 It is unsatisfactory that the school lacks suitable changing rooms and showers. This limits opportunities for pupils and students to receive support with skills such as dressing and has implications for personal hygiene after strenuous physical effort. Toilets are unsatisfactory for the range of pupils in the school. They do not allow appropriate access for hoists. Although the hydrotherapy pool provides a very useful resource the design prevents adequate arrangements for moving a significant minority of pupils who have additional physical needs. Therefore, they cannot gain access to hydrotherapy. This is unsatisfactory and a concern to the school and some parents.

64 Outside areas are of a good standard and well maintained. The courtyard enhances the school environment and the playground and small grassed area provide an appropriate space for play. Although there is insufficient space for aspects of physical education such as competitive team games and gymnastics, the school does make very good arrangements to use swimming and sports and leisure facilities in the community to support the curriculum. The building is kept very clean and tidy and this contributes to pupils' respect for the school and its resources.

65 The provision of learning resources is good for the majority of subjects. This represents good progress since the previous inspection. Resources are satisfactory for English, with good materials to support literacy. They are good for physical education, art and humanities. Mathematics has been a focus for school development and resources are now good. Resources for information communication technology, including software and switches for pupils who have additional special educational needs are good. However, there is a lack of sufficient software in specific areas, for example science. Although there are good examples of displays in the school there is an inconsistency in this area. For example, there are not enough examples in the post 16 accommodation to reflect the students' age and interests. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory progress to improve the quality of display in classrooms to stimulate pupils and celebrate achievement.

The efficiency of the school

66 Financial planning, based on accurate information and projections, is very good. Governors and senior staff are involved in this process which benefits from the existence of clear procedures. Financial decisions are closely linked to whole school planning; this was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. Governors have been careful in their planning and maintain a contingency fund which enables them to fulfil their responsibilities and respond to any additional responsibilities that fair funding delegation might bring. Although arrangements for monitoring spending are satisfactory the governors have no clear systems for evaluating the impact financial decisions might have on standards in the classroom. However, the school is aware of this deficiency and plans are in place to produce a manual outlining financial procedures which will include how they intend to monitor decisions they take.

67 School staff are generally used in an efficient way for the benefit of pupils and students. The deployment of staff and the contribution they make to the high standards students achieve in gymnastics is particularly impressive. The use made of school based professionals is particularly good and therapists make a very effective contribution to individual and group learning. However, there are instances where staff are not used to their full potential. The allocation of responsibilities among the senior staff is not balanced and does not allow the school to make the best use of their skills and time.

Also in lessons there are occasions when support staff are not fully involved in activities such as circle time and as a consequence pupils become restless because they have to wait too long for their turn.

68 Accommodation is used well and the imaginative use of space enables the school to store equipment and resources in a safe and efficient way. During the inspection limited use was made of specialist facilities such as the library and the art room. Appropriate use is made of school based resources and the local community is very effectively used to support aspects of the curriculum through visits to shops, sports centres, colleges and other places of interest.

69 Effective procedures are in place to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the school secretary and the finance officer contribute to very good financial control and administration. The school benefits from the very good support it receives from a finance officer whose services are purchased from the local authority. Information maintained on spending is detailed and ensures that senior staff and governors are kept very well informed on budgetary matters. This enables them to use their time in an efficient way; the information provided supports budgetary planning very well. Recommendations contained in a recent audit report have been acted upon.

70 The quality of teaching is good overall and as a consequence pupils and students make good progress. These factors, together with the efficient use the school makes of its budget, ensures that value for money is good.

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

· **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

English

71 Overall progress in English is good. Since the previous inspection the improvements made to the English curriculum and assessment procedures have had a positive impact on standards. Across the school pupils and students demonstrate a wide range of skills that reflect their special needs.

72 Pupils make good progress in the development of communication skills (speaking and listening). Lower attaining pupils react positively to adults' communication, turning to see or hear its source. Pupils respond to their names, they lift their heads or look at the teacher and some indicate that they recognise their name when it is called during registration. Pupils are developing visual awareness, they track bright lights and objects that are passed in front of their eyes. Some pupils use communication aids effectively, pressing a single switch to participate in lessons with pre-recorded words and phrases. They demonstrate good understanding of familiar routine by participating at the appropriate point. Pupils communicate their likes and dislikes through facial expression, body posture and by vocalising, they use these skills effectively to make choices. Higher attaining pupils talk about their experiences, they listen attentively and respond appropriately during simple conversations.

73 Pupils and students make good progress in the development of pre-reading and reading skills. At Key Stages 3 and 4 lower attaining pupils can focus on objects and people. They are beginning to participate in familiar stories they hear. For example, looking up to see the magic carpet fly over their head or turning to look for the bells that signal the Genie before he appears in the story. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 understand that words and pictures carry meaning. They read simple text, supported by symbols, that they dictate to the teacher and some can read text supported by symbols that they have not seen before. They do this with confidence and look to the teacher for support with words or symbols that they do not know. At Key Stage 4 pupils retell familiar stories remembering the characters and the key elements. In the story of Ali Baba one pupil remembered that the main character had to say 'open sesame' to move the rock from the front of the cave and the phrase is repeated at the appropriate point in the story. Some pupils use signing confidently to communicate their needs, to express their feeling and to participate in activities. Although a variety of individual books is available in classrooms the school does not currently use a reading scheme. As a consequence those pupils who are capable of recognising and reading words do not have sufficient opportunity to make progress in using a structured scheme as they move through the school.

74 Pupils and students make satisfactory progress in the development of pre-writing and writing skills. At Key Stages 3 and 4 lower attaining pupils generally respond to touch, accepting and manipulating objects that are put in their hands. Others demonstrate emerging pencil control and an appropriate pincer grip. They make deliberate marks on paper. Some pupils colour accurately within defined margins and draw pictures that are recognisable. One pupil pretends to write, making marks on paper to represent words; he says aloud to himself what he has written. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 dictate the answers to questions and the teacher types them using a word symbol programme on the computer. They understand that what they have said has been recorded. Higher attaining pupils at both key stages copy write single words or simple sentences. They recognise upper and lower case letters and make good attempts to write their name independently at the top of their work. However, they do not have appropriate opportunities to develop independent word processing

skills.

75 In three-quarters of lessons pupils' response is consistently good. They respond particularly well to the story-telling activities provided for them. At Key Stage 3 lower attaining pupils show considerable pleasure listening to the noise made when the lamp is rubbed. Higher attaining pupils are keen to become involved and enthusiastically "act out" simple parts in the story they are studying. At Key Stage 4 the response shown by pupils continues to be good. They listen to instructions and cope with the re-organisation of furniture after circle time very well. They particularly enjoy the work related to personal experiences. At post 16 lower attaining students respond very well to the imaginative use of resources; one shows genuine excitement as the "digger" approaches. In the single lesson where response was unsatisfactory the slow pace of the lesson meant that too much time was available for students to engage in inappropriate behaviour. Some also became frustrated when they were unable to convey their needs to the adults supporting them.

76 Although teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good it is good overall. It is very good for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 and for some post 16 students. Adults involved in teaching have very secure subject knowledge and a good range of activities and experiences supports understanding of the subject and learning. This is particularly evident in story telling activities organised and managed by the speech and language therapist. Although teachers generally sign well to support the key elements of communication some teachers sign more confidently and consistently than others. Signing is particularly effective when it is used by all adults to encourage pupils' participation. The use of meaningful objects of reference to support pupils' communication is underdeveloped and some pupils have been introduced to the use of symbol communication before they are ready. Resources are well selected and matched to pupils' learning. However, classroom support staff are not always sufficiently well briefed and consequently are not deployed effectively by teachers. Where support staff are involved in planning and have clear roles and responsibilities they make a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils. Unsatisfactory teaching is sometimes seen for pupils and students with more challenging behaviour. Low expectations of what can be achieved in terms of work and response restricts the progress pupils make.

77 The subject is well co-ordinated and managed. The curriculum is being continually improved and a scheme of work to provide more detailed guidance is nearing completion. The subject co-ordinator works closely and effectively with the speech therapists on the development of the curriculum. Some good research work is being carried out to enhance the teaching of communication, to develop literacy skills and story telling across the curriculum and identify the most effective forms of symbol communication. The curriculum is monitored effectively through regular review of the modules taught and through the formal monitoring of teachers' planning. However, the co-ordinator does not currently have responsibility for the monitoring of teaching across the school and information about individual strengths and areas for improvement are not available to inform development planning.

78 Overall there are sufficient and suitable resources to support teaching and learning and the provision of single switch communication aids is good. Book stocks are satisfactory. The library has been restocked over the past three years and the school effectively uses the local authority library service to enhance its book resources for the topics that are being taught. Resources to support literacy, such as story boxes, are good and are constantly being improved. There are insufficient resources for information communication technology. Higher attaining pupils do not have opportunities to use concept keyboards or software that would support the development of word processing skills. Accommodation is satisfactory and there is an adequate library area.

Mathematics

79 Progress in mathematics is good overall. By the end of Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils are making good progress. They read and answer number problems using addition and subtraction up to 100. They can classify by counting the number of sides and corners of a given range of shapes. Money skills are being consolidated when pupils label coins and match them by value. Lower attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress when the tasks set for them do not match their needs and abilities. At the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils are beginning to tell the time to the hour. They use standard measurement for height, weight and length. Lower attaining pupils use touch to feel sharp corners when experimenting with differences in shape.

80 Students at post 16 use calculators with three digits and they understand how to check their answers. The effective use of the community allows them to use money to make purchases in shops; for example buying ingredients for cooking. Some students tell the time to the quarter hour and can make predictions when asked to estimate in time. Lower attaining students make good use of matching skills when they use cue cards to select and make choices.

81 Pupils' and students' attitudes to learning are good overall. They generally enjoy activities and are eager to respond to teachers' questions. Concentration levels shown by most pupils and students are good and they demonstrate a good knowledge of routines when they distribute and collect resources. Higher attaining pupils work independently on the computer and confidently change number programmes. In a minority of lessons at Key Stage 3 pupil response is unsatisfactory. There is an over-reliance upon adults and pupils have to be strongly prompted in order to achieve tasks set for them.

82 The quality of teaching is good overall; however it is unsatisfactory for some pupils in Key Stage 3. When teaching is at its best, for example in lessons for higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3, activities are well chosen to meet pupils' needs and a variety of strategies are used to achieve lesson outcomes. Most teachers manage pupils well and have suitably high expectations of them in terms of behaviour and work. Teaching is unsatisfactory when work on colour, pattern and shape do not extend pupils' mathematical knowledge.

83 The good policy for mathematics reflects the aims of the school and National Curriculum guidelines. A very good scheme of work, which supports the policy, is now in place. Pupils' individual targets are reflected in teacher planning. Assessment is good, conforms to school policy and is closely linked to schemes of work. Resources including information and communication technology, have been matched to meet curriculum requirements. Monitoring of teaching has been started in mathematics which allows good opportunities for support and development work. This is a very good development.

84 Since the previous inspection, the overall progress of pupils and students has been improved. The mathematics policy has been rewritten and schemes of work have been matched to National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

• **Science**

85 Progress in science is good. At Key Stage 3 higher attaining pupils make good progress studying the way that heating and cooling causes change. They make very good progress suggesting how to change ice back into water in order to free a plastic spider trapped in a block of ice. They understand that materials change and they use this knowledge to predict that heat will melt chocolate. Lower attaining pupils experience change when water cools. They feel warm water in a container insulated with aluminium foil, comparing it with the temperature of the water in a non-insulated container. Pupils show an increasing knowledge of parts of the body, naming and labelling them. Higher attaining pupils can locate the heart, feeling their own heartbeat and saying that it beats fast. Pupils make good progress in studying forces in design and technology lessons. They show a growing understanding of pushing and pulling forces when they control a pneumatically operated genie in a model of Aladdin's lamp.

86 At Key Stage 4, pupils make good progress when they experiment with circuits to make a bulb light or a buzzer sound. Higher attaining pupils can connect wires and know that they have to move a switch to complete the circuit. They begin to make predictions of what they have to do using appropriate vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils join hands to complete a circuit so that a small electrical current can flow and make a keyboard play a note. Pupils make further good progress when they study floating and sinking in design and technology. They understand that some materials will float and some will sink.

87 No science lessons were observed at post 16 and so it was not possible to make a judgement about the students' response to science or the quality of teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work, reports on progress, teachers' records and the work on display indicate that students make good progress. The study of science forms part of several of the modules in the department. Students increase their knowledge of how the body functions in a Learning for Life programme. Their study links well with work in art, where they examine and record the characteristics and uses of materials in architecture. Students study science through horticulture, making decisions on where to grow plants and how to care for them.

88 Pupils' response to lessons in science is good. Pupils enjoy undertaking experiments and respect resources, sharing them with each other well. They take an interest in what others are doing and learn from this. Pupils are pleased to see what happens when connecting wires to terminals and batteries during their investigation of circuits. Higher attaining pupils work independently and solve problems for themselves. They comply well with instructions to perform experiments and work together to produce a group effort. Most behave well and the good choice of resources arouses their interest. A small minority of pupils do not retain interest in the lesson. They miss work and this adversely affects the progress that they make.

89 The quality of teaching is good or very good in more than half of lessons. Good and very good teaching reflects the methods chosen to provide sufficient motivation for pupils to become absorbed in the work and build upon previous learning. The enthusiastic approach and choice of imaginative resources creates a sense of wonder in pupils, inspiring them to want to know more. The deployment of resources is effective and means that lessons flow smoothly and maintain the pupils' interest. Teachers usually manage other adults well to provide support for pupils. In a minority of classes their management does not consistently involve them in pupils' learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, the work set does not always match pupils' needs in order for them to understand each step in the lesson. This means that the pupils do not build up knowledge so effectively in relation to their previous learning.

90 The modules to support lesson planning in science are good and provide an effective means of ensuring that the pupils receive a balanced programme. The very recently appointed co-ordinator is already having a positive impact on standards in the subject. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Most teachers choose to teach science in their own classrooms since the general-purpose science room offers few advantages. However, classrooms are too small and ill equipped and this restricts opportunities for group and individual work. The provision of resources is satisfactory overall and the availability of science books is good. Teachers make good use of information communication technology resources such as electronic keyboards and large switches. However, there is a shortage of information technology software, particularly to provide pupils with the opportunity to undertake research. The school makes good use of the school environment and visits play an important part in providing pupils with first hand experiences.

91 The school has made good progress in raising standards in science since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress has improved and the quality of teaching is now good overall. Investigative work is good and is a strong feature of science lessons. Pupils are now provided with a good science curriculum and assessment procedures have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

· Design and technology

92 Progress in design and technology is good. During their study of water transport Key Stage 3 pupils investigate materials that will float. They understand that some items will float and some will sink; some higher attaining pupils know that they can alter the shape of the clay to make it float. They begin to understand that they need to consider the intended use, for example to carry a model figure, when they design rafts. Lower attaining pupils contribute to making birthday cards. They make choices of materials and, with help, join in activities.

93 At Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress during their work on forces. They have already worked in pairs, pushing and pulling each other. Pupils build on this work by examining how a syringe works. They use the information gained to join plastic tubing to syringes to make a pneumatic device, which they use, with help, to make a genie come out of Aladdin's lamp. Higher attaining pupils use words such push, pull, tubing and plastic appropriately. Lower attaining pupils experience forces using large apparatus such as hoists and a tricycle.

94 Students at post 16 have good opportunities to develop skills in design and technology. They contribute to the design of Christmas wreaths, making decisions on how to attach the ivy and the flowers to create an effect. Students have good opportunities to take part in projects throughout the year, such as making planters for the courtyard of the school. Lower attaining students take simple puppets apart with help and investigate how to re-assemble them.

95 Pupils' and students' responses to lessons in design and technology are good. They are particularly interested in the resources and keen to use apparatus and connect it together. They cooperate well in pairs, sharing equipment and helping each other to fix it together. Pupils handle tools with care and respect, following instructions on how to use them. Pupils work independently when they construct their rafts. They observe others and consider new ideas to improve their own work. Pupils enjoy showing off their products at the end of the lesson. They watch demonstrations with interest and applaud the outcome.

96 The quality of teaching is good at Key Stages 3 and 4. Explanations are clear and the pupils know what to do. Resources are well planned and stimulating to ensure that pupils are interested and keen to use them independently. Lesson planning provides a balance between designing and making, with good provision for evaluation. Learning support staff are given clear instructions so that they provide appropriate support for pupils to make progress.

97 The planning modules in design and technology are good and provide suitable links with other subjects. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The food technology and multi-purpose craft rooms provide specialist areas but only for small groups and the size of classrooms limits opportunities for small group and individual work. Resources for learning are satisfactory. There is good planning to provide communication switches but limited provision for using information communication technology to support learning in the subject. Design and technology makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. They design and make artefacts to support their learning of world faiths.

98 There has been good improvement in design and technology. The previous inspection judged standards of achievement and the quality of teaching to be variable; both these aspects are now good. Resources, which are now satisfactory, were judged to be poor three years ago.

· Art

99 Evidence gained from a scrutiny of work on display, the observation of a small sample of lessons and examination of appropriate records indicate that pupils are making good progress in art. Pupils at Key Stage 3 create a mural based upon the work of Monet. The pupils have good opportunities to develop skills in painting and their finished work shows that they are developing good control of brushes and paint. They paint blue stripes, gradually adding white to gain knowledge of the effect of colour mixing. The pupils look at architecture in the locality. They build upon this experience by helping to draw and paint representations of the Taj Mahal in a study of the history of India. They have good opportunities to make progress in using a range of mediums, for example creating collages in the style of Salvador Dali. Pupils at Key Stage 4 create animal screen prints based upon their study of Aboriginal animals. They continue to show progress through their work involving colouring flags and adding materials to explore making a collage of Ayres Rock. The pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are working with artists from the community to make screen prints and a banner for display. They create finished products of a high standard.

100 Students at post 16 make good progress in art. They have good opportunities to develop skills and can choose to study art as an optional subject, developing further skills in pottery and ceramics, printing and making pictures. The students' work on display shows that they make good progress in a range of mediums. They create particularly good mosaics based upon a Roman example. Students study architecture as part of their accredited course, painting representations of buildings of different heights and shapes. Lower attaining students begin to choose materials to draw and start to make representative marks on paper. The students benefit from the work they are doing with the Camden Arts Centre.

101 During the inspection week insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement on pupils' response to art or the quality of teaching in the subject. However, pupils follow a broad curriculum in art that provides a good balance of two and three-dimensional work. Teachers plan well to use art to enhance the pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils paint French flags to support the study of a modern foreign language and make collages of their own body in science. They have good opportunities to use art to accompany their work in religious education, creating pictures for the celebration of Diwali.

102 The co-ordinator makes a positive contribution to the promotion of good standards in art. Pupils and students receive very good support from artists based in the community who come into school to work with them. There are good resources for art and this enables pupils and students to work in a wide range of materials. Displays of art throughout the school are good and indicate that the subject makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

103 There has been very good progress in raising the standard of art in the school since the previous inspection.

• **Information communication technology**

104 Insufficient teaching of information and communication technology took place during the inspection to enable a judgement to be made on pupil and student progress. However, evidence of attainment was seen in the use of technology in curriculum subjects, display boards and in pupil and student work. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are using simple control switches to operate electrical equipment such as tape recorders. They use single switch communication aids when prompted to respond to questions. Higher attaining pupils begin to use a touch screen to alter images, for example when they create colour patterns. Pupils at Key Stage 4 develop the use of control mechanisms to operate a range of equipment such as fans, lights and hair dryers. They have started to print out completed work with the support of an adult. One pupil can use the mouse to play number games and is able to load software programmes. Technology is used to support other curriculum areas. For example, in a science lesson pupils use keyboard instrument touch pads to help their understanding of electric circuits. At post 16 students use word processing to write their names and addresses. The

independent use of other communication aids such as the telephone is developing. Remote control cars and computer games are used for leisure activities.

105 Pupils and students respond well to learning opportunities using information communication technology. The use of switches and other communication aids enables them to be involved in group activity. For example, a pupil was able to respond to her name at registration time. Good use is made of single switch communicators for greetings such as when, in geography, a pupil was able to respond in Japanese. The school has yet to fully develop the use of information communication technology to allow pupils and students to express opinions and make decisions for the purpose of increasing independent skills.

106 During the inspection information communication technology was used principally to support work in other subjects and so it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The emphasis of teaching is upon the use of switches for communication. However, from the evidence of pupil and student work, staff do not provide sufficient opportunities to develop the use of keyboards and there is not enough teaching aimed at improving word processing skills. Where pupils and students use words and symbols programmes, work is often staff generated and there is an inappropriate over-use of prompting.

107 Information communication technology is a priority in school development plans. A good start has been made with the review of policy and the writing of a sound scheme of work. These plans give staff a good structure from which they plan to meet individual pupil targets. Staff have yet to fully implement the schemes, particularly in the use of keyboard skills. Resources are being developed and the school has sound plans for use of the Internet.

108 Since the previous inspection improvements have only been satisfactory. The school has not yet satisfactorily addressed the training needs of teaching and non-teaching staff to help develop their expertise. Pupils and students continue to depend upon staff prompting and have insufficient opportunity to make decisions using control technology.

Humanities (History and Geography)

109 History and geography modules are taught in half termly blocks. During the week of the inspection all classes were working on the geography module and so it was not possible to observe history. Judgements on progress are therefore based on a scrutiny of whole school planning, teachers' files and pupils' work. Documentation indicates that over time pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in history. All pupils in Key Stage 3 have studied India. Teachers' planning takes account of pupils' ability and consequently classes study different aspects of the country. Lower attaining pupils have experienced aspects of Indian culture such as food, clothing and music. Higher attaining pupils understand where Hindus and Muslims worship and some recognise that Ghandi is an important person in the country's history. All pupils in Key Stage 4 studied Post War United Kingdom last half-term. Lower attaining pupils listened to music from the fifties and nineties and expressed a preference. Some higher attaining pupils recognised that life was different in the past and a small number distinguished between old and new washing machines.

110 Progress in geography overall is satisfactory. Key Stage 3 pupils are currently studying the British Isles. For lower attaining pupils work in this module is focusing on space, position, and direction. They find these concepts very difficult to understand and require considerable prompting to find areas of the classroom. Most pupils in this key stage are working on their immediate environment and are able to recognise features in the school and the local area. They visit, as part of their work, Brent Cross and the River Thames. Higher attaining pupils are aware that they live in Barnet and when doing map work can consistently distinguish between land and sea. At Key Stage 4 pupils are making satisfactory progress in their study of Japan. Lower attaining pupils focus well on the experience that they are given of Japanese culture such as writing and the tea ceremony. Although

higher attaining pupils sometimes experience difficulty in remaining on task some recognise the items which come from Japan; for example a plate and different types of food.

111 History and geography are studied at post 16 as part of The Learning for Life module. It is not possible to make a judgement on progress in history as the subject has not yet been taught as part of the rolling programme. However, later this year topics covered will include, Native Indians, The Romans and Explorers and Voyagers. Planning indicates that students have made good progress in geography. They can associate parts of the U.K with different activities, for example coal mining and some can recognise physical features such beaches, rivers and mountains.

112 Overall pupils' response in geography is satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 lower attaining pupils enjoyed being part of a group when working on classroom areas but were reluctant to find these without considerable adult input. Pupils' response at Key Stage 4 is mixed. Where it is good they make appropriate eye contact and enjoy the experiences that the Japanese tea ceremony offers them. Higher attaining pupils generally enjoy lessons and respond willingly to questions. However, some find difficulty remaining on task and become restless if they are not fully engaged throughout the lesson.

113 Overall the quality of geography teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good planning is imaginative and resources are used well. For example, the work on the tea ceremony benefited from the input provided by a Japanese parent. This level of planning, which is a feature of lessons, reflects the hard work that staff undertake to adapt the modules to make them more relevant to the needs of the pupils they teach. However, this effort is not always evident in practice. For example, during work on position and space pupils did not understand the concepts and consequently made little progress.

114 The planning that has been put in place for the development and teaching of history and geography is good and links closely with National Curriculum requirements. The subjects are well managed and when all the modules are complete there will exist a comprehensive framework for teaching. Overall resources are good. School materials are very effectively supplemented by those provided by class teachers.

115 Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements in history and geography. The curriculum now meets National Curriculum requirements and the quality of learning and teaching is satisfactory overall.

Modern foreign language (French)

116 Due to timetable arrangements only two lessons of French were seen, one at Key Stage 3 and the other at Key Stage 4. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about teaching or pupils' responses during lessons. Judgements about progress are supported by evidence from lessons observed, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and records, pupil profiles and their records of achievement. Indications are that pupils have appropriate opportunities to take part in a good range of learning opportunities and experiences.

117 The progress of pupils at both key stages is at least satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 pupils respond in French to the greeting 'hello' at the beginning of the lesson. They count the number of pupils in the class and one pupil knows the French for numbers up to five, pointing out in French when four pupils are counted instead of three. Pupils use the target language appropriately to answer simple questions and they repeat the names of colours enjoying the rolling sound of the 'r' in rouge. At Key Stage 4 pupils develop their speaking skills further and higher attaining pupils answer questions using simple and familiar phrases. Pupils correctly name the rooms of a house remembering the new words they learned in the previous lesson. When asked in French if the room is the kitchen or the bedroom they give the correct answer. Pupils try hard to copy the teacher's accent, they listen carefully and follow simple

instructions. Students at post 16 have appropriate opportunities to continue their studies as French is available to them as part of a programme of subject options.

118 The good scheme of work together with the procedures that exist to monitor the subject effectively inform curriculum development. However, the co-ordinator has not been responsible for the subject for very long and currently has no responsibility for monitoring the content of subject teaching. Information about strengths and areas for development in teaching is therefore not available. The school has already identified this as an issue. There are sufficient and suitable resources to support learning and pupils' experiences are enhanced by a trip to France at the end of Key Stage 4. Opportunities to experience the language and culture of another country make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' cultural awareness.

· **Music**

119 Due to timetabling arrangements only two music lessons were observed, one at Key Stage 3 and another at Key Stage 4. This is insufficient to make an overall judgement about teaching or about pupils' responses during lessons. However, judgements about progress are supported by evidence from these lessons, a scrutiny of curriculum and teachers' planning, pupil profiles and their records of achievement. Indications are that pupils have opportunities to take part in a good range of learning opportunities and experiences.

120 Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils learn about the music of countries such as South America, Africa and India. They experience the work of different composers and performers and have opportunities to listen to sacred music. At Key Stage 3 pupils are studying world music. They begin to recognise different tempos and they use instruments to create sound. Some higher attaining pupils develop sufficient skill with the instruments to follow a simple pattern of beats. Pupils respond positively to music and they are beginning to understand that music from different countries has its own particular style. At Key Stage 4 pupils listen to big band Jazz and to Classical Music. They develop an awareness of Jazz form by listening to the music of Ella Fitzgerald and Ray Charles. Pupils have good opportunities to experience the contrast between classical music such as the Moonlight Sonata and the music of Duke Ellington. Through the creative arts course, accredited by ASDAN, students at post 16 have good opportunities to continue developing their awareness of different types of music and to continue developing their skills with instruments.

121 Teachers plan a good range of activities that enable all pupils to develop their listening skills and to make responses to the music they hear. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to express likes and dislikes and higher attaining pupils learn to play instruments either with support or independently. They develop their skills and are beginning to explore the sounds that instruments make, composing simple patterns of notes and playing them to the group. In both the lessons seen teaching and pupils' responses were good.

122 Modules of work are taught through a three-year rolling programme at Key Stage 3 and a two-year programme at Key Stage 4. Good procedures are used to monitor the curriculum and these are used effectively to inform planning. The co-ordinator has not been responsible for the subject for very long and is appropriately carrying out an audit of provision. There are sufficient and suitable resources to support learning and visiting musicians are effectively used to enhance pupils' experiences. The school uses a wide range of music to support learning and this makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' cultural awareness.

123 There has been very little change in provision for music since the previous inspection.

Progress continues to be satisfactory and the quality of learning and teaching remains good.

Personal, social and health education

124 School aims indicate a commitment to maximising personal autonomy and independence. The emphasis that the school places on ensuring this happens means that overall progress in personal, social and health education is good.

125 Pupils at Key Stage 3 are beginning to make choices and there are good examples of lower attaining pupils using simple switches to indicate preferences. Opportunities are given for higher attaining pupils to express their own opinions and, through discussion, understand the feelings of others. In following simple menus in food technology pupils learn basic food preparation and can recall techniques such as those necessary for cooking pasta.

126 At Key Stage 4 pupils use local shops to purchase ingredients and have developed sufficient food preparation skills to enjoy eating the food that they cook. All pupils are acquiring more self-help skills in personal care. For example, lower attaining pupils begin to help with personal hygiene and some enjoy having their hair brushed. Higher attaining pupils take an interest in clothes and footwear and can dress without prompts.

127 Some post 16 students can identify hazards in the kitchen. When presented with a range of situations they can identify danger and suggest ways of improvement. For example, they can recognise that cables near water may result in an electric shock and should be moved to safer locations. Some students work toward independent use of public transport and can walk safely to local supermarkets.

128 Overall pupil response is good. Almost all lessons are characterised by pupil and student enthusiasm for learning and their eagerness to respond to questions in group discussion. They follow class routines well and through curriculum modules have the opportunity to make choices. When involved in group activities, such as cookery, they help each other by distributing equipment and food. However, a significant minority of pupils and students lack confidence and their participation in activities is too frequently dependent upon prompting by staff.

129 The quality of teaching is good. The well structured schemes of work linked to pupils' individual educational programmes ensure that planning is very good. Best teaching is characterised by strong communication skills. Classes are well organised and the high expectations of behaviour are made clear to pupils and students. Good strategies for managing challenging behaviours result in a calm and purposeful working environment. There are some excellent examples of signing by learning support staff which enables students to take a full part in discussion and make choices. The use of resources for learning is very good. In the few instances of unsatisfactory teaching opportunities are not given to pupils and students to enable them to exercise their independence with confidence and in a variety of situations.

130 Curriculum management is good and the co-ordinator has been successful in establishing sound policies in personal, social and health education. There is a well structured programme of studies. Pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 who follow the ASDAN Key Steps programme, in addition to school modules, are provided with a wide range of valuable experiences that help them begin to understand more about themselves and their place in society. Students at post 16 develop these skills by following the ASDAN Toward Independence and Youth Award Scheme and success in these courses can gain them accredited qualifications. Although very good policies for sex and drug education have been written the school has yet to complete the writing of modules through which these policies can be implemented. Resources for learning are good and budget allocations have been well spent in support of the developing curriculum.

131 Revisions to the policies, improvements in resources and continued good teaching and progress

indicate that there has been good progress in personal, social and health education provision since the previous inspection.

· **Physical education**

132 Overall progress in physical education at Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. In both key stages lower attaining pupils make good progress. They show, in most activities, that they are achieving at a level appropriate to their individual needs. For example, lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 can, with adult prompts, push a ball towards an object or person; more mobile pupils demonstrate that they can perform this activity with accuracy over short distances. Records kept of those pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 who go to a local sports centre for gymnastics indicate that they are making good progress in this area. However, it is unsatisfactory that the narrow curriculum provided prevents them from making progress in other aspects of physical education.

133 Most pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are working towards an appropriate award in swimming and detailed records indicate that they are making good progress against the targets set for them. At Key Stage 3 pupils are gaining in confidence in the water and the majority can travel on their backs for short distances using a suitable buoyancy aid. Higher attaining pupils can enter the pool unaided. At Key Stage 4 pupils are demonstrating an emerging stroke technique which enables them to swim short distances and the majority can enter the water by themselves.

134 Students in the post 16 area of the school are making very good progress in physical education. Lower attaining students following the school based sports, leisure and physiotherapy modules show that, with support, they can perform simple exercises and some can maintain body positions without help. Students attending the local sports centre make very good progress in working towards the externally accredited awards in trampolining and gymnastics. Lower attaining pupils show good balancing skills both on the floor and on a beam. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good skills when jumping off a variety of boxes, maintaining good body shape on landing. In trampolining very good standards are achieved and one student is able to complete a sequence involving hand and knee bouncing and a forward turn over. In swimming students are making good progress. They are very confident in the water and understand the need for safe behaviour. Higher attaining students are now using a variety of strokes to propel themselves through the water.

135 Pupils and students across the school with complex physical needs benefit from the very good support that they receive from the school based physiotherapists. These professionals work very closely with staff and have introduced a programme to the school aimed at developing gross motor skills in activities such as sitting, standing and walking. The emphasis on developing these physical skills in everyday school activities ensures progress is maintained over time. The physiotherapists also offer hydrotherapy to individuals who are not yet ready to visit local swimming pools. The targets worked on in these sessions are well thought out. They provide physiotherapy exercises in a warm and relaxing environment and they also enable progress to be made in developing stamina and fitness levels.

136 Pupils' attitude to physical education is good. A feature of lessons is the enjoyment that pupils show in all the activities they undertake. They stay on task for appropriate periods of time and those with more complex physical difficulties respond well to working with an adult. Pupils spontaneously celebrate the achievements of others; for example when a Key Stage 3 pupil is successful in knocking skittles over with a ball. During the gymnastics session post 16 students relate very well to each other and it is impressive the way they sit calmly at the end of the lesson and show their appreciation for the achievements of others.

137 Overall teaching is good. In the best lessons expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and as a result they achieve very good standards. The organisation and planning of the post 16 gymnastics and trampolining sessions is very good and consequently students are successfully

performing quite complex routines. Staff assess pupils' skills and give immediate feedback which is relevant and easily understood by pupils. A positive aspect of teaching is the adult support provided to enable all pupils to experience activities irrespective of their skill level. Clear instructions are given to pupils and teacher demonstration of activities and routines are good. However, it is unsatisfactory that in all lessons staff and pupils do not change for activities which are quite strenuous.

138 The recently reviewed policy for physical education is good and the newly appointed subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good grasp of what needs to be done to develop the subject. The planning grid for Key Stages 3 and 4 is appropriate and ensures that all the required aspects of physical education are covered. However, it is unsatisfactory that this planning is not implemented for those Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils who attend the local sports centre for gymnastics. Resources for the subject are good and the school benefits very much from the opportunity it has to use local facilities for swimming and gymnastics. Deficiencies in the school accommodation mean that there is a lack of changing and showering facilities for pupils. This is unsatisfactory and has implications in terms of pupils' dignity and hygiene.

139 There have been improvements in physical education since the last inspection. Pupils' progress overall is still satisfactory. However, it is now good in swimming and very good for pupils in the post 16 area. At the time of the last inspection some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching is now good overall with some very good teaching at post 16.

• **Religious education**

140 Progress in religious education is good throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress celebrating the lives of special people and higher attaining pupils can say how people are special. They celebrate the life of Helen Keller and collect Braille labels for the initial letter of their name. Pupils look at differences in people and show a growing understanding of why people are special. They suggest ways that people can improve their behaviour towards others and some relate this to their own conduct. Pupils consider the examples of good and unselfish behaviour in religious teachings. Lower attaining pupils identify their friend in school and consider how to make them feel special. They do this by producing birthday cards for them.

141 The pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress learning about each other's faiths. They study places of worship, visiting a temple, synagogue and church. Pupils deepen their understanding by recording events and making drawings. They develop their understanding when a pupil brings artefacts to school to demonstrate prayer in a Mosque. They make divas to show the significance of light in the celebration of Diwali. Lower attaining pupils experience the difference between light and dark during a time for reflection created to develop an awareness of religious symbols.

142 Students at post 16 make good progress when they study special days and times celebrating special events. They remember that they sing happy birthday, relating this to their own experience. Some remember that they sang happy birthday to a student the week before. Higher attaining students understand that we celebrate events such as the harvest festival and Christmas at special times. Lower attaining students respond positively to the photographs of a birthday party in the study of special days. They contribute to creating a picture to celebrate the event by handling resources and indicating choices of colour.

143 Pupils' response to lessons in religious education is good. Most pupils listen well for the majority of the lesson and respond with suitable suggestions or answers. They show considerable interest in resources such as the Braille alphabet and this motivates them to learn. The choice of resources and interesting activities ensure that pupils concentrate on their tasks and this avoids any potentially challenging behaviour. Relationships between pupils are very good and they support each other well.

144 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge of what they are teaching and relate their planning well to what pupils have done before. Activities are planned to meet pupils' different needs and work is informed by teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Teachers promote speaking and listening well through discussions aided by signs and symbols and they generally link lessons in religious education effectively with other subjects. The pupils are able to make choices because teachers deploy resources well, for example using large switch communication aids to ensure that all pupils are able to participate. In a minority of lessons the pace is too slow and does not leave enough time to enable pupils to evaluate their work appropriately.

145 The planning grids follow the locally agreed syllabus and provide an appropriate guide to ensure broad coverage of all the required topics. Resources for learning are good with good topic boxes for teachers to select, for example when they study a particular faith. The quality of display and the provision of artefacts are good. They make a strong contribution to promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths. Religious education lessons make a very good contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

146 There have been significant improvements in this area of the curriculum. At the time of the previous inspection the school was not meeting its requirement to teach religious education. This is no longer an issue as the subject is now timetabled for all pupils and students.

• **Post 16**

147 Provision for students over the age of 16 is good. Policies in this area clearly reflect school aims and are achieved in practice through a well structured programme of activities and courses. The curriculum, which is suitably different to that offered to younger pupils, is broad, balanced and relevant. The ASDAN Towards Independence Modules provide suitable challenges for lower attaining pupils and The Youth Award Scheme Challenge Level encourages higher attaining students to develop valuable skills for use in the community. Modules covered in school are very well supported by a good range of off-site activities; for example, communication and number skills are practised in a variety of community situations. Link courses at local colleges allow students to make choices about placements after school and prepare them well for further education. Arrangements for the transition to adult life are very good and there are well established links with the careers service.

148 The attitude of students is generally good. They are enthusiastic and consistently maintain interest throughout an activity. Students' relationships with each other and with staff are good. The very good behaviour evident in this area of the school reflects the ethos of mutual care and respect that exists and is one of the most positive features of post 16 provision. Students are pleased to be in the department and enjoy celebrating the success of others. However, in some lessons students can lack confidence and look to staff before making decisions.

149 The quality of teaching in this area of the school is good. At its best students are treated as young adults, provided with opportunities to develop their independence and given the chance to make their own decisions. Where teaching is less effective students are over-dependent upon staff prompting when completing activities. The school has recently implemented new strategies for the teaching and management of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and a small group has been established for this purpose in the post 16 department. A good start has been made to planning and managing the learning environment for these students. However, although individual needs are being addressed their broader curriculum needs are not being met.

150 Post 16 provision is effectively co-ordinated and well resourced. Schemes of work and accredited and non-accredited modules are detailed and clearly reflect school and departmental aims. Accommodation is too small for the number of students and two teaching areas are used to access

other classrooms. This is unsatisfactory and has a disruptive effect on student learning. There are insufficient suitable display areas and students would benefit from more age-appropriate display material in areas such as entertainment, sports and current affairs.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

151 The inspection was carried out by a team of five inspectors including a lay inspector. A total of 20 inspection days were spent in the school. During this time 66 lessons or part of lessons were observed for a total of 39 hours and 10 minutes. Inspectors observed lunchtimes, acts of collective worship and the arrival and departure of school transport. Discussions were held with the head teacher, the chair of governors, teaching staff, support assistants, the office manager, the finance officer, the caretaker, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, the school nurse and where appropriate pupils. A selection of pupils' statements of special educational needs, annual reviews and individual education plans were examined to evaluate progress. Inspectors examined teachers' plans and records, pupils' work, school documentation and policies. Pupils were accompanied off-site to a local college and to observe swimming and gymnastics. A meeting attended by seventeen parents was held to listen to their opinion of the school. Questionnaires were also sent out to all parents and inspectors analysed the 32 that were returned.

· **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	58	58	58	25

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR7 - Y14)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	11.40
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.09:1

Education support staff (YR7 - Y14)

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked each week	496.2

Average class size:	6.4
---------------------	-----

Financial data

Financial year:	98/99
	£
Total income	658043
Total expenditure	628689
Expenditure per pupil	10655.75
Balance brought forward from previous year	17454
Balance carried forward to next year	46808

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

58

Number of questionnaires returned:

32

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	47	53	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	59	41	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	47	37	0	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	59	37	0	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	56	34	6	3	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	41	6	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	50	44	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	34	34	9	3	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41	50	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50	44	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	72	22	3	0	0

Responses do not always total one hundred per cent. This is because not all parents responded to all questions.